SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales · Charity number 1102433

Details

Other names	BATTERSEA LAW CENTRE, BATTERSEA LEGAL ADVICE, CROYDON AND SUTTON LAW CENTRE, KINGSTON AND RICHMOND LAW CENTRE, MORDEN LEGAL ADVICE, SWLLC, TOOTING LEGAL ADVICE, WANDSWORTH AND MERTON LAW CENTRE
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	05018587
Registered	2004-03-02
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Unit 41-42 Centrale Keeley Road Croydon CR0 1TF
Phone	020 8767 2777
Email	enquiries@swllc.org
Website	www.swllc.org

Activities

Objects: 3.1 THE RELIEF OF POVERTY, SUFFERING AND DISTRESS AMONG, PERSONS RESIDENT OR WORKING OR IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION IN SOUTH WEST LONDON INCLUDING THE BOROUGHS OF WANSWORTH, MERTON, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, RICHMOND UPON THAMES, CROYDON AND SUTTON (AND IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, RESIDENTS OF OTHER AREAS) ("SOUTHWEST LONDON AREA"), BY THE PROVISION OF LEGAL ADVICE, ASSISTANCE, REPRESENTATION; AND3.2 THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AMONG PERSONS RESIDENT OR WORKING IN THE SOUTH WEST LONDON AREA BY THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN RESPECT OF THE LAW AND THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS AND DUTIES.3.3 THE PROMOTION OF SUCH OTHER PURPOSES BEING EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES AS THE TRUSTEES MAY FROM TIME TO TIME DETERMINE.

Activities: Legal Advice, Assistance and Representation.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** WANDSWORTH, MERTON, KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES, RICHMOND, SUTTON AND CROYDON
- Croydon
- Kingston Upon Thames
- Merton
- Richmond Upon Thames
- Sutton
- Wandsworth

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,761,577	£1,759,131	£691,501	42
2024-03-31	£1,774,272	£1,725,837	£689,055	38
2023-03-31	£1,569,154	£1,544,089	£640,620	32
2022-03-31	£1,509,383	£1,574,499	£615,555	37
2021-03-31	£1,707,191	£1,526,548	£680,671	41

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Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Nichola Mary Warrender	Chair	2025-06-19
David Jackson		2024-03-19
James Waugh		2024-03-19
Melanie Dorothea Felten		2024-03-19
Nimmisha Aslam		2022-12-01
Sarmad Mehmood Qureshi		2020-02-20
Simon Tinkler		2019-12-18
Susan Rennie Field		2022-12-01

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SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales - Charity number 1102433

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1102433

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

FOR

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Berringers LLP
Lygon House
50 London Rd
Bromley
BR1 3RA

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

TRUSTEES	Allan Blake (resigned 6.1.25) Sarmad Qureshi Simon Tinkler Nimmisha Aslam Sarah Bergstrom (resigned 28.10.25) Susan Field Melanie Felten Theodore Watkins James Waugh David Jackson Nichola Mary Warrender (appointed 19.6.25)
COMPANY SECRETARY	Patrick Marples
REGISTERED OFFICE	Unit 41-42 Keeley Road Croydon CR0 1TF
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1102433
AUDITORS	Berringers LLP Lygon House 50 London Rd Bromley BR1 3RA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Patrick Marples
BANKERS	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

Objectives and activities

Purposes and aims
The objects of the Charity are: the relief of poverty, suffering and distress by the provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and the advancement of education for those resident, working or in full time education in South West London, including the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth and, in exceptional circumstances, residents from other areas; and the promotion of other such purposes which are exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

Public benefit
The Trustees referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the law centre's aims and objectives and in planning and reviewing all our activities. South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a community based, legal practice working to relieve poverty, suffering and distress for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our communities, in need of help at difficult times in their lives to resolve legal problems. We broadly help those who cannot afford a lawyer to access social welfare law. Public benefit is delivered by the provision of free legal advice or affordable charges for services and representation at court in social welfare law. These professional services are funded by legal aid, grants, and donors, and operates from three branches in Wandsworth, Croydon and Merton. We continue to charge, on a limited basis, for some services in employment and immigration where funding through legal aid is no longer available. Our Pro Bono legal advice clinics are free and staffed by volunteer advisers.

By these means, the Charity aims to improve access to justice to vulnerable members of the community in South West London.

We are, at our core, an anti-poverty charity. We use the law to lift families and individuals out of crisis and give them opportunities for better lives. Our model of community lawyering is built around the real-world experiences of those we serve. This means working alongside our communities, not just delivering legal services, but listening, understanding local realities, and building relationships that support long-term change.

Community lawyering goes beyond casework. It includes outreach, education, preventative work, partnership with community groups, and using legal insight to inform wider advocacy and campaigning. It recognises that problems are often complex and cross multiple areas of law.

While the world has changed in the last half-century, the nature of the crises our clients face has remained stubbornly familiar:

- People living in disrepair and poor housing conditions
- People burdened with rising rent arrears and mounting debts
- Workers treated unfairly and unlawfully
- A persistently hostile environment for immigrants and migrants
- A welfare system that continues to fail to deliver rightful entitlements

We are a specialist service. From our core legal representation work in courts and tribunals, we have developed a number of targeted projects to meet specific needs. But we have also recognised, since as early as 1982, that the need in our community goes beyond what our staff alone can meet. That's why we've

worked with volunteer lawyers for over 40 years to provide free legal advice. This vital part of our work supports hundreds of people each year. People who would otherwise be denied their rights and shut out of justice entirely.

This 50-year history means that thousands of people have contributed to the Law Centre, as staff, trustees, volunteers, or clinic participants. We want to re-engage with this wider community, recognising them as a vital part of our future. Their support, networks, and advocacy will help us continue and grow our work for the next 50 years.

In 2024/25 we were able to assist 5,469 clients. This was 399 less than the previous year (2023/24 to 5,868) due to a number of factors including the remodelling of our clinic advice scheme.
Our services include:

- Legal Aid and grant-funded casework in social welfare law, covering housing, debt, employment, and immigration.
- On-the-day legal advice at three London courts to prevent homelessness and improve housing conditions.
- Free legal advice clinics in partnership with volunteer lawyers, offering accessible guidance to the community.
- Crisis navigation and cost-of-living support to help individuals maximise their income and maintain stable housing.
- Community-driven campaigns and policy work that amplify client voices, build social justice networks, and empower communities to protect their rights through advocacy, education, and collaboration.

All Case Studies use fictitious names to protect the identity clients.

Volunteers
The use of hundreds of volunteers alongside our 42 employed staff has been at the heart of our law centre operations for a long time. SWLLC runs a significant Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service delivered through a network of hundreds of volunteer lawyers a year.

Volunteers also help us in every aspect of our work: supporting reception during the daytime and in the evening with administrative tasks, to working as casework assistants to support our casework teams. The work includes undertaking legal research, assisting with creating bundles of documents, note taking and drafting letters. We recruited 30 new volunteers during the year.

We continue to use internships in our immigration and employment teams. Through these placements some interns have gone on to successfully gain paid employment. We want to expand this programme. Typically, our volunteers have been those seeking new skills/experience to get back into the job market or students wishing to further legal careers. On average daytime volunteers stay with the law centre between 3 - 6 months; Many of those that left went onto gain paid employment furthering their careers. Some took up paid roles at the law centre when these became available.

There was much positive feedback from our volunteers:

"I enjoyed being able to help and support people with their legal issues whilst learning more about the problems commonly experienced. I then enjoyed reading their letters of advice from the advisers to see how such issues can be addressed. I've learnt a lot from it."
"I think the law centre has helped shape my opinions on what fields of law to enter into and has developed my customer service skills significantly which helped me get my new job."
"If I could stay at the law centre, I think I would. The experience was enjoyable, my colleagues and clients made the environment feel great and I enjoyed learning parts about different areas of law. My training was in depth, and I got the hang of it only after the first day. Thank you for the experience, I wish you guys the best of luck."
"Volunteering at SWLLC certainly helped me gain a training contract. In my final round interview, I was asked to compare my experiences working at a legal aid charity versus doing a vac scheme at a corporate law firm." – Volunteers, 2024

We estimate the annual value of daytime volunteering to be £62,825. An estimate of the value of annual pro bono work provided by evening volunteers is in excess of £728,000. This is calculated on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time) takes an average total of 3 hours of volunteer time at £164 per hour. This is a high street rate, higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover for professional services in casework and representation.

My experience as a pro bono solicitor has had a huge impact both on my personal and professional life. Professionally, I am able to see that the advice I give where it is being taken, the clients do achieve good results. This can often be life changing for them – seeing their children, having their children being returned in their care or an abuser being stopped from carrying out more abuse. I can see that my hard work in law and has come to fruition and is being used in a very good way. Personally, I get a huge satisfaction that I am making a difference however small to someone's life. Where there are incidents of abuse that I am able to stop in some way, I feel that I have accomplished something personally and I am so humbled by how grateful the clients are that I help. This is my way of giving something back to the community and to people who truly need help and have nowhere else to turn to. (Pro bono family solicitor)

Achievements and performance

The Table below summarises our principal Activities in three main areas. Overall, in 2024/25, we assisted 5,470 clients (5,868 in 2023/24) with direct services.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Housing Team: Six solicitors, including one who undertakes community care and welfare rights cases, plus five paralegals/apprentices and trainees attached to the team. **Debt Team:** Five caseworkers. **Immigration Team:** Four solicitors and two IAA registered caseworkers, including one undertaking public law. **Employment Team:** One caseworker and one solicitor **Cost of Living** Three crisis navigators and two welfare rights caseworkers and a team leader supporting the work of the housing and debt teams. A Campaigns, Policy and Community Manager promoting the law centre's work.	**Activity 1 - Provision of representation in social welfare law** covering community care, debt, discrimination employment, housing, immigration, asylum, public law and welfare rights	2,805 cases (2,505 in 2023/24) We carried forward 694 cases at the start of the year. In addition our housing outreach and advice line assisted 264
Housing Team (as above)	**Activity 2 – Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme**	875 cases (563 in 2023/24)
Pro Bono Team HR and Admin Manager, triage and reception staff, and pro bono lawyers	**Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic** delivered remotely since March 2020	1526 clients seen (2,800 in 2023/24).

Activity 1: Provision of representation in social welfare law

Outcomes - full specialist casework service in a broad range of social welfare law in the areas of community care, debt, discrimination, employment, housing, immigration and asylum, public law and welfare rights, collectively referred to as 'social welfare law'. Our legal work has a broad range of outcomes.

Impact Report
There are a range of impacts from our casework as illustrated in the examples below.

1. **Community Care**
We help people obtain the appropriate community care assessment and services that they are entitled to. Casework enables people with mental illness, learning disabilities or other care needs to get the support they are entitled to. This also helps to reduce isolation for these often very lonely individuals struggling to cope alone in the community.

2. **Debt**
We help people with a strategy for dealing with debts as early as possible in the process as well as challenging unenforceable debts. Work is focussed on reducing debt and finding affordable and manageable debt solutions. We work with individuals and families to calculate an affordable budget, so that they can get back on track. We also help people to apply for grants from a variety of sources to support their everyday needs.

Our debt team, funded through Debt Free London, supported 1,104 people last year. We continue to see high demand and saw 658 clients through our Economic Justice/Cost of living team.

Our team is part of the Debt Free Advice partnership in London, which has an excellent Feefo rating based on client feedback, scoring 4.6 out of 5.

Some of our recent feedback has included

"Excellent - I recommend it 100%. The service was very kind, and thank you very much for your time." – 5 stars

"Very helpful service - I was made to feel comfortable an at ease and the adviser was softly spoken which helped and was patient and most helpful" – 5 stars

Community Stories - Debt Case Studies

Lena, age 43, suffered severe health issues, whilst also being a single mother, leading to her having difficulty finding a job. One of our expert advisors assisted Lena in applying for a DRO in May 2024, supporting her throughout the process. Lena was successful with her application, able to wipe away her debts and start afresh, with a weight lifted off her shoulder.

"Thank you for all your help I am so grateful all the work you have put in for me. Something I've not been able to do all my life and didn't even know where to start. I shall never forget you and all the effort patience you had for me."

Jenny, a 63-year-old widow, was living alone and unemployed. Feeling vulnerable and afraid for her future, she was able to contact our centres, where she was put into contact with Money Wellness, and supported through an application for a DRO.

"I am extremely happy with the advice and support I received. With your help, I have finally taken the steps to getting this weight lifted off me."

3. **Economic Justice (Cost of Living)**

We support people to maximise their income, claim the right benefits, and get further assistance such as claim grants for individuals in need. Our work is supported by the Lottery Community Fund, London Legal Support Trust/Greater London Authority and London Borough of Merton. We have added some one-off short-term funding from Wimbledon Guild and Croydon Relief in Need. Our crisis navigators support the work of the whole organisation by:

a. Being the consistent point of contact for those accessing multiple services;
b. Securing additional funds for the client to enable them to stabilise their short term crisis;
c. Channelling clients through to our specialist caseworkers/ legal staff so that their time is prioritised on providing necessary expert advice and representation; and
d. Acting as case manager to ensure all internal and relevant external services are working together and the client understands how they all fit together to resolve their issues.

With new funding from the Home Office we were able to assist with applications for e-visa and have set up a clinic and assisted 371 people with their applications through our Economic Justice team and volunteers.

Maria's story - Economic Justice

At 32, Maria was navigating single parenthood, life as a newcomer, and rising council tax debt, made harder by a language barrier. At a community event, she found no one who could understand her until she reached the Law Centre's stall, where Brian, a Spanish-speaking outreach worker, reviewed her bailiff letter and quickly spotted the issue: she'd been wrongly charged as if two adults lived in her home.

Brian followed up with the council, provided evidence that Maria was the sole adult resident, and secured the Single Person Discount. Within a week, the council corrected the error and refunded her over £1,838. What began in panic ended in relief, showing how vital accessible support is for people facing barriers.

"When I first received the letter from the council, I felt completely lost and scared. I didn't know who to turn to for help, and the language barrier made everything so much harder. Meeting Brian at the outreach event changed everything for me. For the first time, someone understood my situation and spoke my language. I felt like I could finally express what I was going through. Now that my bill is corrected, I can focus on what really matters... taking care of my child. I can breathe easier, knowing that I have the support I need and that my situation is finally resolved"

4. **Employment**

We help people on a wide range of issues including: dismissal, suspension, discrimination, unpaid wages and failure to pay the minimum wage, notice or redundancy pay, holiday pay, breach of contract, grievances, appeals and settlement agreements. We also specialise in discrimination cases funded through our legal aid contract. Through this work we help people to remain in their jobs and where appropriate obtain redress for bad employment practice. Our team doubled in size as we welcomed a newly qualified solicitor, Alex Iossifidis, supported through *Awards for All* funding.

This work is funded through grant funding, legal aid and various methods of affordable charging. This year we worked on 76 cases an additional 50 from the previous year. We have increased our reach through volunteers to support weekly employment advice clinics along together with our general pro bono clinics where we advised 568 people. Our pro bono work has been boosted through Employment Law for London partnership with BPP Law School offering a 30-minute telephone advice appointment for all London residents needing legal advice about a workplace issue.

Sushmita's Story - Employment Case study

At 46, Sushmita endured persistent bullying and discrimination at work, leaving her depressed and overwhelmed. After a workplace incident where her manager pushed her, she ended up in A&E and was then unfairly dismissed. Referred by Citizens Advice, she met with Sarah Forsyth at South West London Law Centres, who quickly recognised that her dismissal was unjust and that Sushmita had strong grounds to challenge it.

Sarah advised her to gather medical evidence and present it to her employer as part of an unfair dismissal claim. With this guidance, Sushmita pursued the case, won, was reinstated with backdated pay, and later moved on to a healthier job. Her experience highlights the importance of accessible, free employment advice for those who can't access legal aid.

"I was depressed, and I didn't know what to do. I knew I was in the right, but I didn't know what options were available for me to get my company to take my situation seriously. My manager was constantly bullying me, making me do things that I wasn't supposed to have to do. Never leaving me alone, and creating a lot of stress within myself. I was too scared to say anything."

"I am so grateful for Sarah's support. Sarah was truly the best person; she was so understanding, and was able to give me the advice I needed to take the situation to the next stage. It is wonderful that your organisation exists, so that people like me are able to get the help that they needed, without any worry about cost."

5. **Housing**

We work with people on a wide range of different housing issues covering possession, unlawful eviction, homelessness, disrepair and anti-social behaviour. They all help people keep or gain a home. We also act for the homeless by ensuring local authorities accept their statutory duties to provide housing. We worked on 278 cases, and 875 clients were assisted as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme. Our new housing advice line and outreach service assisted 264 people. Our pro bono clinics advised 259 clients on housing issues.

Darren's Story - Housing Case Study

When Darren lost his job during the pandemic, he quickly fell into debt and, not realising he could claim help with rent, his arrears grew to more than £14,000. His landlord took him to court, putting him at serious risk of eviction. There, he was relieved to receive free last-minute support from Florence and Jeinsen through the Law Centres' County Court Duty Scheme.

Darren explained he had borrowed some money and simply needed a chance to keep his home. The duty team negotiated an agreement allowing him to stay and repay the arrears in manageable instalments, without taking on further debt. The judge approved the plan, securing his housing and giving him clear steps to move forward.

"It was a daunting prospect to represent myself in court and I was grateful for the duty team. The experience and knowledge of the legal system from my solicitors helped me to be better-informed about my situation and my rights... I am over the moon my eviction has been stopped, and I have full understanding of what I need to do to keep living at my address. Once again thank you for your expertise. 10/10"

Community Engagement and Housing

Over the last year our Campaigns, Policy, and Community Manager continued talking to the community about what they want from the law centre. As a result of a community survey, we continue to develop a series of themed workshops on using the law for support. Through these we help people to recognise when they have a legal problem. These workshops evolve and have a series of case studies that are dissected as a group to find routes to remedy a situation using the same approach in each situation: Identify, Evidence, Report, Connect.

A major theme from our consultations are issues around the cost of living crisis, the lack of economic justice and access to, and the condition of, housing. This work is currently being funded through Trust for London and the National Lottery Community Fund. Our work has involved organising events and training sessions with the community. We have also been able to bring people together and engage with policy makers on both a national and local level covering council tax, fuel poverty, benefit take up, cost of living, rights to repair, facilities in temporary accommodation and allocation of housing. This has enabled us to feed in some of the conversations we've had with our clients that are impacted by the increase in cost-of-living and to be privy to in-depth conversations with policy makers pushing for changes in the law and practice. We continue to see important outcomes through teaching community members to escalate their cases themselves where there isn't the capacity or scope within the advice sector to tackle these problems.

A significant part of this work has been work with those living in temporary accommodation in Wandsworth and Croydon. Our Campaigns, Policy and Community Manager has run regular action meetings in community spaces and established quarterly forums, with many participants new to the group and needing immediate support. We have become a trusted partner to local authorities for evidence, insight and resident voice, with action meetings used to surface issues and the Wandsworth forum used to resolve them.

When Croydon's restructuring disrupted formal forums, we maintained momentum with open letters, media engagement, public events and community days. This combination secured practical improvements and rebuilt constructive relationships with housing leaders while retaining appropriate challenge.

The work is delivering concrete results: close working in Wandsworth got additional showers and laundry rooms installed; fortnightly resident engagement meetings now run in TA blocks with council officers; in Croydon, residents obtained bidding numbers and were added to the housing register, giving hundreds the ability to bid; residents moved to more suitable homes or into permanent social housing; a large group compensation claim was progressed after a fire; and residents were trained to lodge effective complaints and secured compensation for poor treatment.

6. **Migrants and Asylum Seekers**

This work is focussed on enabling clients to obtain Leave to Remain. With this 'gateway' status, they can work and earn an income legally, re-unite with family left behind and maximise their life chances. Many of the people who eventually come to us have failed to have their cases fully dealt with and were exploited by other lawyers.

Our small team specialises in dealing with unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, domestic violence and minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We worked on 315 cases. We took on 60 more cases this year through increased capacity from our GLA Immigration Homelessness and Surrey Domestic Violence projects. The team continued to be rated 'excellent' in Legal Aid Agency independent peer review.

From both a practical standpoint (file management, record keeping and funding requirements) and a legal standpoint (advice, assistance, understanding of the law and presentation of the cases), the files reviewed were of a uniformly high standard.
It is evident that the caseworkers in the team not only have a high level of expertise and experience but have a genuine commitment to their clients and to ensuring they are represented in the best way possible on each case. – Peer Review Report

Marieme's Story - Immigration Case Study

At 60, Marieme fled Mauritius after years of sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, and a conviction that led to death threats on her release. Traumatised and struggling with severe mental health difficulties, she found it extremely hard to disclose her past or engage with the asylum process.

With steady support from a South West London Law Centres solicitor, Marieme felt safe enough to share her experiences. We secured a delay to her Home Office interview and gathered strong medical and expert evidence, including assessments from the Helen Bamber Foundation. Her case was so clear and well-supported that she was granted refugee status without needing a substantive interview, giving her long-awaited safety and stability.

"I am grateful to the South West London Law Centres for providing me with such an amazing solicitor, Miss. Sabira. She has work for me with a lots of understanding, compassion and honesty. She deserves the best. I would refer anybody who are in need of professional advice and solicitor to approach the SWLLC without any doubt. Thank you very much to Miss. Sabira, and all her colleagues and supervisor, for their support.

7. **Public law**
We have the ability to litigate against public authorities, this includes dealing with Home Office delays and refusals to make decisions on immigration and asylum cases.

8. **Welfare Rights**
We assist people with cases including appeals to the second tier Tribunal. We can further litigate suitable cases beyond this. Most of this work is now undertaken by our Cost of Living team.

Activity 2: Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

Outcome - Emergency housing representation across 3 county courts: We were successful in our legal aid tenders and now provide a service at Croydon, Kingston and Wandsworth county courts covering the whole of our South West London and surrounding areas. Our duty solicitors have provided emergency legal advice/representation to clients at court and saved many from eviction often providing pro bono benefit assistance to address underlying issues relating to the benefit cap and bedroom tax. We are available to help clients to defend themselves against possession and home evictions in both rented and mortgage cases.

Impact - We continue to achieve a high success rate. In 2024/25 we represented 875 people, an additional 312 cases from the previous year.

Activity 3: Pro Bono Legal Advice

Outcome – Our Volunteering Programme Our clinic programme addresses legal problems in their early stages and covers a wide range of legal subjects: Crime, Criminal Injury, Consumer, Employment, Family, General Litigation, Housing, Inquests, Motoring Offences, Personal Injury, and Small Claims. This service empowers clients by encouraging them to take better steps to resolve problems themselves, where necessary with some follow-up by advisers (e.g. drafting documents or writing letters on clients' behalf).

Impact - The impact of timely, accurate legal advice through a personalised intervention can prevent a problem from escalating and becoming far more damaging for an individual, as well as costly to taxpayers. Our pro bono advice clinics not only provide an avenue for clients to seek legal redress. They also empower them with new knowledge of the law and their rights, thereby increasing confidence and capacity to approach legal problems. Our advice also helps improve the efficacy of other public services such as education, health or social services by helping eligible people exercise their rights to access these services in a timely fashion.
We assisted 1,526 clients this year and arranged an average of 40 consultations each week. Our pro bono programme continued to operate remotely through booked telephone and video appointments, with sessions available both during the day and in the evenings to increase flexibility for clients.

The areas of law covered were:

- Consumer, small claims and general litigation: 13%
- Employment: 38%
- Family: 25%
- Housing: 17%
- Other (crime, education, personal injury): 7%

We saw fewer clients through our pro bono clinics last year as we restructured the programme to make better use of the resources available. We shifted our focus to supporting our 11 partner firms and developing more specialist clinics, particularly in housing. A pro bono housing supervisor was appointed to work closely

with two of our largest firms, piloting new models that involved booking specific matters rather than running larger general clinics. Several firms are now offering limited housing casework services, and others are piloting full casework and representation for clients experiencing issues such as withheld deposits.

We also introduced mandatory use of the case management system and required advisers to submit written notes of their advice. While this was essential for risk management and compliance, some advisers found the additional administrative work challenging, which contributed to a reduction in individual volunteer solicitor attendance. This change has had the greatest impact on the availability of immigration advice.

The Croydon office move in early 2025 caused temporary disruption, and reduced reception capacity (due to lower numbers of office volunteers), limited the number of clients we were able to book and support through the clinics.

Although these changes led to lower overall numbers, they have laid strong foundations for a more targeted, specialist and higher-impact pro bono service going forward.

Client feedback continues to highlight the transformative effect of timely and accurate legal advice, helping people resolve problems, regain confidence and move forward with their lives. Here are just a few of the comments clients have given:

"In my case I needed a legal advice on my situation and after explaining thoroughly my case, I receive a very good advice from the solicitor which put my mind in peace."

"The service is very efficient and the information is well understood. It pointed me in the right direction to take action. Very helpful, clear and useful advice. Much appreciated."

"I was a member of a trade union when I got the advice from your advisor. I can definitely say that I would give your advisor 10 marks out of 10, for the timely and right advice he gave me due to which I could file a discrimination claim against my employer. My trade union didn't give me good advice and hence I didn't have confidence in my union. I wish that the Government could give you more funding to help people like me to take the case to a logical conclusion, that is, right from giving advice, filling the necessary forms and the representation at the Employment Tribunal / County Court. I am 100% confident that your advisors / solicitors will do a better and effective job than a paid solicitor. My earnest request to the authorities is to give more funding to SWLLC and other helpful organisations to help people in need of right, efficient and timely advice. I have only the good things to say about the services given by SWLLC. Please continue the good work."

"Warm and caring even when they don't know you, no judgement and really helpful."

"Your law advisors are extremely professional and give appropriate and right advice for the situation a person is in. I would give your advisors ten out of ten. The advice is always spot on. Thank you so much for the service you give to the society."

Other major achievements

Operational successes
Throughout this period, the Law Centre has taken various successful steps to secure its future:

Maintaining Financial Control - The Senior Management Team's work has been significant in maintaining our cashflow in a difficult operating environment, where there is restricted legal aid and competitive grant funding opportunities, resulting in a small surplus.
Maintaining Grant Funding - We are grateful to all our funders for the support that enabled us to continue operating in a challenging year. We expanded the Law Centre's reach by securing new funding streams, bringing our total number of active grants to 18, including new support from the Home Office E-Visa Fund.

These grants, together with legal aid funding, have strengthened our capacity in housing and court duty work, Economic Justice (including E-visa support), and employment and immigration casework.

We continue to grow our grant portfolio and build strong partnerships as we move into the next financial year.

Maintaining Quality - We continued to pass both our Lexcel and Legal Aid quality audits remotely with a positive audit assessment as detailed below:

"Despite the current difficulties and challenges, SWLLC should again continue to be commended for sustaining an extremely high level of compliance against the Lexcel Standard. There will still be short term challenges around continuing to sustain those high levels of compliance in the face of continuing change and development both internally and externally. It remains very clear, however, that compliance remains a deeply embedded part of the culture and, in Lexcel terms, SWLLC remains an extremely well run, and extremely well managed organisation!! The significant ongoing work, and influence, of the HOLP/Lexcel SRO, plus the ongoing positive impact of the CEO, continue to provide a very stable platform from which to address those challenges."

Given the current context, one of the key challenges for SWLLC is to continue to fully review, refine and embed, structure, process and system given ongoing change, particularly the departure of the Deputy CEO. This will enable the organisation to then continue to grow and develop. SWLLC will need to continue to proactively consider what that will mean both for culture, working methods, funding, supervision and compliance. There is also a need "to continue to protect the culture" – it is the culture that, in large part, has both enabled, and will continue to enable, the successful development of the organisation. Integral to all of this will be the need to maintain a cost effective organisation structure, and the continued refinement of the culture which will need to remain proactively focussed on client care, development/growth, funding sources, agile decision making and agile working. Other key challenges are the need to continue to proactively monitor performance, improve prompt and effective billing, and ensure that the support functions can continue to meet the challenges of increased casework volumes/complexity. In addition, SWLLC will need to continue to proactively address the critical need to secure additional funding streams and/or protect its current ones in order to further improve, its financial resilience. Critically it will need to effectively manage the office move, and it will need to begin to consider the impact of any introduction."

Lexcel Audit (April 2025)

Entering 50 years of service to our local communities

We are celebrating our 50th year from the date the first law centre opened in Balham, in a dilapidated shop, in June 1974. Shortly afterwards in the mid 1970s there were three law centres in Wandsworth. Sadly, that is not the case now. The law centre has gone through many changes but despite this has continued to thrive and survive through thick and thin. Many of the problems that were being tackled in 1974 are still being dealt with by the law centre today. We are incredibly proud of being able to help many thousands of people to improve their lives by getting them access to legal advice and support. We are proud to be part of a movement of law centres that has developed the concept and areas of social welfare law that are so important to making justice and access to rights a reality. We are thankful to the staff, volunteers, trustee board and funders who have enabled this all to happen.

In November 2024 we held an event at Clifford Chance, where we invited supporters and potential sponsors for the Law Centre. Our guest speaker, I. Stephanie Boyce, spoke about the importance of access to justice and the role of law centres.

In June 2024, we were proud to have two of our solicitors, Sabira Kashmiri and Paul Keeley, shortlisted for the 2024 Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards. Sabira, recognised in the Social Welfare category, has delivered transformative results for survivors of domestic abuse, trafficking, and human rights abuses, earning praise for her meticulous, compassionate approach. Paul, shortlisted in the Public Law category, is a highly respected advocate with over 15 years' experience, known for his strategic work on complex deportation cases and his dedication to clients often failed by previous representation.

Financial review

Financially, as for many in this sector, this year has been challenging.

Restrictions of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) continue to make it extremely difficult for the Law Centre to operate as fairly and effectively as it should. Legal Aid is now worth less than 50% in real terms than a decade ago. We continue to find ways to address the difficulties this causes to our funding, now supported currently by 18 grant funders to whom we ae extremely grateful. We are considering ways we can further harness the legal profession's support as well as increasing even further the number of grant-funded projects we can undertake.

The charity's income for the year was £1,761,577 compared to £1,774,272 in 2023/24. The total expenditure in the year was £1,759,131 compared to £1,725,837 in 2023/24. The net result produced a surplus of £2,446 (2023/24 surplus £48,435). Restricted funds decreased by £54,973 and unrestricted general funds increased by £57,419.

SWLLC held funds of £691,501 at the year-end, of which £176,678 was restricted and £514,823 was unrestricted.

In 2024/25, South West London Law Centres' main source of funding was Grant Income, due to challenges around Legal Aid income.

We received funding and grants from:
Croydon Relief in Need; Debt Free Advice; Greater London Authority (GLA) Homeless; Home Office E-visa fund; Law Centre Network Propel; Legal Education Foundation; London Legal Support Trust – Cost of Living; London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey; Lottery Awards for All; Lottery Community Fund - Crisis Project; Merton Council; Surrey County Council - Domestic Violence Project; The Access to Justice Foundation Improving Outcomes Through Legal Support (IOTLS); Trust for London Employment; London Borough of Wandsworth – Cost of Living Project; and Wimbledon Foundation; Trust for London - Temporary Accomodation

SWLLC retained a number of donors and corporate sponsors as well as raising funds through various fundraising activities.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the following factors when considering a reserves policy:

- The organisation's contractual obligations to its staff in terms of parental rights, sickness pay and redundancy provisions;
- The organisation's obligations to maintain a safe and clean working environment;
- Certain equipment is essential for our work; and
- The timing of legal aid income is uncertain.

The nature of the law centre's business means that at any one moment in time it has very considerable work in progress. This is reflected in its material reserve position. The Trustees have adopted a target for unrestricted reserves of three months expenditure which is approximately £427,507 at 31 March 2025, our unrestricted reserves stood at £514,823 (2023/24 £457,404). Because reserves are effectively held as work in progress rather than cash the Trustees continue to prioritise the effective management of work in progress: turning it into cash as quickly as possible as well as looking for other means whereby cash reserves can be built up. This will continue to be a major focus of the Law Centre's work in the coming year.

Going concern

The ongoing impact of both the freezing of legal aid and limited alternative sources of funding available for our operational activities has maintained our focus on going concern. There is considerable impact on the ability of the Law Centre to earn Legal Aid income through an effective 25 year freeze on rates of remuneration. The Law Centre has expanded its share of grant income where we can. The Trustees

continued measures to deal with this by undertaking a scenario-based budgeting exercise to quantify the potential deficit and put in place early savings measures.

This work continues by harnessing our community engagement work. By listening to what the community wants and further developing pilots we have added to our portfolio. We are optimistic that the relationships that we have developed with new and existing funders, and efforts put into diversifying our fundraising based on new areas of demand, will assist towards meeting our commitments.

The Law Centre will start the year 2025/26 with a small budgeted deficit. There are a number of grant funds that are coming up for renewal during the year. The board will carry a full mid year review to make sure that the law centre remains on track as well as close regular monitoring of the cash position. Actions being taken includes moving to cheaper premises in Croydon and freezing a number of roles when they become vacant. Early work is taking place for the budget for 2026/27 to review further remedial action that need to be taken to remain on a stable financial footing this includes some restructuring. Like many organisations we have been affected by the cyber attack on the Legal Aid Agency and the changing landscape of grant funding which is leading to a review of the size and scope of the law centre.

The Budgets are regularly reviewed by the Trustees at Board level and through a Finance Sub-Committee.

Fundraising note
We are mindful of the code issued by the Fundraising Regulator. We did not use any third parties in our fundraising activities and no complaints were received in the year.

Principal risks and uncertainties
South West London Law Centres undertook a strategic review and developed a revised three-year strategic plan. The Law Centre undertakes a formal risk management review throughout the year. This forms part of the business plan cycle. It involves identifying the types of risk the charity faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying ways of mitigating the risks. The major risks are reviewed regularly by the trustees on a quarterly basis through a risk register covering governance, regulatory and compliance, financial, operational and external factors.

Plans for the future: The Year Ahead – Our Strategic Objectives 2025-26

As South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) marks 50 years of fighting injustice, this strategic plan sets out our vision for the future, a future where everyone, regardless of income, has access to the law and the power to enforce their rights.

SWLLC is one of the UK's largest and most impactful Law Centres, supporting thousands of individuals across six London boroughs and beyond. At a time of growing poverty, rising housing need, and widespread inequality, our work has never been more critical.

With a dedicated staff team, an army of hundreds of pro bono lawyers, and a deep connection to the communities we serve, we combine specialist legal expertise with grassroots engagement. We are not just helping people solve legal problems, we are building fairer futures.

This strategy outlines our aims for 2025 - 2028: to deliver high-quality legal support, ensure long-term sustainability, engage meaningfully with our communities, champion social justice through evidence and advocacy, and to strengthen our governance. It also recognises the serious challenges we face, including stagnant legal aid, increasing demand, and pressures on recruitment and digital access.
But we are not standing still. We are investing in our people, our partnerships, our technology, and our voice. We are driven by a mission to fight injustice, inequality, and poverty, and we are ready to meet the future with determination and ambition.

1. **Our Current Challenges**
There are some major challenges ahead. The more immediate ones are:
   a. Broader demand – The community needs for specialist legal advice go far beyond our current capacity
   b. Recruitment – Our ability to attract suitably qualified staff to maintain and grow capacity within our specialist advice teams

c. Reduced funding opportunities – legal aid funding has been stagnant for more than twenty years and, although there are some fee increases on the horizon, these will take a number of years before we see their effects. Grants are less available and more unpredictable.
d. Changes in access – The service delivery model has changed significantly since covid. Online delivery is now more common and, whilst this opens up geographical reach increasing access and demand for services, coping with that demand creates significant pressures on our staff.
e. Harnessing the rapid changes in technology so that they are good for our clients and the law centre.
f. Harnessing the data within the law centre, so that along with case studies we can continue to champion and campaign for our work

Our Strategic Aims for the Next 12 Months

- Secure funding to address the budget deficit, improve pay, and support modest growth.
- Retain our current staff team while expanding capacity within the housing team.
- Make better use of our data to champion our work and strengthen our message as an anti-poverty charity.
- Develop and establish the new Croydon office site.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution and Organisational Structure

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended 15 December 2017, and was granted charitable status on 2 March 2004.

The overall responsibility of SWLLC belongs to the Trustees (board of directors) which meets bi-monthly. The Board is supported by a Finance Sub-committee. Day to day responsibility for managing the law centre is delegated to the charity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Marples and the Senior Management Team. Our Deputy CEO, Stacey Edgar, left in October 2024 to become Executive Director of Southwark Law Centre. The current senior management team comprises of the Head of Legal Service; Finance Manager; Operations Manager; Strategic Development Manager and Campaigns, Policy and Community Manager. The remuneration for key management staff is determined by following a criteria of consistency with the responsibilities assigned, and alignment and success in achieving the organisation's overall strategic aims and prevailing market trends.

Appointment of trustees

SWLLC is a charitable company managed by a board of voluntary trustees comprised of local groups and individuals. Voluntary organisations from SWLLC's catchment area, representing vulnerable individuals and groups in need of our services, are encouraged to become members of the organisation and stand for election to the board as are concerned individuals from across the six boroughs. The amended articles changed the way that trustees are appointed. The size of the board is now restricted to 12 and trustees are eligible to stand for up to 2 terms of 4 years before a break. Trustees due for re-election retire from office at the AGM and those eligible can stand for re-election.

Induction and training of new trustees

Skill gaps on the Board are regularly identified and as a result efforts are made to identify new Trustees capable of filling any gaps. Induction and training of trustees is currently carried out on an ad-hoc basis as and when the needs arise. The Trustees have developed an induction programme and are reviewing training policies as part of its current review.

Related parties

The charity received donations of £951 (2024: NIL) from it's Trustees in the year.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of South West London Law Centres for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

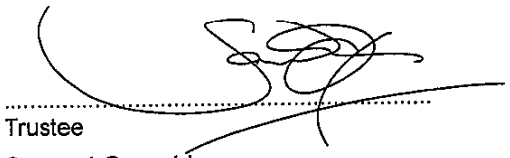
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on .....18 December 2025 and signed on the board's behalf by:



.....
Trustee
Sarmad Qureshi

Independent auditor's report to the members of South West London Law Centres

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of South West London Law Centres for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Statement of Financial activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of 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 2025 and of the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 charitable company'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:
- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and

- the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' 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 by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company 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 for the financial statements
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 2, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

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

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and Payroll and Sales Taxes.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries or the manipulation of accounting estimates, such as the recognition of work in progress. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;

- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

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

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

Use of our report

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

Ricky Hutson BSc ACA FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Berringers LLP
Lygon House
50 London Rd
Bromley
BR1 3RA

Date: 18.12.25

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
INCOME FROM					
Grants and donations	3	206,497	1,067,450	1,273,947	1,311,683
Legal and advice services	4	484,030	-	484,030	459,311
Investment income	5	3,600	-	3,600	3,278
Total		694,127	1,067,450	1,761,577	1,774,272
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	6				
Legal and advice services		636,708	1,122,423	1,759,131	1,725,837
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		57,419	(54,973)	2,446	48,435
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		457,404	231,651	689,055	640,620
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		514,823	176,678	691,501	689,055

The notes form part of these financial statements

BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	2024 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	1,279	-	1,279	3,603
CURRENT ASSETS					
Work in progress	13	321,855	-	321,855	329,556
Debtors	14	469,697	-	469,697	437,765
Cash at bank		181,800	176,678	358,478	358,697
		973,352	176,678	1,150,030	1,126,018
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	15	(459,808)	-	(459,808)	(440,566)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		513,544	176,678	690,222	685,452
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		514,823	176,678	691,501	689,055
NET ASSETS		514,823	176,678	691,501	689,055
FUNDS	16				
Unrestricted funds				514,823	457,404
Restricted funds				176,678	231,651
TOTAL FUNDS				691,501	689,055

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on ....18 December 2025... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Trustee
Sarmad Qureshi

The notes form part of these financial statements

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(383)	30,833
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		(383)	30,833
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,436)	(3,620)
Interest received		3,600	3,278
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		164	(342)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(219)	30,491
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		358,697	328,206
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		358,478	358,697

The notes form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	2,446	48,435
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	5,760	11,621
Interest received	(3,600)	(3,278)
Decrease/(increase) in work in progress	7,701	(12,755)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(31,932)	15,601
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	19,242	(28,791)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	(383)	30,833

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.24 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.25 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	358,697	(219)	358,478
	358,697	(219)	358,478
Total	358,697	(219)	358,478

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

GOING CONCERN

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The financial position, reserves levels and future plans gives the trustees confidence the Charity remains a going concern for the foreseeable future.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Legal Aid Agency income is accounted for on a receivable basis when the income is measurable and certain. In the case of Legal Aid, the Legal Aid Agency income is usually recognised once they have confirmed the payment. Legal Help income is recognised under the Unified Contract when SWLLC has closed the cases and is entitled to claim the fee.

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and covenants and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable.

Grant income is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is receivable or received whichever is the earlier.

EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Overheads have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of charitable activities.

Support costs are those incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Any irrecoverable VAT is written back to general expenditure.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with enabling the company to comply with external regulation, constitutional and statutory requirements, and in providing support to the Trustees in the discharge of their statutory duties.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised, where the benefits of capitalisation are material.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

Furniture, fittings and equipment - Over 3 years

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

WORK IN PROGRESS
Work in progress represents the value of all open legally aid funded cases. These cases had been opened but were not yet completed, as at 31 March 2025. Work in progress has been valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value taking into account payments that have already been received.

TAXATION
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

HIRE PURCHASE AND LEASING COMMITMENTS
Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Although these estimates are based on the trustees' best knowledge of the amount, events or actions actual results ultimately differ from these estimates. Estimates have been used in the calculation of the pension liability and valuation of the contribution by volunteers. The valuation of our work in progress is normally looked at on a quarterly basis, to assess the value of time earned but not billed. A provision is held against legal casework where it has been determined that the likelihood of recovery of costs is low.

continued...

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£
General donations	8,811	5,744
Solicitor and long term donations	185,000	226,909
Pro bono volunteers	-	10,916
London borough of Merton	76,241	76,241
London borough of Croydon	19,177	-
Other grants	984,718	991,873
	1,273,947	1,311,683

The charity received no donations in kind in 2025 (2024: NIL).

The charity has benefited during the year from pro bono legal volunteers, whose professional services had we paid for would have been valued at £1.4m (2024: £1.4m).

We have calculated the financial benefit provided to SWLLC, by the volunteers by estimating the cost of day time volunteers only. At a conservative estimate, daytime volunteers provide the equivalent of £62,825 in added value (£11.44ph administration/reception and £15ph casework support).

We estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers at around £1.4 million, on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £168p). We have used an estimated high street rate, which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover, and also assumed that rates have stayed fixed since last year.

4. LEGAL AND ADVICE SERVICES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Legal and advice services	484,030	459,311

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2025	2024
	£	£
Interest receivable	3,600	3,278

continued...

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs	Support costs (see note 7)	Totals
	£	£	£
Legal and advice services	1,737,505	21,626	1,759,131

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Finance	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Legal and advice services	176	21,450	21,626

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	2025 Legal and advice services	2024 Total activities
	£	£
Bank charges	176	161
Auditors' remuneration	11,275	11,000
Accountancy fees	10,175	8,675
	21,626	19,836

8. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025	2024
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	11,275	11,000
Depreciation - owned assets	5,760	11,621
Hire of plant and machinery	25,585	(1,779)

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

continued...

10. STAFF COSTS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,235,938	1,185,193
Social security costs	122,774	111,156
Other pension costs	50,583	47,316
	1,409,295	1,343,665

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
Legal service and advice	31	29
Support and fundraising	11	12
	42	41

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year. The remuneration of the Charity's key management personnel in the year was £49,000 (2024: £56,895).

Redundancy payments were £NIL (2024: £13,745) in the year.

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
INCOME FROM			
Grants and donations	185,433	1,126,250	1,311,683
Legal and advice services	459,311	-	459,311
Investment income	3,278	-	3,278
Total	648,022	1,126,250	1,774,272
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Legal and advice services	692,083	1,033,754	1,725,837
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(44,061)	92,496	48,435
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	501,465	139,155	640,620
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	457,404	231,651	689,055

continued...

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £
COST	
At 1 April 2024	142,856
Additions	3,436
At 31 March 2025	146,292
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2024	139,253
Charge for year	5,760
At 31 March 2025	145,013
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2025	1,279
At 31 March 2024	3,603

13. WORK IN PROGRESS

	2025 £	2024 £
Work-in-progress	321,855	329,556

14. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	239,375	128,193
Other debtors	211,379	252,495
Prepayments and accrued income	18,943	57,077
	469,697	437,765

continued...

15. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Clients' funds held	114,800	87,634
Trade creditors	264,399	277,548
Social security and other taxes	54,153	24,316
Other creditors	10,556	8,803
Accrued expenses	15,900	42,265
	459,808	440,566

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.24	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.25
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	453,801	59,743	513,544
Fixed asset fund	3,603	(2,324)	1,279
	457,404	57,419	514,823
Restricted funds			
General fund	231,651	(74,968)	156,683
Designated fund	-	19,995	19,995
	231,651	(54,973)	176,678
TOTAL FUNDS	689,055	2,446	691,501

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	694,127	(634,384)	59,743
Fixed asset fund	-	(2,324)	(2,324)
	694,127	(636,708)	57,419
Restricted funds			
General fund	1,035,078	(1,110,046)	(74,968)
Designated fund	32,372	(12,377)	19,995
	1,067,450	(1,122,423)	(54,973)
TOTAL FUNDS	1,761,577	(1,759,131)	2,446

continued...

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	489,861	(32,440)	457,421
Fixed asset fund	11,604	(11,621)	(17)
	501,465	(44,061)	457,404
Restricted funds			
General fund	139,155	92,496	231,651
TOTAL FUNDS	640,620	48,435	689,055

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	648,022	(680,462)	(32,440)
Fixed asset fund	-	(11,621)	(11,621)
	648,022	(692,083)	(44,061)
Restricted funds			
General fund	1,126,250	(1,033,754)	92,496
TOTAL FUNDS	1,774,272	(1,725,837)	48,435

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.25 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	489,861	30,739	520,600
Fixed asset fund	11,604	(17,381)	(5,777)
	501,465	13,358	514,823
Restricted funds			
General fund	139,155	17,528	156,683
Designated fund	-	19,995	19,995
	139,155	37,523	176,678
TOTAL FUNDS	640,620	50,881	691,501

continued...

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,342,149	(1,311,410)	30,739
Fixed asset fund	-	(17,381)	(17,381)
	1,342,149	(1,328,791)	13,358
Restricted funds			
General fund	2,161,328	(2,143,800)	17,528
Designated fund	32,372	(12,377)	19,995
	2,193,700	(2,156,177)	37,523
TOTAL FUNDS	3,535,849	(3,484,968)	50,881

Fixed Asset Fund
This represents the net book value of fixed assets held within unrestricted funds.

Designated fund
This represents the funds, held within restricted funds, allocated for the office move taking place in the year ending 31 March 2026.

continued...

17. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
The Croydon Relief in Need Fund	-	19,177	(17,579)	1,598
Office Move Designated Fund	-	32,372	(12,377)	19,995
Debt Free Advice	-	202,387	(202,387)	-
GLA - SLRA Immigration	-	52,744	(52,744)	-
Grants to clients	2,566	7,392	(9,712)	246
LCN Propel	124	25,796	(25,920)	-
Legal Education Foundation	-	46,000	(46,000)	-
LLST/GLA - Cost of Living	-	110,170	(110,170)	-
LLST - Surrey	20,962	-	-	20,962
Lottery - Crisis Project	80,316	168,854	(170,541)	78,629
Lottery - Employment	-	20,000	(5,000)	15,000
Merton Council / Merton Giving	1,547	81,241	(80,288)	2,500
Surrey CC - DV	65,999	65,000	(99,701)	31,298
The Access to Justice Foundation	2,465	113,395	(115,860)	-
Trust for London Employment	3,333	40,000	(40,000)	3,333
Trust for London Temp Accom	26,592	25,000	(49,772)	1,820
HO E visa grants	12,942		(32,976)	(20,034)
Wandsworth Council - Cost of Living	1,471	47,921	(37,227)	12,165
Wimbledon Guild - Crisis Fund	13,334	10,000	(14,167)	9,167
Total	231,651	1,067,450	(1,122,423)	176,678

Purpose of restricted funds:

Croydon Relief in Need - a grant towards the Cost of Living team to provide services in Croydon.

Debt Free Advice - a grant received from Toynbee Hall in consortium with other London advice agencies, funded by the Money and Pensions Service to provide face to face debt advice across South West London

Greater London Authority (GLA) Homeless - a grant to provide immigration advice and casework to rough sleepers as part of a pan London partnership, working alongside South London Refugee Association in the South West Region.

Grants to Clients - grants received from various sources for direct payments to clients.

Home Office E-visa fund - a new grant to help vulnerable people to access their E-visa. There was a timing difference on the grant payment from the provider, and this was funded from unrestricted funds during this interim.

Law Centre Network - Propel - a partnership grant administered by the Law Centres Network through Propel funding from London Funders, to help support legal apprenticeships as a way of qualifying as a solicitor at the law centre..

continued...

17. RESTRICTED FUNDS - continued

Legal Education Foundation - a grant to fund a trainee solicitor role with supervision costs.

London Legal Support Trust - Cost of Living - a grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service. This is part of a wider pan London partnership funded through the GLA

London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey - carried forward funds to continue to support development of work in Kingston and Surrey.

Lottery Awards for All - a new grant to support our employment and discrimination work

Lottery Community Fund - Crisis Project - a new grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service as well as management and community engagement costs

Merton Council - a grant to fund specialist advice and casework in Merton plus an additional emergency fund grant

Surrey County Council - Domestic Violence Project - a carried forward grant to provide casework and advice on immigration issues to the residents of domestic violence refuges. The grant will help support the refuges to take on people fleeing domestic violence who have outstanding immigration issues.

The Access to Justice Foundation - Improving Outcomes Through Legal Support (IOTLS) grant program. The purpose of supporting organisations working to sustain and improve access to early social welfare and family legal support and advice, to enable users to resolve these problems as early as possible and avoid the need for court or tribunal proceedings where possible.

Trust for London - Employment - a grant towards the cost of an employment caseworker.

Trust for London - Temporary Accommodation Project - a grant to develop coordination and campaigning for better conditions of those in temporary accommodation through community engagement work.

London Borough of Wandsworth - Cost of Living Project - a grant to provide housing and immigration advice to the residents of Wandsworth.

Wimbledon Foundation - a grant towards work within our Cost of Living team.

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The charity received donations of £951 (2024: NIL) from it's Trustees in the year.
There were no other related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025 (2024: NIL).

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales - Charity number 1102433

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1102433

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

FOR

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Berringers LLP
Lygon House
50 London Rd
Bromley
BR1 3RA

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

TRUSTEES	Allan Blake Sarmad Qureshi Simon Tinkler Nimmisha Aslam Sarah Bergstrom Susan Field Bernd Halschka (resigned 19.2.24) Melanie Felten (appointed 19.3.24) Theodore Watkins (appointed 19.3.24) James Waugh (appointed 19.3.24) David Jackson (appointed 19.3.24)
COMPANY SECRETARY	Stacey Edgar
REGISTERED OFFICE	5th Floor Davis House Robert Street Croydon CR0 1QQ
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1102433
AUDITORS	Berringers LLP Lygon House 50 London Rd Bromley BR1 3RA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Patrick Marples
BANKERS	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Purposes and aims
The objects of the Charity are: the relief of poverty, suffering and distress by the provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and the advancement of education for those resident, working or in full time education in South West London, including the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth and, in exceptional circumstances, residents from other areas; and the promotion of other such purposes which are exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

The main activities undertaken in relation to those purposes are:

- Activity 1 - Delivery of professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law
- Activity 2 - Delivery of the housing court duty solicitor scheme in housing cases in Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston County Courts.
- Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service.

Public benefit
The Trustees referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the law centre's aims and objectives and in planning and reviewing all our activities. South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a community based, legal practice working to relieve poverty, suffering and distress for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our communities, in need of help at difficult times in their lives to resolve legal problems. We broadly help those who cannot afford a lawyer to access social welfare law. Public benefit is delivered by the provision of free legal advice or affordable charges for services and representation at court in social welfare law. The professional services and the housing court duty scheme are funded by legal aid, grants, and donors, and operates from three branches in, Battersea, Croydon and Merton. We continue to charge for some services in employment and immigration where funding through legal aid is no longer available. Our Pro Bono legal advice clinics are free and staffed by volunteer advisors.

By these means, the Charity aims to improve access to justice to vulnerable members of the community in South West London.

The 'Cost of Living Crisis'
There were many highlights to 2023/24 framed by the continuing impact of increase in the cost-of-living, the chronic restriction in our resources and therefore our ability to deliver our services. The majority of our clients have always been in a cost of living 'crisis' situation: this is nothing new. The prolonged wider national impact is affecting greater numbers and highlighting the situation on a national basis that our clients have consistently lived in. There has been no significant policy change to use social welfare law services to relieve the effects of this 'crisis'. We can see through the long history of our work since 1974, 50 years ago, that we do have an impact on those in urgent need. Our project work that runs alongside our legal aid work has always been focused on this. We were able to assist 5,868 clients in 2023/24. This was 910 less than the previous year (2022/23 to 6,778) due to a number of factors including the loss of some of our court duty schemes and a funder wanting more in depth work.

All Case Studies use fictitious names to protect the identity clients.

Volunteers

The use of hundreds of volunteers alongside our 39 employed staff (36.8 FTE) has been at the heart of our law centre operations for a long time. SWLLC runs one of the largest Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic services in the UK delivered through a team of around 400 volunteer lawyers. This service empowers clients by encouraging them to take better steps to resolve problems themselves, where necessary with some follow-up by advisers (e.g. drafting documents or writing letters on clients' behalf). We are providing 60 appointments a week through our clinic programme.

We continued to operate our pro bono programme remotely through booked appointments held over the telephone or through video conferencing. In a survey of our service users and volunteers we received positive feedback on the way the service operates. We have introduced some flexibility into our remote appointments having some held during the day as well as in the evenings. We continue to see if we can adapt the pro bono offering so we can develop specialisms to carry out some casework. At the end of the year we started working closer with some partners to deliver more in depth housing casework through targeted training and supervision of a number of clinics. We recruited a part time Housing Pro Bono Supervisor.

Volunteers also help us in every aspect of our work: supporting reception during the daytime and in the evening with administrative tasks, to working as casework assistants to support our casework teams. The work includes undertaking legal research, assisting with creating bundles of documents, note taking and drafting letters. We recruited nearly 50 new volunteers during the year.

We continue to use internships in our immigration and employment teams. Through these placements some interns have gone on to successfully gain paid employment. We want to expand this programme. Typically, our volunteers have been those seeking new skills/experience to get back into the job market or students wishing to further legal careers. On average daytime volunteers stay with the law centre between 3 - 6 months; 54% of those that left went onto gain paid employment furthering their careers. Some took up paid roles at the law centre when these became available. There was much positive feed back from our volunteers

"I think the law centre has helped shape my opinions on what fields of law to enter into and has developed my customer service skills significantly which helped me get my new job."
"I was able to bolster my CV and in the interview for my job I referenced the work I had done in the law centre and this was very useful. Having obtained real experience in legal practice has been crucial to me finding a job."
We estimate the annual value of daytime volunteering to be £72,929. An estimate of the value of annual pro bono work provided by evening volunteers is in excess of £1.4 million. This is calculated on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time) takes an average total of 3 hours of volunteer time at £164 per hour. This is a high street rate, higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover for professional services in casework and representation.

"Pro bono work is invaluable; it forms the backbone of our justice system by ensuring that everyone, regardless of financial means, has access to legal support and representation. It is a vital commitment that I have made and will continue to make to uphold the integrity of our legal system. I believe pro bono work also strengthens the communities we serve, providing hope and a fair chance for those who might otherwise be left without a voice!" (Pro bono lawyer)

Achievements and performance

The Table below summarises our principal Activities in three main areas. Overall, in 2023/24, we assisted 5,868 clients (6,778 in 2022/23) with direct services.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Housing Team: Six solicitors, including one who undertakes community care and welfare rights cases, plus four paralegals attached to the team. **Debt Team:** Five caseworkers. **Immigration Team:** Four solicitors and one OISC registered caseworkers, including one undertaking public law. **Employment Team:** one caseworker. **Cost of Living** Two crisis navigators and two welfare rights caseworkers and a team leader supporting the work of the housing and debt teams. A Community Engagement Manager promoting the law centre work.	**Activity I - Provision of representation in social welfare law** covering community care, debt, discrimination employment, housing, immigration, asylum, public law and welfare rights	2,505cases (2,925 in 2022/23) We carried forward 572 cases at the start of the year.
Housing Team (as above)	**Activity 2 – Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme**	563 cases (899 in 2022/23)
Pro Bono Team Client Services Manager, daytime and evening reception staff, and pro bono lawyers	**Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic** delivered remotely since March 2020	2,800 clients seen (2,954 in 2022/23).

Activity 1: Provision of representation in social welfare law

Outcomes - full specialist casework service in a broad range of social welfare law in the areas of community care, debt, discrimination, employment, housing, immigration and asylum, public law and welfare rights, collectively referred to as 'social welfare law'. Our legal work has a broad range of outcomes

Impact Report

There are a range of impacts from our casework as illustrated in the examples below.

1. **Community Care**

We help people obtain the appropriate community care assessment and services that they are entitled to. Casework enables people with mental illness, learning disabilities or other care needs to get the support they are entitled to. This also helps to reduce isolation for these often very lonely individuals struggling to cope alone in the community.

2. **Debt**

We help people with a strategy for dealing with debts as early as possible in the process as well as challenging unenforceable debts. Work is focussed on reducing debt and finding affordable and manageable debt solutions. We work with individuals and families to calculate an affordable budget, so that they can get back on track. We also help people to apply for grants from a variety of sources to support their everyday needs.

Our debt team, funded through Debt Free London, supported 989 people last year. We continue to see high demand and saw 790 clients through our Cost of Living/ Welfare Rights team.

Our funder Debt Free Advice has awarded the team a Trustpilot score of 4.8 out of 5 based on feedback from our clients.

"My advisor Lana, is amazing she listened and helped me in every way possible and was very patient which helped as I was suicidal prior to speaking with Lana at SWLLC. I wasn't eating and very mentally unwell, Lana explained my options every step of the way making sure I fully understood my options and have given me the advice tailored to my needs to help me go forward and try to resolve my debts with the help and support I needed to deal with this and without them I would not be here today!!! I am so grateful for there service they literally saved my life without the service I would not be writing this review today so THANKYOU LANA and SWLLC you do amazing hard work." 5 Stars

Fara's Story – A Debt Case Study

Fara, a 51-year-old stroke survivor, lost her social care from Wandsworth Council due to an alleged £21,000 debt, leaving her without essential support. Isolated and fearful of bailiffs, she reached out to our Money Advice Team, where adviser Andrew Boba discovered that the council's actions were unlawful, as they could not withhold care due to debt. With Andrew's guidance, Fara successfully applied for a debt relief order, which cleared her debt and restored her access to necessary care. Today, Fara feels more secure but remains impacted by the trauma of her experience.

"What the council did was illegal, they took my care away and left me to suffer on my own. I asked myself: How is this my life? How are the people that are supposed to be helping me, causing panic attacks and seizures that make my health conditions worse."

"I felt so much better. I felt relieved. I felt calm. I felt good that someone finally helped remove this burden from me. Andrew's kind support has helped ease my mind. I finally feel like I am safe enough to leave the house and get the medical help I need."

3. **Cost of Living**

We support people to maximise their income, claim the right benefits, and get further assistance such as claim grants for individuals in need. We continued to develop our service based on external evaluation and through grants from the Lottery Community Fund, London Legal Support Trust/Greater London Authority and London Borough of Merton. We now have team of five - two Crisis Navigators and two welfare rights caseworkers together with a team leader. We have added some one-off short term funding from Wimbledon Guild. Our Crisis Navigators support the work of the whole organisation by:

a. Being the consistent point of contact for those accessing multiple services;
b. Securing additional funds for the client to enable them to stabilise their short term crisis;
c. Channelling clients through to our specialist caseworkers/ legal staff so that their time is prioritised on providing necessary expert advice and representation; and
d. Acting as case manager to ensure all internal and relevant external services are working together and the client understands how they all fit together to resolve their issues.

Robert's story - Cost of Living – Debt case study

At 67, Robert faced escalating financial hardship as the cost of living rose, complicating his life with disabilities. When an unfair parking fine and conflicting advice from other organizations left him feeling hopeless, he turned to our Law Centre. Robert connected with Ash, a Money Advice caseworker, who crafted a tailored plan to address his needs and helped him access benefits that increased his income by £16,000 annually. With Ash ' s guidance, Robert now feels empowered and more secure, with renewed hope for his future.

"I had seriously started panicking. Even thinking about how I felt back then makes my heart race. I kept thinking, what if the bailiffs came to take my wheelchair? I was stressed... and felt like I had no options. "

"My first conversation with Ash significantly eased my anxiety. He was incredibly knowledgeable, and it was obvious that he knew what he was doing. Each question I asked had a clear, immediate answer. "

4. Employment

We help people on a wide range of issues including: dismissal, suspension, discrimination, unpaid wages and failure to pay the minimum wage, notice or redundancy pay, holiday pay, breach of contract, grievances, appeals and settlement agreements. We also specialise in discrimination cases funded through our legal aid contract. Through this work we help people to remain in their jobs and where appropriate obtain redress for bad employment practice.

This work is funded through grant funding, legal aid and various methods of affordable charging. We now have two caseworkers. This year we worked on 26 cases and increased our reach through volunteers to support weekly employment advice clinics along together with our general pro bono clinics where we advised 655 people. Our pro bono work has been boosted through Employment Law for London partnership with BPP Law School offering a 30-minute telephone advice appointment for all London residents needing legal advice about a workplace issue.

Employment Case study – Tammy's Story

Tammy, a mother of three, was offered a senior fundraising role with a salary of £70,000, only to have the offer rescinded after being inappropriately questioned about her children's ages by the company's Vice President. Following this, the company claimed a hiring freeze, but Tammy suspected gender discrimination based on assumptions about her childcare responsibilities. Devastated, she sought support from our Law Centre, where employment caseworker Sarah Forsyth guided her through a successful gender discrimination claim. The tribunal ruled in Tammy's favour, awarding her £90,000 in compensation, restoring her confidence, and setting a precedent for others facing similar challenges.

"I was in a state of financial and emotional crisis as I was the main breadwinner for the family... I felt less competitive. I was in a tough situation. "

"After the verdict, the result was incredible. My original pursuit wasn ' t just for myself, but to seek justice for other women in similar situations... The burden was lifted. "

5. Housing

We work with people on a wide range of different housing issues covering possession, unlawful eviction, homelessness, disrepair and anti-social behaviour. They all help people keep or gain a home. We also act for the homeless by ensuring local authorities accept their statutory duties to provide housing. We worked on 267 cases and 563 clients were assisted as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme. Our pro bono clinics advised 724 clients on housing issues.

Kiera's Story - Housing Case Study

At 19, Kiera became homeless after her family rejected her upon learning she was pregnant and bisexual. Faced with threats to her safety and inadequate support from the council, she was left to sleep in unsafe places and experienced severe anxiety. Desperate, she reached out to our Law Centre, where housing solicitors Jeinsen and Florence intervened. They pressed the council to fulfil its legal obligation, securing safe accommodation for Kiera. Today, Kiera lives in secure housing with her newborn, feeling hopeful and safe, thanks to the Law Centre' s unwavering support.

"I had no idea where I was going to go... The fear of not knowing was absolutely crushing."
"The Law Centre was more than helpful. I wouldn' t be where I am today without the law centre, you' ve been absolutely fantastic."

Community Engagement and Housing

Over the last year our Community Engagement Manager has continued talking to the community about what they want from the law centre. As a result of a community survey, we continue to develop a series of themed workshops on using the law for support. Through these we help people to recognise when they have a legal problem. These workshops evolve and have a series of case studies that are dissected as a group to find routes to remedy a situation using the same approach in each situation: Identify, Evidence, Report, Connect.

A major theme from our consultations are issues around the cost of living crisis and access to, and the condition of, housing. This work is currently being funded through Trust for London and the National Lottery Community Fund. Our work has involved organising events and training sessions with the community. We have also been able to bring people together and engage with policy makers on both a national and local level covering council tax, fuel poverty, benefit take up, cost of living, rights to repair, facilities in temporary accommodation and allocation of housing. This has enabled us to feed in some of the conversations we've had with our clients that are impacted by the increase in cost-of-living and to be privy to in-depth conversations with policy makers pushing for changes in the law and practice. We continue to see important outcomes through teaching community members to escalate their cases themselves where there isn't the capacity or scope within the advice sector to tackle these problems. This has included work around the allocation of permanent housing. We are continuing to work with the community to pilot a citizens inventory, so that people can check that temporary accommodation is safe and they understand their rights to challenge this effectively.

6. Migrants and Asylum Seekers

This work is focussed on enabling clients to obtain Leave to Remain. With this 'gateway' status, they can work and earn an income legally, re-unite with family left behind and maximise their life chances. Many of the people who eventually come to us have failed to have their cases fully dealt with and were exploited by other lawyers.

Our small team specialises in dealing with unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, domestic violence and minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We worked on 351 cases. Our pro bono clinics advised 460 people on immigration issues. Through new funding from Surrey County Council we are working with those fleeing domestic violence to resolve their immigration issues. We continued our project to improve the immigration status of those who are street homeless as a way of helping them to move from being homeless.

Harold's Story - Immigration Case Study

Harrold, facing deportation after a 39-month prison sentence, sought help from our Law Centre and discovered life-changing support. Our immigration solicitor recognized that Harrold was a victim of child trafficking, forced into domestic servitude and denied an education by his family. With careful legal representation, Harrold's appeal was upheld under Articles 3, 4, and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, recognizing the severe risks he faced if deported and the trauma he endured. Today, Harrold is safe, stable, and optimistic about his future, thanks to the compassionate, dedicated advocacy he received.

"I was in a state of··· I had just given up. I had no one to turn to. Before I met Paul, I was really struggling. My personal life was a mess, I was out of money, and on top of that, I was facing deportation. I felt like I had hit rock bottom."

"The challenges I faced were not just legal; they were deeply personal··· Today, I am not only in a stable situation but also optimistic about my future–something I couldn't have imagined before SWLLC took on my case."

7. **Public law**
We have the ability to litigate against public authorities, this includes dealing with Home Office delays and refusals to make decisions on immigration and asylum cases.

8. **Welfare Rights**
We assist people with cases including appeals to the second tier Tribunal. We can further litigate suitable cases beyond this. Most of this work is now undertaken by our Cost of Living team.

Activity 2: Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

Outcome - Emergency housing representation across 2 county courts: We currently provide this service at Kingston and work as agent for Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre in Wandsworth. Our duty solicitors have provided emergency legal advice/representation to clients at court and saved many from eviction often providing pro bono benefit assistance to address underlying issues relating to the benefit cap and bedroom tax. We are available to help clients to defend themselves against possession and home evictions in both rented and mortgage cases.

Unfortunately, during 2023/24we lost part of the court duty scheme in Croydon in a Legal Aid Agency tender round meaning that we were able to help fewer people this year. Court duty has been an important entry point into the law centre into the housing and other law centre teams. However, we reapplied in the new tender round from the Legal Aid Agency to cover Croydon, Kingston and Wandsworth County Courts, and were successful and provide services at all these courts from September 2024..

Impact - We continue to achieve a high success rate. In 2023/24 we represented 563 people.

Activity 3: Pro Bono Legal Advice

Outcome – Our Volunteering Programme Our clinic programme addresses legal problems in their early stages and covers a wide range of legal subjects: Crime, Criminal Injury, Consumer, Employment, Family, General Litigation, Housing, Immigration, Inquests, Motoring Offences, Personal Injury, Small Claims and Wills and Probate.
Impact - The impact of timely, accurate legal advice through a personalised intervention can prevent a problem from escalating and becoming far more damaging for an individual, as well as costly to taxpayers.

Our pro bono advice clinics not only provide an avenue for clients to seek legal redress. They also empower them with new knowledge of the law and their rights, thereby increasing confidence and capacity to approach legal problems. Our advice also helps improve the efficacy of other public services such as education, health or social services by helping eligible people exercise their rights to access these services in a timely fashion.

From the feedback we receive, we know that this advice unlocks problems, helps people move on with their lives and builds confidence. Here are just a few of the comments clients have given:

"The questions I was asked were extremely detailed and thorough, I have been really impressed with the details of the advice received"

"I just needed some advice regarding a small claim I have submitted. The response helped me have some confidence that I was doing the right thing"

"The adviser has been very helpful and understanding, he pointed me in the right direction and allowed me to strengthen my legal case. I am still waiting for some time to pass and after that I will raise the matter to Court, I am sure the chances of a positive outcome have increased since I have spoken with the adviser"

Other major achievements

Operational successes

Throughout this period, the Law Centre has taken various successful steps to secure its future:

Maintaining Financial Control – The Senior Management Team's work has been significant in maintaining our cashflow in a difficult operating environment where there is restricted legal aid and competitive grant funding opportunities.
Maintaining grant funding - We are grateful for the support provided by our funders that allowed us to continue to operate in these difficult times. Through the year we have been able to extend the reach of the law centre through new funding streams which now total 23. These have included:
London Borough of Wandsworth – Crisis Project to provide support with housing and immigration casework
Surrey County Council – funded immigration advice to those staying in refuges fleeing domestic violence
Legal Education Foundation - funding for a trainee solicitor
Propel (Law Centres Network) – This funding has enable us to recruit an apprentice solicitor to join our housing team.
We continue to apply and develop our grant portfolio with continuing success into the next financial year, developing partnerships
Maintaining quality – We continued to pass both our Lexcel and Legal Aid quality audits remotely with a positive audit assessment as detailed below:

Despite the current difficulties and challenges, SWLLC should again continue to be highly commended for sustaining an extremely high level of compliance against the Lexcel Standard. There will still be short term challenges around continuing to sustain those high levels of compliance in the face of continuing change and development both internally and externally. It remains very clear, however, that compliance remains a deeply embedded part of the culture and, in Lexcel terms, SWLLC remains an extremely well run, and extremely well managed organisation!! The significant ongoing work, and influence, of the HOLP/Lexcel SRO, plus the ongoing positive impact of the CEO and Deputy CEO, continue to provide a very stable platform from which to address those challenges.

Given the current context, one of the key challenges for SWLLC is to continue to build upon the "new normal" in terms of the "post pandemic" context. This will enable SWLLC to then continue to grow and develop. SWLLC will need to continue to proactively consider what that "new normal" will mean both for

culture, working methods, funding, supervision and compliance. There is also a need "to continue to protect the culture" – it is the culture that, in large part, has both enabled, and will continue to enable, the successful development of SWLLC. Integral to all of this will be the need to maintain a cost effective organisation structure, and the continued refinement of the culture which will need to remain proactively focussed on client care, development/growth, funding sources, agile decision making and agile working. Other key challenges are the need to develop a Premises Strategy in the event that the Croydon office is closed by the Local Authority. There is a need to continue to proactively monitor performance, continue to ensure prompt and effective billing, and ensure that the support functions can continue to meet the challenges of increased casework volumes/complexity. In addition, SWLLC will need to continue to proactively address the critical need to secure additional funding streams and/or protect its current ones in order to both sustain, and further improve, its financial resilience. Some significant progress has been made on these issues, but more can, should, and is, being done!!

Lexcel Audit (April 2024)

Entering 50 years of service to our local communities

We are coming to the end of our 49th year and will start celebrating our 50th year from the date the first law centre opened in Balham in a dilapidated shop in June 1974. Shortly afterwards in the mid 1970s there were three law centres in Wandsworth. Sadly, that is not the case now. The law centre has gone through many changes but despite this has continued to thrive and survive through thick and thin. Many of the problems that were being tackled in 1974 are still being dealt with by the law centre today. We are incredible proud of being able to help many thousands of people to improve their lives by getting them access to legal advice and support. We are proud to be part of a movement of law centres that has developed the concept and areas of social welfare law that are so important to making justice and access to rights a reality. We are thankful to the staff, volunteers, trustee board and funders who have enabled this all to happen.

Financial review

Financially, as for many in this sector, this year has been challenging.

Restrictions of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) continue to make it extremely difficult for the Law Centre to operate as fairly and effectively as it should. Legal Aid is now worth less than 50% in real terms than a decade ago. We continue to find ways to address the difficulties this causes to our funding, now supported currently by 23 grant funders to whom we are extremely grateful. We are considering ways we can further harness the legal profession's support as well as increasing even further the number of grant-funded projects we can undertake.

The charity's income for the year was £1,774,272 compared to £1,569,154 in 2022/23. The total expenditure in the year was £1,725,837 compared to £1,544,089 in 2022/23. The net result produced a surplus of £48,435 (2022/23 surplus 25,065). Restricted funds increased by £92,496 and unrestricted general funds decreased by £44,061.

SWLLC held funds of £689,055 at the year-end, of which £231,651 was restricted and £457,404 was unrestricted.

In 2023/24, South West London Law Centres' main source of funding was Grant Income, due to challenges around Legal Aid income.

We received funding and grants from:
AB Charitable Trust, Debt Free Advice, Greater London Authority Homeless Immigration Project, Law Centres Network – Propel' Legal Education Foundation, Locality, London Legal Support Trust (Cost of Living and Surrey), Lottery Community Fund -Crisis Project, London Borough Of Merton, London Borough of Wandsworth (Crisis, EUSS, Rent Subsidy and Cost of Living projects), Merton Giving, Merton Social Prescribers, Surrey County Council, The Access to Justice Foundation, Trust for London (employment and temporary accommodation projects) and Wimbledon Guild.

SWLLC retained a number of donors and corporate sponsors as well as raising funds through various fundraising activities.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the following factors when considering a reserves policy:

- The organisation's contractual obligations to its staff in terms of parental rights, sickness pay and redundancy provisions;
- The organisation's obligations to maintain a safe and clean working environment and to meet its obligations to suppliers and statutory parties on a timely basis; and
- The timing of legal aid income is uncertain.

The nature of the law centre's business means that at any one moment in time it has very considerable work in progress. This is reflected in its material reserve position. The Trustees have adopted a target for unrestricted reserves of three months expenditure which is approximately £431,459. At March 2024, our unrestricted reserves stood at £457,404 (2022/23 £501,465). Because reserves are effectively held as work in progress rather than cash the Trustees continue to prioritise the effective management of work in progress: turning it into cash as quickly as possible as well as looking for other means whereby cash reserves can be built up. This will continue to be a major focus of the Law Centre's work in the coming year

Going concern

The ongoing impact of both the freezing of legal aid and limited alternative sources of funding available for our operational activities has maintained our focus as a going concern. There is considerable impact on the ability of the Law Centre to earn Legal Aid income through an effective 25 year freeze on rates of remuneration. The Law Centre has expanded its share of grant income where we can. The Trustees continued measures to deal with this by undertaking a scenario-based budgeting exercise to quantify the potential deficit and put in place early savings measures.

This work continues by harnessing our community engagement work. By listening to what the community wants and further developing pilots we have added to our portfolio winning new funding from the London Borough of Wandsworth, expanding our reach through funding by Surrey County Council and seeking funds to help train new solicitors from The Legal Education Foundation and Propel. We are optimistic that the relationships that we have developed with new and existing funders, and efforts put into diversifying our fundraising based on new areas of demand, will assist towards meeting our commitments as well as seeing our legal income grow.

The Law Centre will start the year 2024/25 with a small budgeted deficit. The board will carry a full mid year review to make sure that the law centre remains on track as well as close regular monitoring of the cash position. Actions being taken includes moving to cheaper premises in Croydon and freezing a number of roles when they become vacant. Early work is taking place for the budget for 2025/26 to review further remedial action that need to be taken to remain on a stable financial footing where we continue face the strictures of legal aid together with an over subscribed and competitive competition for grants.

The Budgets are regularly reviewed by the Trustees at Board level and through a Finance Sub- Committee.

Fundraising note
We are mindful of the code issued by the Fundraising Regulator. We did not use any third parties in our fundraising activities and no complaints were received in the year.

Principal risks and uncertainties
South West London Law Centres undertook a strategic review in 2023/24 and developed a revised three-year strategic plan. The Law Centre undertakes a formal risk management review throughout the year. This forms part of the business plan cycle. It involves identifying the types of risk the charity faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying ways of mitigating the risks. The major risks are reviewed regularly by the trustees on a quarterly basis through a risk register covering governance, regulatory and compliance, financial, operational and external factors

Plans for the future: The Year Ahead – Our Strategic Objectives 2024-25

Update – Current situation and update on the last strategic plan
In 2024 we are celebrating our 50th anniversary. We want to take this milestone anniversary to celebrate, reflect and adapt so that we can put ourselves in a strong position for the future for the benefit of our clients and staff.

Our last three-year plan was written before the pandemic. It was an ambitious attempt to modernise and drive our growth to meet the ever increasing demand for our services. Covid-19 was so disruptive that we had to set aside plans for strategic growth and focus on survival. The impact of the pandemic will be felt for some considerable time and has been closely followed by a wide reaching cost of living 'crisis' impacting both our clients and our ability to deliver services. The reality is that our clients have always been in 'crisis' mode: it is the extension of that distressed state to far more families and individuals and its public recognition that has heralded the term 'crisis'. Through concerned and generous funders we have been able to increase significantly the levels of our grant funding. However, our legal income has remained depressed, poorly remunerated and slow to recover from the pandemic. Recruitment at all levels has become substantially more difficult, but particularly for qualified legal staff in social welfare areas of law.

The overall direction of the plan and goals for the next three years has not changed significantly. We have set out the actions for next year only as the environment continues to change rapidly.

Our Current Challenges

There are some major challenges ahead. The more immediate ones are:
a. Broader demand – The community needs for specialist legal advice go far beyond our current capacity
b. Recruitment – Our ability to attract suitably qualified staff to maintain and grow capacity within our specialist advice teams
c. Reduced funding opportunities – Legal aid funding has been stagnant for more than twenty years; grants are less available and unpredictable.
d. Changes in access – The service delivery model has changed significantly since covid. Online delivery is now more common. This opens up geographical reach, increasing access and demand for services. However, coping with that demand creates significant pressures on staff.

Summary of the past three years
How we measure success and the vision we set ourselves in the previous version of this strategic plan are set out below.
Success is Unlocking Justice through...
- Growth with enhanced funding to match our clients' needs, both geographically and in areas of legal need
- A good employer developing staff and recruiting and growing our own
- Working smarter with technology in a smarter working environment

- Convincing more funders and sponsors that funding SWLLC is the right thing to do in order to meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable in our society: we have to succeed in this.

Where do we see the Law Centre in 3 years' time? - in 2027 SWLLC is...
- An established voice in London and nationally; a cutting-edge legal advocate for those in most need with professional external communications developing and promoting policy and campaigns developed from casework and strategic cases
- Financially stable, attractive to more and varied funders
- A One Stop Shop for our clients delivering holistic and integrated advice and casework: we deal with the whole of the problem, not just the symptoms
- Hosting Pro Bono clinics that generate some discrete casework
- Attracting and retaining staff including 'home grown' qualified staff through innovation in our staff offer and development opportunities
- Lived experience is incorporated into our work and influencing our future development
- A better working environment is established

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, we believe we have made considerable progress towards these objectives. We now need to consolidate what has been achieved and re-focus on our strategic growth in order to maintain the current trajectory.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our many sponsors and funders. They have stuck with us and increased in number during a very difficult period for the sector.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution and Organisational Structure

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended 15 December 2017, and SWLLC was granted charitable status on 2 March 2004.

The overall responsibility of SWLLC belongs to the Trustees (board of directors) which meets bi-monthly. The Board is supported by a Finance Sub-committee, HR Sub-committee and Fund Raising Sub-committee. Day to day responsibility for managing the law centre is delegated to the charity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Marples and the Senior Management Team, comprised of the Deputy CEO, Stacey Edgar, Head of Legal Service and Housing Solicitor, Katy Forkah. The remuneration for key management staff is determined by following a criteria of consistency with the responsibilities assigned, and alignment and success in achieving the organisation's overall strategic aims and prevailing market trends.

Appointment of trustees

SWLLC is a charitable company managed by a board of voluntary trustees comprised of local groups and individuals. Voluntary organisations from SWLLC's catchment area, representing vulnerable individuals and groups in need of our services, are encouraged to become members of the organisation and stand for election to the board as are concerned individuals from across the six boroughs. The amended articles changed the way that trustees are appointed. The size of the board is now restricted to 12 and trustees are eligible to stand for up to 2 terms of 4 years before a break. Trustees due for re-election retire from office at the AGM and those eligible can stand for re-election.

Induction and training of new trustees

Skill gaps on the Board are regularly identified and as a result efforts are made to identify new Trustees capable of filling any gaps. Induction and training of trustees is currently carried out on an ad-hoc basis as and when the needs arise. The Trustees have developed an induction programme and are reviewing training policies as part of its current review.

Related parties

There are no related parties' transactions.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of South West London Law Centres for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2024 was 91 (2023: 89). The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on .....21 December 2024..... and signed on the board's behalf by:

.....
Trustee - Sarmad Qureshi

Independent auditor's report to the members of South West London Law Centres

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of South West London Law Centres for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Statement of Financial activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of 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 the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 charitable company'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:
- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' 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 by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company 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

Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 14, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

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

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and Payroll and Sales Taxes.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries or the manipulation of accounting estimates, such as the recognition of work in progress. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

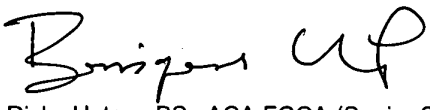
- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

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

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

Use of our report

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



Ricky Hutson BSc ACA FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
Berringers LLP
Lygon House
50 London Rd
Bromley
BR1 3RA

Date: 21/12/2024

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
INCOME FROM					
Grants and donations	3	185,433	1,126,250	1,311,683	1,158,419
Legal and advice services	4	459,311	-	459,311	409,863
Investment income	5	3,278	-	3,278	872
Total		648,022	1,126,250	1,774,272	1,569,154
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	6				
Legal and advice services		692,083	1,033,754	1,725,837	1,544,089
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(44,061)	92,496	48,435	25,065
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		501,465	139,155	640,620	615,555
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		457,404	231,651	689,055	640,620

These notes form part of these financial statements

BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	12	3,603	-	3,603	11,604
CURRENT ASSETS					
Work in progress	13	329,556	-	329,556	316,801
Debtors	14	437,765	-	437,765	453,366
Cash at bank		127,046	231,651	358,697	328,206
		894,367	231,651	1,126,018	1,098,373
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	15	(440,566)	-	(440,566)	(469,357)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		453,801	231,651	685,452	629,016
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		457,404	231,651	689,055	640,620
NET ASSETS		457,404	231,651	689,055	640,620
FUNDS	16				
Unrestricted funds				457,404	501,465
Restricted funds	17			231,651	139,155
TOTAL FUNDS				689,055	640,620

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on ....21.December.2024..... and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Trustee - Sarmad Qureshi.

These notes form part of these financial statements

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	30,833	103,863
Net cash provided by operating activities		30,833	103,863
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,620)	(10,369)
Interest received		3,278	872
Net cash used in investing activities		(342)	(9,497)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		30,491	94,366
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		328,206	233,840
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		358,697	328,206

These notes form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	48,435	25,065
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	11,621	10,716
Interest received	(3,278)	(872)
(Increase)/decrease in work in progress	(12,755)	105,448
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	15,601	(59,767)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(28,791)	23,273
Net cash provided by operations	30,833	103,863

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.24 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	328,206	30,491	358,697
	328,206	30,491	358,697
Total	328,206	30,491	358,697

These notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

GOING CONCERN

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The financial position, reserves levels and future plans gives the trustees confidence the Charity remains a going concern for the foreseeable future.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Legal Aid Agency income is accounted for on a receivable basis when the income is measurable and certain. In the case of Legal Aid, the Legal Aid Agency income is usually recognised once they have confirmed the payment. Legal Help income is recognised under the Unified Contract when SWLLC has closed the cases and is entitled to claim the fee.

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and covenants and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable.

Grant income is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is receivable or received whichever is the earlier.

EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Overheads have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of charitable activities.

Support costs are those incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Any irrecoverable VAT is written back to general expenditure.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with enabling the company to comply with external regulation, constitutional and statutory requirements, and in providing support to the Trustees in the discharge of their statutory duties.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised, where the benefits of capitalisation are material.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

Furniture, fittings and equipment - Over 3 years

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

WORK IN PROGRESS
Work in progress represents the value of all open legally aid funded cases. These cases had been opened but were not yet completed, as at 31 March 2024. Work in progress has been valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value taking into account payments that have already been received.

TAXATION
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

HIRE PURCHASE AND LEASING COMMITMENTS
Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Although these estimates are based on the trustees' best knowledge of the amount, events or actions actual results ultimately differ from these estimates. Estimates have been used in the calculation of the pension liability and valuation of the contribution by volunteers. The valuation of our work in progress is normally looked at on a quarterly basis, to assess the value of time earned but not billed. A provision is held against legal casework where it has been determined that the likelihood of recovery of costs is low.

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	£	£
General donations	5,744	12,658
Solicitor and long term donations	226,909	178,025
London legal support trust (Surrey)	10,916	14,686
London borough of Merton	76,241	56,000
London borough of Croydon	-	57,342
Other grants	991,873	839,708
	1,311,683	1,158,419

The charity received no donations in kind in 2024 (2023: NIL).

continued...

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS - continued

The charity has benefited during the year from pro bono legal volunteers, whose professional services had we paid for would have been valued at £1.4m (2023: £1.6m).

We have calculated the financial benefit provided to SWLLC, by the volunteers by estimating the cost of day time volunteers only. At a conservative estimate, daytime volunteers provide the equivalent of £72,929 in added value (£11.44ph administration/reception and £15ph casework support).

We estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers at around £1.4 million pounds - on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £168p). We have used an estimated high street rate, which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover, and also assumed that rates have stayed fixed since last year.

4. LEGAL AND ADVICE SERVICES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Legal and advice services	459,311	409,863

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Interest receivable	3,278	872

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs	Support costs (see note 7)	Totals
	£	£	£
Legal and advice services	1,706,001	19,836	1,725,837

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Finance	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Legal and advice services	161	19,675	19,836

continued...

7. SUPPORT COSTS - continued

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	2024 Legal and advice services £	2023 Total activities £
Bank charges	161	369
Auditors' remuneration	11,000	15,000
Accountancy fees	8,675	7,500
	19,836	22,869

8. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2024 £	2023 £
Auditors' remuneration	11,000	15,000
Depreciation - owned assets	11,621	10,716
Hire of plant and machinery	(1,779)	25,843

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

10. STAFF COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	1,185,193	1,118,754
Social security costs	111,156	107,131
Other pension costs	47,316	2,040
	1,343,665	1,227,925

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
Legal service and advice	29	26
Support and fundraising	12	12
	41	38

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year. The remuneration of the Charity's key management personnel in the year was £56,895 (2023: £56,038).

continued...

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

Redundancy payments were £13,745 (2023: £NIL) in the year.

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME FROM			
Grants and donations	230,148	928,271	1,158,419
Legal and advice services	409,863	-	409,863
Investment income	872	-	872
Total	640,883	928,271	1,569,154
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Legal and advice services	635,126	908,963	1,544,089
NET INCOME	5,757	19,308	25,065
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	495,708	119,847	615,555
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	501,465	139,155	640,620

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £
COST	
At 1 April 2023	139,236
Additions	3,620
At 31 March 2024	142,856
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2023	127,632
Charge for year	11,621
At 31 March 2024	139,253
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2024	3,603
At 31 March 2023	11,604

continued...

13. WORK IN PROGRESS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Work-in-progress	329,556	316,801

14. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	128,193	148,035
Other debtors	252,495	191,144
Prepayments and accrued income	57,077	114,187
	437,765	453,366

15. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Clients' funds held	87,634	149,238
Trade creditors	277,548	232,503
Social security and other taxes	24,316	37,319
Other creditors	8,803	7,258
Accrued expenses	42,265	43,039
	440,566	469,357

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.23	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.24
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	489,861	(36,060)	453,801
Fixed asset fund	11,604	(8,001)	3,603
	501,465	(44,061)	457,404
Restricted funds			
General fund	139,155	92,496	231,651
TOTAL FUNDS	640,620	48,435	689,055

continued...

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	648,022	(684,082)	(36,060)
Fixed asset fund	-	(8,001)	(8,001)
	648,022	(692,083)	(44,061)
Restricted funds			
General fund	1,126,250	(1,033,754)	92,496
TOTAL FUNDS	1,774,272	(1,725,837)	48,435

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	473,388	16,473	489,861
Fixed asset fund	22,320	(10,716)	11,604
	495,708	5,757	501,465
Restricted funds			
General fund	119,847	19,308	139,155
TOTAL FUNDS	615,555	25,065	640,620

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	640,883	(624,410)	16,473
Fixed asset fund	-	(10,716)	(10,716)
	640,883	(635,126)	5,757
Restricted funds			
General fund	928,271	(908,963)	19,308
TOTAL FUNDS	1,569,154	(1,544,089)	25,065

continued...

16. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	473,388	(19,587)	453,801
Fixed asset fund	22,320	(18,717)	3,603
	495,708	(38,304)	457,404
Restricted funds			
General fund	119,847	111,804	231,651
TOTAL FUNDS	615,555	73,500	689,055

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,288,905	(1,308,492)	(19,587)
Fixed asset fund	-	(18,717)	(18,717)
	1,288,905	(1,327,209)	(38,304)
Restricted funds			
General fund	2,054,521	(1,942,717)	111,804
TOTAL FUNDS	3,343,426	(3,269,926)	73,500

Fixed Asset Fund
This represents the net book value of fixed assets held within unrestricted funds.

continued...

17. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Carried Forward £
AB Charitable Trust	-	22,000	(22,000)	-
Debt Free Advice	-	226,909	(226,909)	-
GLA Homeless	-	63,260	(63,260)	-
Grant to Clients	305	9,381	(7,119)	2,566
LCN Propel	-	17,168	(17,043)	124
Legal Education Foundation	-	46.000	(46.000)	-
Locality	7,500	-	(7,500)	-
London Legal Support Trust – Cost of Living	-	95,480	(95,480)	-
London Legal Support Trust - Surrey	14,616	10,916	(4,570)	20,962
Lottery CF – Crisis Project	78,475	164,500	(162,659)	80,316
London Legal Support Trust	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
Merton Council	-	82,241	(80,694)	1,547
Merton Giving	6.339	-	(6,339)	-
Merton Social Prescribers	1,250	5,000	(6,250)	-
Surrey County Council Domestic Violence		100,000	(34,001)	65,999
The Access to Justice Foundation	-	114,627	(112,162)	2,465
The Good Things Foundation	2,000		(2,000)	
Trust for London – Employment		60,000	(56,667)	3,333
Trust for London Temporary Accommodation	3,212	80,417	(57,037	26,592
Wandsworth Council – Crisis Fund Projects	1,222		(1,222)	-
London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS	12,942	6,997	(6,997)	12,942
London Borough Wandsworth Rent Subsidy	6,294		(6,294)	-
London Borough Wandsworth Cost of Living Project		26,040	(24,567)	1.470
Wimbledon Guild	-	16,000	(2.666)	13,334
Total	139,155	1,148,937	(1,056,441)	231,651

continued...

Purpose of restricted funds:

AB Charitable Trust – a grant towards the cost of a part time Communications manager post

Debt Free Advice – a grant received from Toynbee Hall in consortium with other London advice agencies, funded by the Money and Pensions Service to provide face to face debt advice across South West London

Greater London Authority (GLA) Homeless – a grant to provide immigration advice and casework to rough sleepers as part of a pan London partnership, working alongside South London Refugee Association in the South West Region.

Grants to Clients - grants received from various sources for direct payments to clients.

Law Centre Network Propel - a partnership grant administered by the Law Centres Network through Propel funding from London Funders, to help support legal apprenticeships as a way of qualifying as a solicitor at the law centre.

Legal Education Foundation – a grant to fund a trainee solicitor role with supervision costs.

Locality - a carried forward grant towards refurbishment cost of the Merton office and spent on a partial refurbishment of the office including installing a new boiler and lighting.

London Legal Support Trust – Cost of Living - a grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service. This is part of a wider pan London partnership funded through the GLA

London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey - grants to continue to support development of work in Kingston and Surrey.

London Legal Support Trust - a grant carried forward for the refurbishment of our offices in Merton and completed this year.

Lottery Community Fund - Crisis Project – a new grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service as well as management and community engagement costs

Merton Council – a grant to fund specialist advice and casework in Merton plus an additional rent subsidy payment for the prior year.

Merton Giving - a brought forward grant to fund additional training and supervision costs for volunteers working on the Cost of Living project

Merton Social Prescribers - a pilot grant to provide debt advice to referrals from Merton Social Prescribing team which completed in June 2023

Surrey County Council Domestic Violence Project - a new two year grant to provide casework and advice on immigration issues to the residents of domestic violence refuges. The grant will help support the refuges to take on people fleeing domestic violence who have outstanding immigration issues.

The Access to Justice Foundation – Completion of grant under Help Accessing Legal Support to support access into law centre services. A further 21 month grant under Improving Outcomes Through Legal Support (IOTLS) grant program. The purpose of supporting organisations working to sustain and improve access to early social welfare and family legal support and advice, to enable users to resolve these problems as early as possible and avoid the need for court or tribunal proceedings where possible.

continued...

The Good Things Foundation – a pilot grant to fund digital training for clients coming through our Cost of Living projects.

Trust for London Employment – a grant towards the cost of an employment caseworker.

Trust for London – Temporary Accommodation Project - a grant to develop coordination and campaigning for better conditions of those in temporary accommodation through community engagement work.

Wandsworth Council – Crisis Fund Projects – brought forward grant towards additional training and supervision for volunteers working on the Cost of Living project

London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS - a brought forward grant towards the funding of part of an immigration post specialising on helping those needing support with EUSS applications. These funds were spent with a new grant dealing with housing and immigration issues.

London Borough of Wandsworth – Rent Subsidy - a brought forward one off grant to support local Wandsworth charities through cost of living crisis used to support our rental commitments

London Borough of Wandsworth – Cost of Living Project - a new project to provide housing and immigration advice to the residents of Wandsworth.

Wimbledon Guild – a grant towards work within our Cost of Living team

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2024 (2023: NIL).

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales - Charity number 1102433

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1102433

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

FOR

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Haysmacintyre LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

TRUSTEES	Allan Blake Clara Clint (resigned 1.12.22) Marion Edge (resigned 30.3.23) Claire Gilbert (resigned 1.12.22) John Linwood (resigned 30.3.23) Sarmad Qureshi Simon Tinkler Sarah Towler (resigned 30.3.23) Nimmisha Aslam (appointed 1.12.22) Sarah Bergstrom (appointed 1.12.22) Susan Field (appointed 1.12.22) Bernd Halschka (appointed 1.12.22) Keith Alastair Livingston Boak (appointed 1.12.22) (resigned 23.3.23)
COMPANY SECRETARY	Stacey Edgar
REGISTERED OFFICE	5th Floor Davis House Robert Street Croydon CR0 1QQ
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1102433
AUDITORS	Haysmacintyre LLP 10 Queen Street Place London EC4R 1AG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Patrick Marples
BANKERS	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Purposes and aims
The objects of the Charity are: the relief of poverty, suffering and distress by the provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and the advancement of education for those resident, working or in full time education in South West London, including the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth and, in exceptional circumstances, residents from other areas; and the promotion of other such purposes which are exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

The main activities undertaken in relation to those purposes are:

- Activity 1 - Delivery of professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law
- Activity 2 - Delivery of the housing court duty solicitor scheme in housing cases in Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston County Courts.
- Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service.

Public benefit
The Trustees referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the law centre's aims and objectives and in planning and reviewing all our activities. South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a community based, legal practice working to relieve poverty, suffering and distress for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our communities, in need of help at difficult times in their lives to resolve legal problems. We broadly help those who cannot afford a lawyer to access social welfare law. Public benefit is delivered by the provision of free legal advice or affordable charges for services and representation at court in social welfare law. The professional services and the housing court duty scheme are funded by legal aid, grants, and donors, and operates from four branches in, Battersea, Croydon, Merton, and Kingston. The Kingston Branch closed in March 2023. We will continue to deliver the court duty scheme at Kingston County Court with other services that used to be delivered from Kingston being delivered from other offices. We continue to charge for some services in employment and immigration where funding through legal aid is no longer available. Our Pro Bono legal advice clinics are free and staffed by volunteer advisors.

By these means, the Charity aims to improve access to justice to vulnerable members of the community in South West London.

The ‘Cost of Living Crisis’
There were many highlights to 2022/23 framed by the continuing impact of increase in the cost-of-living, the restriction in our resources and therefore our ability to deliver our services. The majority of our clients have always been in a cost of living 'crisis' situation: this is nothing new. The prolonged wider national impact is affecting greater numbers and highlighting the situation on a national basis that our clients have consistently lived in. There has been no significant policy change to use social welfare law services to relieve the effects of this 'crisis'. We can see through the long history of our work that we do have an impact on those in urgent need. Our project work that runs alongside our legal aid work has always been focused on this. We were able to assist an additional 117 individuals and families compared to the previous year bringing the total number helped in 2022/23 to 6,778.

All Case Studies use fictitious names to protect the identity of staff and clients.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Volunteers

The use of hundreds of volunteers alongside our 42 employed staff (32 average FTE) has been at the heart of our law centre operations for a long time. SWLLC runs one of the largest Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic services in the UK delivered through a team of around 400 volunteer lawyers. This service empowers clients by encouraging them to take better steps to resolve problems themselves, where necessary with some follow-up by advisers (e.g. drafting documents or writing letters on clients' behalf).

We continued to operate our pro bono programme remotely through booked appointments held over the telephone or through video conferencing. In a survey of our service users and volunteers we received positive feedback on the way the service operates. In the current environment we recognise that the service may not be meeting the needs of everyone in our community and that there is a need to widen its scope. We have therefore approached a number of supporters for assistance to adapt and streamline the remote pro bono clinic services to make them easier to use. Our longer-term aim is to move to a system of more flexible advice times. We continue to see if we can adapt the pro bono offering so we can develop specialisms to carry out some casework. During the year we established an innovative new partnership with BPP Law School - Employment Law For London: this service offers a free 30-minute telephone advice appointment for all London residents needing legal advice about a workplace issue. We continue to look at the feasibility of bringing back an element of a face-to-face pro bono clinic service.

Volunteers also help us in every aspect of our work: from supporting reception during the daytime and in the evening with administrative tasks, to working as casework assistants to support our casework teams. The work includes undertaking legal research, assisting with creating bundles of documents, note taking and drafting letters. Following the pandemic, we have started to reintroduce volunteers to undertake these tasks although in smaller numbers. We continue to use internships in our immigration and employment teams; through these placements some interns have gone on to successfully gain paid employment. We want to expand this programme. Typically, our volunteers have been those seeking new skills/experience to get back into the job market or students wishing to further legal careers. On average daytime volunteers stay with the law centre between 3 - 6 months.

"Volunteering at SWLLC has greatly developed my understanding of legal aid and its scope in asylum and housing law. I have also gained exposure to various other areas of law through triaging clients for pro bono clinics. This has given me invaluable experience in the legal sector, and it has been immensely rewarding to be part of the process of providing equal access to justice." (Volunteer)

We estimate the value of daytime volunteering to be £37,500. An estimate of the value of pro bono work provided by evening volunteers is in excess of £1.4 million, calculated on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time) can on average take a combined total of 3 hours of volunteer time at £164 per hour. This is a high street rate, higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover for professional services in casework and representation.

"My drive to volunteer comes from seeing a small difference that my time can make to others. Some people lose hope by the time they come to me because they have had no joy anywhere else. A conversation of only 10 minutes sometimes makes a huge impact upon their life and motivates them and gives them the direction they need to resolve their issue. It's almost like a buzz from seeing people coming out of their dark places and into the light as a result of only a few minutes of my time which makes me want to continue in giving whatever I can for as long as SWLLC want me!" (Pro bono lawyer)

Achievement and performance

The Table below summarises our principal Activities in three main areas. Overall, in 2022/23, we assisted 6,778 clients (6,664 in 2021/22) with direct services.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Housing Team: Six solicitors, including one who undertakes community care and welfare rights cases, plus two paralegals attached to the team one of whom qualified post year end. **Debt Team:** Five caseworkers. **Immigration Team:** Four solicitors and two OISC registered caseworkers, including one undertaking public law. **Employment Team:** Two caseworkers. **Cost of Living:** Two crisis navigators and two welfare rights caseworkers supporting the work of the housing and debt teams. A Community Engagement Manager promoting the law centre work.	**Activity I - Provision of representation in social welfare law** covering community care, debt, discrimination employment, housing, immigration, asylum, public law and welfare rights	2,925 cases (2,655 in 2021/22) We carried forward 539 cases at the start of the year.
Housing Team (as above)	**Activity 2 - Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme**	899 cases (806 in 2021/22)
Pro Bono Team Client Services Manager, daytime and evening reception staff, and pro bono lawyers	**Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic** delivered remotely since March 2020	2,954 clients seen (3,200 in 2021/22).

Activity 1: Provision of representation in social welfare law

Outcomes - full specialist casework service in a broad range of social welfare law in the areas of community care, debt, discrimination, employment, housing, immigration and asylum, public law and welfare rights, collectively referred to as 'social welfare law'. Our legal work has a broad range of outcomes

Impact Report

There are a range of impacts from our casework as illustrated in the examples below.

1. Community Care

We help people obtain the appropriate community care assessment and services that they are entitled to. Casework enables people with mental illness, learning disabilities or other care needs to get the support they are entitled to. This also helps to reduce isolation for these often very lonely individuals struggling to cope alone in the community.

2. Debt

We help people with a strategy for dealing with debts as early as possible in the process as well as challenging unenforceable debts. Work is focussed on reducing debt and finding affordable and manageable debt solutions. We work with individuals and families to calculate an affordable budget, so that they can get back on track. We also help people to apply for grants from a variety of sources to support their everyday needs.

Our debt team, funded through Debt Free London, supported 1,749 people last year. We continue to see high demand and saw 538 clients through our Cost of Living/Welfare Rights team.

Our funder Debt Free Advice has awarded the team a Trustpilot score of 4.9 out of 5 based on feedback from 172 of our clients.

"I liked the service, the adviser listened carefully tried to get into the problem, I somehow even calmed down, she consoled me and said not to be upset, then they can and will help. I hadn't asked anyone for help before and in my situation, it was embarrassing to ask." January 2023, 5 Stars

Nirmay's Story - A Debt Case Study

"Ten years ago, I was a victim of fraud from a member of my family who took advantage of me by using my credit card. They took out loans in my name of over £50,000. It was very stressful, and I ended up with depression and then lost my job."

Although Nirmay told his credit card company in 2014 about the fraudulent loan, it was only after he contacted the Law Centre for help with his case that they finally agreed to write off the account balance and sent a goodwill payment. They have also now reimbursed him for the payments made, plus interest.

"Getting this money will make a huge difference to me after ten years of struggling. I was put in a situation I couldn't get out of until I contacted South West London Law Centres. They helped me out and all the members of staff worked extremely hard for me throughout. They used so much of their energy and got me out of the dark hole I was in and into the bright light."

3. Cost of Living

We support people to maximise their income; claim the right benefits and get further assistance such as claim grants for individuals in need. We continued to develop our service based on external evaluation and through new grants from the Lottery Community Fund and London Legal Support Trust/Greater London Authority. We now have team of four - two Crisis Navigators and two welfare rights caseworkers. Our Crisis Navigators support the work of the whole organisation by:

a. Being the consistent point of contact for those accessing multiple services;
b. Securing additional funds for the client to enable them to stabilise their short term crisis;
c. Channelling clients through to our specialist caseworkers/ legal staff so that their time is prioritised on providing necessary expert advice and representation; and
d. Acting as case manager to ensure all internal and relevant external services are working together and the client understands how they all fit together to resolve their issues.

Denise's story - Cost of Living - Debt case study

'I was living in a women's refuge due to domestic violence. The council pointed me to the Law Centre for help with debts, but I had too much on my plate to focus on it.

'A money adviser, discussed different financial scenarios with me. She also mentioned unclaimed support funds for my autistic son. I knew about these, but with the domestic violence situation, I hadn't acted on it.

'After a while, when I was rehoused and felt more settled, the money adviser connected me with a caseworker to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for my son. She patiently helped me fill the lengthy form over the phone. When I received the full DLA amount, it marked my journey to financial stability. With a clear calculation on balancing work and childcare, I adjusted my work hours. Using the DLA wisely, I arranged a tutor for my son. He's flourishing now.

'I've significantly reduced my debt and stopped relying on credit. The support from the Law Centre has been instrumental. The Caseworker's persistence and the DLA funds have been pivotal in confronting my debt and rebuilding my life. I'm deeply thankful.'

Denise was living in emergency accommodation following domestic violence and was referred to us for help with her debts. We gave her debt advice and referred her to our crisis navigator who helped her successfully apply for Disability Living Allowance for her son. Following the advice and support she received she is now in a much better position financially and she is able to build a new life with her children.

4. Employment

We help people on a wide range of issues including; dismissal, suspension, discrimination, unpaid wages and failure to pay the minimum wage; notice or redundancy pay, holiday pay, breach of contract, grievances, appeals; and settlement agreements. We also specialise in discrimination cases funded through our legal aid contract. Through this work we help people to remain in their jobs and where appropriate obtain redress for bad employment practice.

This work is funded through grant funding, legal aid and various methods of affordable charging. We now have two caseworkers. This year we worked on 36 cases and increased our reach through volunteers to support weekly employment advice clinics along together with our general pro bono clinics where we advised 595 people.

Employment Case study - Matha's Story

'When Covid came along, given my heart condition, I made the decision to shield. I'm a single mum and have had financial struggles in the past. It's important to me to be working. I was still waiting for a shielding letter when I spoke to my GP. I let my employer know their recommendation. Two days before my May pay date, I received a letter saying I was absent without leave and faced disciplinary action. The country was in lockdown!'

'I had a mental breakdown, diagnosed with depression and anxiety. The fear of leaving my job without any support loomed large. Financial difficulties mounted, leading to rent delays and dependency on neighbours and family … My employer then deducted from my pay.

'I reached out to Citizens Advice, and they directed me to the Law Centre. The tribunal lasted five days. When the judgment arrived, I was overwhelmed with relief. The compensation I received was beyond my expectations. I'm deeply grateful for all the support I received during this ordeal.'

*Matha started working for her employer in 2019. Her medical condition, which affects her cardiovascular health, prompted her to request work-from-home accommodations in early 2020 due to Covid-19. The relationship with her employer deteriorated, impacting Matha's mental health. We pursued legal action for disability discrimination on Matha's behalf and won a week-long hearing at the Employment Tribunal, being awarded £45,000.

5. Housing

We work with people on a wide range of different housing issues covering possession, unlawful eviction, homelessness, disrepair and anti-social behaviour, all helping people keep or gain a home. We also act for the homeless by ensuring local authorities accept their statutory duties to provide housing. We worked on 242 cases and 899 clients were assisted as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme.

Judy's Story - Housing Case Study

Judy works as a carer and was living with her partner and adult daughter. When her partner died, she contacted the Housing Association to have the tenancy changed to her name. They replied saying she had no right to succeed and should vacate the property. Our housing solicitor took on her case under legal aid and began legal proceedings against the Housing Association, providing evidence and witnesses to prove the relationship and therefore the right to succession. Judy won her case and has taken over the tenancy meaning she and her daughter can stay in their home.

'At the trial, the judge said I would get the tenancy. I just felt elated. I knew I was right. At one stage I'd felt like giving up on the whole thing because of the stress and anxiety it caused, but then I knew in my heart that what I was doing was right. The Law Centre's solicitor and the barrister who represented me in court were so supportive and compassionate and that meant a lot because it had been a very stressful situation - I work with vulnerable people and I'd constantly been thinking I may be homeless for no good reason.

'Without the solicitor's help I think I would have lost the tenancy. He knew the process so well, that if it was anybody else, I don't think they would have fought as hard and possibly done so much work for me. I fully trusted him throughout the whole process, and I really believe that we would have lost this tenancy for no good reason if it wasn't for the Law Centre.

'It's been quite a journey, and a long one, but it's ended very well, and I will be forever thankful to the Law Centre for that.'

Community Engagement and Housing

Over the last year our Community Engagement Manager has continued talking to the community about what they want from the law centre. As a result of a community survey, we continue to develop a series of themed workshops on using the law to support our community. These workshops evolve and have a series of case studies that are dissected as a group to find routes to remedy the situation using the same practice on each situation: Identify, Evidence, Report, Connect.

A major theme from our consultations are issues around access to, and the condition of, housing. We are assessing how we can further help beyond the current strictures of the legal aid scheme. Through new funding from Trust for London we have organised support groups for people to talk about their experiences of living in temporary accommodation and have been helping them to campaign for change. This has led to taking part in various consultations. We continue to use our community engagement work to ask the community about their needs and from this we have developed a series of pilots that have attracted grant funding.

6. Migrants and Asylum Seekers

This work is focussed on enabling clients to obtain Leave to Remain. With this 'gateway' status, they can work and earn an income legally, re-unite with family left behind and maximise their life chances. Many of the people who eventually come to us have failed to have their cases fully dealt with and were exploited by other lawyers. We also worked on the EUSS scheme.

Our small team specialises in dealing with unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, domestic violence and minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We worked on 206 cases. Our pro bono clinics advised 392 people on immigration issues. Through new funding from Greater London Authority we are working with South London Refugee Association in a London wide consortium to improve the immigration status of those who are street homeless as a way of helping them to move from being homeless.

Inara's Story - Immigration Case Study

*Inara had an arranged marriage in her home country. Her husband was violent towards her, forced her to have an abortion and took a second wife. She managed to flee with a family member and they travelled to the UK on student visas. Fearing she would be subject to an honour killing if she returned to her country, as had happened to one of their relatives, they lodged separate claims for asylum in the UK. These were refused as were their joint appeals. Inara was represented by three different fee-paying solicitors during this process.

She eventually came to the Law Centre where our immigration solicitor took on her case. By this point, the family member was no longer able to support her, she became homeless and was suffering from various physical and psychological conditions.

Our solicitor submitted a fresh claim with new evidence, including a psychological assessment, background country evidence and witness statements. The case went to judicial review and Inara was finally granted refugee status earlier this year, eleven years after first arriving in the UK.

Inara said: *"You were there for me during a very difficult time. I will never forget what you have done. At this difficult time it's so nice to feel appreciated."*

7. Public law
We have the ability to litigate against public authorities, this includes dealing with Home Office delays and refusals to make decisions on immigration and asylum cases.

8. Welfare Rights
We assist people with cases including appeals to the second tier Tribunal. We can further litigate suitable cases beyond this. Most of this work is now undertaken by our Cost of Living team.

Activity 2: Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

Outcome - Emergency housing representation across 3 county courts: Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston for hearings listed that day. This helps clients to defend themselves against possession and home evictions in both rented and mortgage cases.

Our duty solicitors have provided emergency legal advice/representation to clients last year in three courts and saved many from eviction often providing pro bono benefit assistance to address underlying issues relating to the benefit cap and bedroom tax.

Impact - We continue to achieve a high success rate. In 2022/23 we represented 899 people.

Julia's story - Court Duty Scheme case study

Julia, a mother grappling with depression and alcoholism, found herself in the Croydon County Court's waiting area. With no one to turn to and a staggering £12,000 in rent arrears threatening her and her children's housing stability.

"I was very scared and nervous, while reading about being evicted. It was quite scary and I had no idea what to do or where to start."

When our County Court duty solicitor recognized Julia's dire need for legal help, we stepped in. Julia's case was complex. She had a four-month-old possession order, hadn't appealed or set aside the order, and was facing imminent eviction.

Upon investigating, we uncovered that her Housing Benefit had been unjustly terminated in 2001, leading to the arrears. Our Law Centre successfully cleared her rent account, negotiated a settlement where the council agreed to pay damage of £2,400 for inconvenience and distress, complete repairs of the property and restore her tenancy.

"After hearing that I will keep my home and receive compensation as well, I got really happy. I was relieved. It felt like the stress on my shoulders had lifted and I could feel a sense of security. SWLLC really made a great impact in my life. I am in a secure and stable place at the moment, which would not be possible without the help of the Law Centre"

Activity 3: Pro Bono Legal Advice

Outcome - Our Volunteering Programme Our clinic programme has run remotely since March 2020 addressing legal problems in their early stages and covering a wide range of legal subjects: Crime, Criminal Injury, Consumer, Employment, Family, General Litigation, Housing, Immigration, Inquests, Motoring Offences, Personal Injury, Small Claims, Wills and Probate.

Impact - The impact of a timely, accurate legal advice through a personalised intervention can prevent a problem from escalating and becoming far more damaging for an individual, as well as costly to taxpayers. Our pro bono advice clinics not only provide an avenue for clients to seek legal redress; they also empower them with new knowledge of the law and their rights, thereby increasing their confidence and capacity to approach legal problems. Our advice also helps improve the efficacy of other public services such as education, health or social services by helping eligible people exercise their rights to access these services in a timely fashion.
From the feedback we receive, we know that this advice unlocks problems, helps people move on with their lives and builds confidence. Here are just a few of the comments clients have given:

"I have used the Law Centre on two separate occasions for housing matters. I cannot recommend them enough. On both occasions I felt that my issue was dealt with very efficiently."

"I spoke to two solicitors from your office. They were knowledgeable, informative and I got the outcome I hoped for thanks to their help. It's a brilliant service."

"Your law advisors are extremely professional and give appropriate and right advice for the situation a person is in. I would give your advisors ten out of ten. The advice is always spot on. Thank you so much for the service."

"I followed her advice and used the information she provided and I was able to reach an immediate resolution with the other party after about four months of going round in circles."

Other major achievements

Operational successes

Throughout this period, the Law Centre has taken various successful steps to secure its future:

Maintaining Financial Control - The Senior Management Team's work has been significant in maintaining our cashflow in a difficult operating environment where there is restricted legal aid and competitive grant funding opportunities.

Increased grant funding - We are grateful for the support provided by our funders that allowed us to continue to operate in these difficult times. Through the year we have been able to extend the reach of the law centre through new funding streams which now total 22. These have included:

Lottery Community Fund, Crisis Fund - has helped secure funding for our Cost of Living Team funding, a crisis navigator, part time welfare rights casework as well as embedding community engagement in the project.
London Legal Support Trust/Greater London Authority - funded a one year Cost of Living pilot for a further crisis navigator and welfare rights caseworker.

Greater London Authority - in partnership with South London Refugee Association funding for 1.5 new regulated immigration caseworkers to assist street homeless with their immigration status.

Trust for London - in partnership with Citizens Advice Croydon funding a temporary accommodation project in partnership with to enhance our community engagement to campaign on the issues of those living in temporary accommodation.

We continue to apply and develop our grant portfolio with continuing success into the next financial year, developing partnerships and including new funding from the Legal Education Foundation to fund a new trainee solicitor post. We continue to look for funding and partnerships that can help us develop the next generation of lawyers working in social welfare law.

Maintaining quality - We continued to pass both our Lexcel and Legal Aid quality audits remotely with a positive audit assessment as detailed below:

Despite the current difficulties and challenges, SWLLC should be highly commended for sustaining an extremely high level of compliance against the Lexcel Standard. There will still be short term challenges around continuing to sustain those high levels of compliance in the face of continuing change and development both internally and externally. It was very clear, however, that compliance is a deeply embedded part of the culture and, in Lexcel terms, SWLLC remains an exceptionally efficient and exceptionally well run organisation!! The significant ongoing work, and influence, of the Head of Legal Practice/Lexcel SRO will continue to provide a stable platform from which to address those challenges.

Given the current context, one of the key critical challenges for SWLLC is to fully embed, its "new normal" in terms of the "post pandemic" context. This will enable the organisation to then regroup and continue to grow and develop. SWLLC will need to continue to proactively consider what that "new normal" will mean both for culture, working methods, funding, supervision and compliance. There is also a need "to continue to protect the culture" - it is the culture that, in large part, has both enabled, and will continue to enable, the successful development of the organisation. Integral to all of this will be the need to maintain a cost effective organisation structure, and the continued refinement of the culture which will need to remain proactively focussed on client care, development/growth, funding sources, agile decision making and agile working".

Lexcel Audit (April 2023)

External Awards

The Law Centre has been recognised in the following Awards:

- Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement 2022
- Our immigration solicitor Rajitha Kumar was one of only three people this year to be awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award from the Law Centres Network. Rajitha has been with the law centre for over 15 years and has got status for many hundreds of people fundamentally changing their lives.
- Our immigration team was rated excellent in an independent peer review by the Legal Aid Agency. We are one of the few agencies across the country that achieve this highest rating

"An exceptional level of client care was provided to vulnerable clients. A large proportion of the files reviewed related to clients who were vulnerable as a result of their youth, mental illness, physical illness, or experience of trauma (sometimes all of these)."

- Employee Volunteer of the Year Award: Our pro bono volunteers, Sital Somaiya (Family Law) and Charlotte Pugh (Immigration Law) have both been awarded joint first place for Employee Volunteer of the Year Award in the Merton Partnership Civic Pride Volunteer Awards Celebration 2023!
- IMA Money Advice Awards finalists 2022: Our Money Advice Team, led by Roni Marsh, was shortlisted for the Debt Team of the Year in the 2022 IMA Money Advice Awards.

Financial review

Financially, as for many in this sector, this year has been challenging.

Restrictions of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) continue to make it extremely difficult for the Law Centre to operate as fairly and effectively as it should. Legal Aid is now worth less than 50% in real terms than a decade ago. We continue to find ways to address the difficulties this causes to our funding, now supported currently by 22 grant funders to whom we are extremely grateful. We are considering ways we can further harness the legal profession's support as well as increasing even further the number of grant-funded projects we can undertake.

The charity's income for the year was £1,569,154 compared to £1,509,383 in 2021/22. The total expenditure in the year were £1,544,089 compared to £1,574,499 in 2021/22. The net result produced a surplus of £25,065 (2021/22 deficit (£65,116)). Restricted funds increased by £19,308 and unrestricted general funds also increased by £5,757.

SWLLC held funds of £640,620 at the year-end, of which £139,155 was restricted and £501,465 was unrestricted.

In 2022/23, South West London Law Centres' main source of funding was Grant Income, due to challenges around Legal Aid income. We received funding and grants from AB Charity, Access to Justice Foundation, Citizens Advice Croydon (Croydon Advice Providers Together), Croydon Relief in Need, Debt Free Advice, DWP (Kickstart), Greater London Authority (Homeless Immigration Project), Here for Good, Law Centres Network, London Legal Support Trust, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Merton, London Borough of Kingston, Lottery Community Fund, Merton Giving, Merton Social Prescribers, The Good Things Foundation, Tides Foundation (Blackrock), Trust for London and Wimbledon Guild.

SWLLC retained a number of donors and corporate sponsors as well as raising funds through various fundraising activities.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the following factors when considering a reserves policy:

- The organisation's contractual obligations to its staff in terms of parental rights, sickness pay and redundancy provisions;
- The organisation's obligations to maintain a safe and clean working environment;
- That certain equipment is essential for our work; and
- That the timing of legal aid income is uncertain.

The nature of the law centre's business means that at any one moment in time it has very considerable work in progress. This is reflected in its material reserve position. The Trustees have adopted a target for unrestricted reserves of three months expenditure which is approximately £390,358. At March 2023, our unrestricted reserves stood at £501,465 (2021/22 £495,708). Because reserves are effectively held as work in progress rather than cash the Trustees continue to prioritise effective management of work in progress turning it into cash as well as looking for other means whereby cash reserves can be built up. This will continue to be a major focus of the Law Centre's work in the coming year.

Going concern

The ongoing impact of the freezing of legal aid and limited alternative sources of funding available for the operational activities of South West London Law Centres has increased the focus on going concern. There is considerable impact on the ability of the Law Centre to earn Legal Aid income through an effective 20 year freeze on rates of renumeration. The Law Centre has expanded its share of grant income where we can. The Trustees continued measures to deal with this crisis, by undertaking a scenario-based budgeting exercise to quantify the potential deficit and put in place early savings measures.

Although the start of 2022/23 was recognised as being difficult, following work on pilot projects started in the previous year we have been successful in a number of longer three year commitments which provide more stability. New funding has been awarded from the Lottery Community Fund, Trust from London and Greater London Authority. As a result of this we ended the year making a small unrestricted surplus. In previous years the law centre has been successful in reducing the defecit and even ending the year with a surplus through effective cost management and seeking new grant and income oppertunities.

This work continues into the current year 2023/24 by harnessing our community engagement work, listening to what the community wants and further developing pilots we have added to our portfolio by getting new funding from London Borough of Wandsworth, expanding our reach through funding by Surrey County Council and seeking funds to help train new solicitors through The Legal Education Foundation and Propel. However, we did loose grants from London Borough of Croydon due to the authority being placed in special financial measures.

A budget is being set for 2024/25, which continues to reflect the challenges that we face going forward. However, we are optimistic that the relationships that we have developed with new and existing funders, and the efforts put into diversifying our fundraising based on new areas of demand, will assist towards meeting our commitments as well as seeing our legal income grow.

The Law Centre will start the year 2024/25 with a smaller budgeted deficit than in previous years. The Budgets are regularly reviewed by the Trustees at Board level and through a Finance Sub- Committee.

Principal risks and uncertainties

Fundraising note

We are mindful of the code issued by the Fundraising regulator. We did not use any third parties in our fundraising activities and no complaints were received in the year.

South West London Law Centres undertook a strategic review and developed a revised three year strategic plan. The Law Centre undertakes a formal risk management review throughout the year. This forms part of the business plan cycle. It involves identifying the types of risk the charity faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying ways of mitigating the risks. The major risks are reviewed regularly by the trustees on a quarterly basis through a risk register covering governance, regulatory and compliance, financial, operational and external factors.

Plans for the future: The Year Ahead - Our Strategic Objectives 2023 -24

Update - Impact of COVID-19 and last strategic plan
Our last three year plan was written before the pandemic. It was an ambitious attempt to modernise and drive our growth to meet ever increasing demand for our services. Covid-19 was so disruptive that we had to set aside plans for strategic growth and focus on survival. The impact of the pandemic will be felt for some considerable time and has been closely followed by a wide reaching cost of living 'crisis' impacting our clients, demand on our services and our ability to deliver them. The reality is that our clients have always been in 'crisis' mode: it is the extension of that distressed state to far more families and individuals and its public recognition that has heralded the term 'crisis'. Through concerned and generous funders we have been able to significantly increase the levels of our grant funding. However, our legal income has remained depressed, poorly remunerated and slow to recover from the pandemic. Recruitment at all levels has become substantially more difficult, but particularly for qualified legal staff in social welfare areas of law. The legal profession, Law Colleges and Universities are not generating lawyers with the skills and knowledge that our clients need.

Although we did not achieve all we set out in our last plan, we did establish some strong building blocks that are helping us move forward. These have included:

- Growing capacity and breadth in the management team with the establishment of the roles of Deputy CEO, Communications Manager and Community Engagement Managers. These roles have enabled the Law Centre to reach out to more communities, develop new projects that they have helped us to identify and succeed in convincing our funders to support them. This approach has helped us to weather the financial storm and at the same time expand the scope of our community work for those in greatest need.

- We have introduced new IT and case management systems to support these initiatives, enabling us to work with greater flexibility and report back to our sponsors on our achievements.

- Staff expertise has increased in breadth with the development of our Crisis Navigation service, enabling us to focus our expert legal help where it is most needed. With the failure of the legal profession to deliver enough lawyers with social welfare law expertise we are developing our own focused legal apprenticeships.

The overall direction of the plan and the goals for the next three years has not changed significantly. We have set out the actions for the next year only as the environment continues to change rapidly.

How we measure success and the vision for the previous iteration of the strategic plan are set out below.

Success is Unlocking Justice through....

- Growth with enhanced funding to match our clients' needs, both geographically and in areas of legal need
- A good employer developing staff and recruiting and growing our own
- Working smarter with technology in a smarter working environment
- Convincing more funders and sponsors that funding SWLLC is the right thing to do in order to meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable in our society: we have to succeed in this.

Where do we see the Law Centre in 3 years' time 2026 SWLLC is....

- An established voice in London and nationally; a cutting-edge legal advocate for those in most need with professional external communications developing and promoting policy and campaigns developed from casework and strategic cases
- Financially stable, attractive to more and varied funders
- A One Stop Shop for our clients delivering holistic and integrated advice and casework: we deal with the whole of the problem, not just the symptoms
- Pro Bono clinics maintaining and diversifying their work;
- Attracting and retaining staff including 'home grown' qualified staff through innovation in our staff offer and development opportunities
- A better working environment is established

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, we believe we have made considerable progress towards these objectives. We now need to consolidate what has been achieved and re-focus on our strategic growth in order to maintain the current trajectory.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our many sponsors and funders. They have stuck with us and expanded in number during a very difficult period for the sector.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution and Organisational Structure

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended 15 December 2017, and was granted charitable status on 2 March 2004.

The overall responsibility of SWLLC belongs to the Trustees (board of directors) which meets bi-monthly. The Board is supported by a Finance and Human Resources Sub Committees who are responsible for setting salaries. Day to day responsibility for managing the law centre is delegated to the charity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Marples and the Senior Management Team, comprised of the Deputy CEO, Stacey Edgar, Head of Legal Service and Housing Solicitor, Katy Forkah. The remuneration for key management staff is determined by following a criteria of consistency with the responsibilities assigned, and alignment and success in achieving the organisation's overall strategic aims and prevailing market trends.

Appointment of trustees

SWLLC is a charitable company managed by a board of voluntary trustees comprised of local groups and individuals. Voluntary organisations from SWLLC's catchment area, representing vulnerable individuals and groups in need of our services, are encouraged to become members of the organisation and stand for election to the board as are concerned individuals from across the six boroughs. The amended articles changed the way that trustees are appointed. The size of the board is now restricted to 12 and trustees are eligible to stand for up to 2 terms of 4 years before a break. Trustees due for re-election retire from office at the AGM and those eligible can stand for re-election.

Induction and training of new trustees

Skill gaps on the Board are regularly identified and as a result efforts are made to identify new Trustees capable of filling any gaps. Induction and training of trustees is currently carried out on an ad-hoc basis as and when the needs arise. The Trustees have developed an induction programme and are reviewing training policies as part of its current review.

Related parties

There are no related parties' transactions.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of South West London Law Centres for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Report of the trustees, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on

13 December 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:

Allan Blake

.....

Allan Blake
Trustee

Independent auditor's report to the members of South West London Law Centres

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of South West London Law Centres for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Statement of Financial activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of 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 2023 and of the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 charitable company'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:
- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' 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 by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company 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 for the financial statements
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 15, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

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

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and Payroll and Sales Taxes.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries or the manipulation of accounting estimates, such as the recognition of work in progress. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals; and

- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

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

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

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

Lee Stokes (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

Date: 13 December 2023

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
INCOME FROM					
Grants and donations	3	230,148	928,271	1,158,419	1,141,992
Legal and advice services	4	409,863	-	409,863	367,373
Investment income	5	872	-	872	18
Total		640,883	928,271	1,569,154	1,509,383
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	42,149	-	42,149	38,573
Charitable activities	7				
Legal and advice services		592,977	908,963	1,501,940	1,535,926
Total		635,126	908,963	1,544,089	1,574,499
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		5,757	19,308	25,065	(65,116)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		495,708	119,847	615,555	680,671
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		501,465	139,155	640,620	615,555

The notes form part of these financial statements

BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	14	11,604	-	11,604	11,951
CURRENT ASSETS					
Work in progress	15	316,801	-	316,801	422,249
Debtors	16	453,366	-	453,366	393,599
Cash at bank		189,051	139,155	328,206	233,840
		959,218	139,155	1,098,373	1,049,688
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(469,357)	-	(469,357)	(446,084)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		489,861	139,155	629,016	603,604
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		501,465	139,155	640,620	615,555
NET ASSETS		501,465	139,155	640,620	615,555
FUNDS	19				
Unrestricted funds				501,465	495,708
Restricted funds				139,155	119,847
TOTAL FUNDS				640,620	615,555

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 13 December 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

Allan Blake

.....
Allan Blake
Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	103,863	(109,501)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		103,863	(109,501)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(10,369)	(645)
Interest received		872	18
Net cash used in investing activities		(9,497)	(627)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		94,366	(110,128)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		233,840	343,968
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		328,206	233,840

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	25,065	(65,116)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	10,716	7,260
Interest received	(872)	(18)
Decrease/(increase) in work in progress	105,448	(29,899)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(59,767)	174,862
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	23,273	(196,590)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operations	103,863	(109,501)

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.22 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.23 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	233,840	94,366	328,206
	233,840	94,366	328,206
Total	233,840	94,366	328,206

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

GOING CONCERN

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The financial position, reserves levels and future plans gives the trustees confidence the Charity remains a going concern for the foreseeable future.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Legal Aid Agency income is accounted for on a receivable basis when the income is measurable and certain. In the case of Legal Aid, the Legal Aid Agency income is usually recognised once they have confirmed the payment. Legal Help income is recognised under the Unified Contract when SWLLC has closed the cases and is entitled to claim the fee.

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and covenants and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable.

Grant income is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is receivable or received whichever is the earlier.

EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Overheads have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of charitable activities.

Support costs are those incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Any irrecoverable VAT is written back to general expenditure.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with enabling the company to comply with external regulation, constitutional and statutory requirements, and in providing support to the Trustees in the discharge of their statutory duties.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised, where the benefits of capitalisation are material.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

Furniture, fittings and equipment - Over 3 years

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

WORK IN PROGRESS
Work in progress represents the value of all open legally aid funded cases. These cases had been opened but were not yet completed, as at 31 March 2023. Work in progress has been valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value taking into account payments that have already been received.

TAXATION
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

HIRE PURCHASE AND LEASING COMMITMENTS
Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Although these estimates are based on the trustees' best knowledge of the amount, events or actions actual results ultimately differ from these estimates. Estimates have been used in the calculation of the pension liability and valuation of the contribution by volunteers. The valuation of our work in progress is normally looked at on a quarterly basis, to assess the value of time earned but not billed. A provision is held against legal casework where it has been determined that the likelihood of recovery of costs is low.

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
General donations	12,658	19,483
City solicitors donations	178,025	116,863
Pro bono volunteers	14,686	37,500
London borough of Merton	56,000	56,000
London borough of Croydon	57,342	38,551
Other grants	839,708	873,595
	1,158,419	1,141,992

The charity received no donations in kind in 2023 (2022: NIL).

continued...

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS - continued

The charity has benefited during the year from pro bono legal volunteers, whose professional services had we paid for would have been valued at £1.6m (2022: £1.6m).

We have calculated the financial benefit provided to SWLLC, by the volunteers by estimating the cost of day time volunteers only. At a conservative estimate, daytime volunteers provide the equivalent of £37,500 in added value (£7.50ph administration/reception and £15ph casework support).

We estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers at around £1.6 million pounds - on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £168p). We have used an estimated high street rate, which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover, and also assumed that rates have stayed fixed since last year.

4. LEGAL AND ADVICE SERVICES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Legal and advice services	409,863	367,373

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest receivable	872	18

6. RAISING FUNDS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Support costs - staff	33,041	31,122
Other support costs (see note 8)	9,108	7,451
	42,149	38,573

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Legal and advice services		
Direct staff costs	822,151	812,895
Direct activity costs	47,332	76,431
Support costs (see note 8)	632,457	646,600
	1,501,940	1,535,926

continued...

8. SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	Fundraising	Charitable	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	33,041	372,733	405,774	387,075
Premises costs	4,689	119,637	124,326	116,372
Office and administration	4,419	106,874	111,293	154,182
Insurance costs	-	10,713	10,713	6,115
Governance costs	-	22,500	22,500	21,429
Total	42,149	632,457	674,606	685,173

Overhead costs have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES – PRIOR YEAR

	Fundraising	Charitable	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	31,122	355,953	387,075	277,828
Premises costs	3,134	113,238	116,372	113,993
Office and administration	4,317	149,865	154,182	118,067
Insurance costs	-	6,115	6,115	29,374
Governance costs	-	21,429	21,429	-
Total	38,573	646,600	685,173	539,262

9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023	2022
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	15,000	15,000
Depreciation - owned assets	10,716	7,260
Hire of plant and machinery	25,843	32,408

continued...

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

11. STAFF COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,118,754	1,053,777
Social security costs	107,131	106,151
Other pension costs	2,040	43,838
	1,227,925	1,203,766

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Legal service and advice	22	26
Support and fundraising	10	11
	32	37

continued...

12. STAFF COSTS - continued

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year. The remuneration of the Charity's key management personnel in the year was £56,038 (2022: £54,975).

Redundancy payments were £NIL (2022: £2,690) in the year.

13. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME FROM			
Grants and donations	307,219	834,773	1,141,992
Legal and advice services	367,373	-	367,373
Investment income	18	-	18
Total	674,610	834,773	1,509,383
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	38,573	-	38,573
Charitable activities			
Legal and advice services	679,251	856,675	1,535,926
Total	717,824	856,675	1,574,499
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(43,214)	(21,902)	(65,116)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	538,922	141,749	680,671
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	495,708	119,847	615,555

continued...

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £
COST	
At 1 April 2022	128,867
Additions	10,369
At 31 March 2023	139,236
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2022	116,916
Charge for year	10,716
At 31 March 2023	127,632
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2023	11,604
At 31 March 2022	11,951

15. WORK IN PROGRESS

	2023 £	2022 £
Work-in-progress	316,801	422,249

16. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	148,035	58,205
Other debtors	191,144	208,673
Prepayments and accrued income	114,187	126,721
	453,366	393,599

continued...

17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Clients' funds held	149,238	109,916
Trade creditors	232,503	239,889
Social security and other taxes	37,319	30,729
Other creditors	7,258	21,083
Accrued expenses	43,039	44,467
	469,357	446,084

18. LEASING AGREEMENTS

As at 31 March 2023, the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Within 1 year	51,958	58,700	17,706	17,706
Between 2 and 5 years	-	51,958	38,662	56,368
	51,958	110,658	56,368	74,074

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.22	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.23
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	473,388	16,473	489,861
Fixed asset fund	22,320	(10,716)	11,604
	495,708	5,757	501,465
Restricted funds			
General fund	119,847	19,308	139,155
TOTAL FUNDS	615,555	25,065	640,620

continued...

20. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Income	Expenditure	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	640,883	(624,410)	16,473
Fixed asset fund	-	(10,716)	(10,716)
	640,883	(635,126)	5,757
Restricted funds			
General fund	928,271	(908,963)	19,308
TOTAL FUNDS	1,569,154	(1,544,089)	25,065

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.21	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.22
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	520,356	(36,599)	483,757
Fixed asset fund	18,566	(6,615)	11,951
	538,922	(43,214)	495,708
Restricted funds			
General fund	141,749	(21,902)	119,847
TOTAL FUNDS	680,671	(65,116)	615,555

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Income	Expenditure	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	674,610	(711,209)	(36,599)
Fixed asset fund	-	(6,615)	(6,615)
	674,610	(717,824)	(43,214)
Restricted funds			
General fund	834,773	(856,675)	(21,902)
TOTAL FUNDS	1,509,383	(1,574,499)	(65,116)

continued...

Fixed Asset Fund
This represents the net book value of fixed assets held within unrestricted funds.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Carried Forward £
AB Charitable Trust	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Citizens Advice Croydon	-	34,211	(34,211)	-
London Borough of Croydon	8,932	23,131	(32,063)	-
Debt Free Advice	-	230,412	(230,412)	-
GLA Homeless	-	26,421	(26,421)	-
Grant to Clients	-	1,980	(1,676)	304
Here for Good	-	42,457	(42,457)	-
LCN Crisis Grant	-	28,000	(28,000)	-
Locality	7,500	-	-	7,500
London Legal Support Trust – Cost of Living	-	58,333	(58,333)	-
London Legal Support Trust - Surrey	34,471	14,259	(34,114)	14,616
Lottery CF – Crisis Project	-	160,966	(82,490)	78,476
London Legal Support Trust	5,000	-	-	5,000
Merton Council	-	56,000	(56,000)	-
Merton Giving	-	7,744	(1,405)	6,339
Merton Social Prescribers	-	20,000	(18,750)	1,250
London Borough of Merton (EUSS)	24,777	-	(24,777)	-
The Access to Justice Foundation	-	79,672	(79,672)	-
The Croydon Relief in Need	-	7,500	(7,500)	-
The Good Things Foundation	-	2,000	-	2,000
The Tides Foundation - Blackrock	-	7,602	(7,602)	-
Trust for London (ELAN)	-	6,564	(6,564)	-
Trust for London – Employment	2,667	16,000	(18,667)	-
Trust for London Temporary Accommodation	-	25,000	(21,788)	3,212
Trust for London - London Community Response Fund	12,500	-	(12,500)	-
Wandsworth Council – Crisis Fund Projects	-	15,958	(14,736)	1,222
London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS	24,000	21,473	(32,531)	12,942
Wandsworth Rent Subsidy	-	12,588	(6,294)	6,294
Wimbledon Guild	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Total	119,847	928,271	(908,963)	139,155

continued...

Purpose of restricted funds:

AB Charitable Trust – a grant towards the cost of a part time Communications manager post

Citizens Advice Croydon - Croydon Advice Providers - a partnership grant with Croydon Citizens Advice under Croydon Council's Community Fund for the provision of a pro bono clinic service in Croydon

London Borough of Croydon - a grant received towards rent of the office at Davis House

Debt Free Advice – a grant received from Toynbee Hall in consortium with other London advice agencies, funded by the Money and Pensions Service to provide face to face debt advice across South West London

Greater London Authority (GLA) Homeless – a grant to provide immigration advice and casework to rough sleepers as part of a pan London partnership, working alongside South London Refugee Association in the South West Region.

Grants to Clients - grants received from various sources for direct payments to clients**.**

Here for Good- a grant to fund a EU Settlement Scheme caseworker seconded to Here for Good.

Law Centre Network Crisis - a partnership grant with Law Centres administered by the Law Centres Network to provide welfare rights and immigration support to Crisis Hubs. A further grant was received to fund support core costs.

Locality - a carried forward grant towards refurbishment cost of the Merton office

London Legal Support Trust – Cost of Living - a new grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service. This is part of a wider pan London partnership funded through the GLA

London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey - grants to continue to support development of work in Kingston and Surrey.

London Legal Support Trust - a grant carried forward for the refurbishment of our offices in Merton

Lottery Community Fund - Crisis Project – a new grant to fund a specialist welfare rights and crisis navigation service as well as management and community engagement costs

Merton Council – a grant to fund specialist advice and casework in Merton.

Merton Giving - a grant to fund additional training and supervision costs for volunteers working on the Cost of Living project

Merton Social Prescribers - a grant to provide debt advice to referrals from Merton Social Prescribing team

London Borough of Merton - EUSS - a grant towards the funding of part of an immigration post specialising on helping those needing support with EUSS applications

The Access to Justice Foundation – grants under wave 3 of Cost of Living and Help Accessing Legal Support to support access into law centre services.

The Croydon Relief in Need – a grant towards crisis navigation support for people in Croydon.

The Good Things Foundation – a grant to fund digital training for clients coming through our Cost of Living projects.

The Tides Foundation – Blackrock – a grant towards developing a complaints clinic on welfare

continued...

rights decision making.

Trust for London (Elan) - a grant to support a coordinator for the Employment Legal Advice Network, a forum for employment advice agencies across London

Trust for London Employment – a grant towards the cost of an employment caseworker.

Trust for London – Temporary Accommodation Project - a new grant to develop coordination and campaigning for better conditions of those in temporary accommodation through community engagement work.

Trust for London - London Community Response Fund – a continuation grant towards the cost of a community engagement post,

Wandsworth Council – Crisis Fund Projects – grants towards specialist welfare rights/ crisis support and towards additional training and supervision for volunteers working on the Cost of Living project

London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS - a grant towards the funding of part of an immigration post specialising on helping those needing support with EUSS applications

Wimbledon Guild – a grant towards welfare rights support

21. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The aggregate of donations received from the Trustees in the year was £NIL (2022: £360).

There were no other related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2023 (2022: NIL).

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales - Charity number 1102433

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1102433

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

FOR

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

TRUSTEES	Allan Blake Clara Clint (resigned 1.12.22) Ranil De Silva (resigned 11.2.22) Marion Edge Claire Gilbert (resigned 1.12.22) John Linwood Sarmad Qureshi Simon Tinkler Sarah Towler Nimmisha Aslam (appointed 1.12.22) Sarah Bergstrom (appointed 1.12.22) Susan Field (appointed 1.12.22) Bernd Halschka (appointed 1.12.22) Keith Boak (appointed 1.12.22)
COMPANY SECRETARIES	Clara Clint (resigned 1.12.22) Stacey Edgar (appointed 1.12.22)
REGISTERED OFFICE	5th Floor Davis House Robert Street Croydon CR0 1QQ
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	05018587 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1102433
AUDITORS	Haysmacintyre LLP 10 Queen Street Place London EC4R 1AG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	Patrick Marples
BANKERS	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Purposes and aims

The objects of the Charity are: the relief of poverty, suffering and distress by the provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and the advancement of education for those resident, working or in full time education in South West London, including the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth and, in exceptional circumstances, residents from other areas; and the promotion of other such purposes which are exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

The main activities undertaken in relation to those purposes are:

- Activity 1 - Delivery of professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law.
- Activity 2 - Delivery of the housing court duty solicitor scheme in housing cases in Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston County Courts.
- Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service.

Public benefit

The Trustees referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the law centre's aims and objectives and in planning and reviewing all our activities. South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a community based, legal practice working to relieve poverty, suffering and distress for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our communities, in need of help at difficult times in their lives to resolve legal problems. We broadly help those who cannot afford a lawyer to access social welfare law. Public benefit is delivered by the provision of free legal advice or affordable charges for services and representation at court in social welfare law. The professional services and the housing court duty scheme are funded by legal aid, by grants, and donors, which operates from four branches in, Battersea, Croydon, Merton, and Kingston. We continue to charge for some services in employment and immigration where funding through legal aid is no longer available. Our Pro Bono legal advice clinics are free and staffed by volunteer advisors. By these means, the Charity aims to improve access to justice to vulnerable members of the community in South West London.

Moving from Covid to the Cost of Living Crisis

There were many highlights in 2021/22 framed by the continuation of the journey back from the pandemic and the emerging and growing cost of living crisis. We were able to assist an additional 862 individuals and families compared to the previous year bringing the total number helped in 2021/22 to 6,664.

Although some Covid-19 restrictions continued, all our offices remained open subject to the various guidance. Most appointments were booked rather than drop in and many were carried out remotely. Staff continue to adapt the way we deliver our services.

The work of the courts, decision makers and statutory authorities all affected our capacity to take on additional work due to their slowness in reaching decisions and dealing with cases. This affected the rate at which we could bill and close cases. We continued to receive some covid funding, albeit a lower amount than in the previous year. This support continued to be invaluable as our legal income remained restricted. During the year we were able to pilot a number of projects which enabled us to reach out to a wider audience and focus on the emerging cost of living crisis. This put us in a better position to be able to bid for larger projects post year end.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Volunteers

The use of volunteers has been, for a long time, at the heart of our law centre operations. SWLLC runs one of the largest Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic services in the UK through a team of around 400 volunteer lawyers. This service aims to empower clients by encouraging them to take better steps to resolve problems themselves, with some limited follow-up by advisers' e.g. drafting documents or writing letters on clients' behalf.

We continued to operate our pro bono programme remotely through booked appointments that are held over the telephone or through video conferencing. Through a survey of both our service users and volunteers we have had positive feedback on the way the service operates but recognise that the service may not be meeting the needs of everyone in our community and consequently there is a need to widen its scope. To this end we have approached a number of supporters for assistance to adapt and streamline the remote pro bono clinic services to make them easier to use. Our longer-term aim is to move to a system of more flexible advice times and to develop specialisms to carry out some casework. We also want to bring back an element of a face-to-face pro bono clinic service.

Volunteers have normally helped us in every aspect of our work: from supporting reception during the daytime and in the evening with administrative tasks, to working as casework assistants to support our casework teams. The work includes undertaking legal research, assisting with creating bundles of documents, note taking and drafting letters. During the pandemic we were not able to accommodate volunteers in these supporting roles. As our offices have reopened, we are starting to rebuild our base of volunteers and are looking more systematically at the roles we need to fill. We have successfully piloted a number of internships in the immigration team and want to expand this program. Typically, our volunteers have been those seeking new skills/experience to get back into the job market or students wishing to further their legal careers. On average daytime volunteers stay with the law centre between 3 - 6 months.

"Speaking to clients from a range of different backgrounds has developed my communication skills and also shaped my emotional intelligence, teaching me to be empathetic and patient. I have learned to listen and understand information quickly and accurately and deliver any necessary information clearly, while making sure the clients feel comfortable." Zafirah, volunteer legal administrator.

We estimate the value of daytime volunteering to be £37,240. An estimate of the value of pro bono work provided by evening volunteers is more than £1.5 million. This is calculated on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time) can on average take a combined total of 3 hours of volunteer time at £164 per hour. This is a high street rate and is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover for professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law.

"Pro bono advice makes a huge difference to people. Often, this is their last chance to obtain legal advice on their matter which could affect them for the rest of their lives." Sital, pro bono lawyer

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievement and performance

In 2021/22, we assisted 6,664 clients (5,802 in 2020/21) with direct services. In addition the hits on our website continued to grow.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Housing Team: Six solicitors, including one who undertakes community care and welfare rights cases plus a trainee (who qualified in the year) and two paralegals attached to the team **Debt Team;**Five caseworkers; **Immigration Team:** Six (three solicitors and three OISC registered caseworkers) including one who undertakes public law **Employment Team:**Two caseworkers In addition 2 crisis navigators supported the work of the housing and debt teams and a new Community Engagement Manager helped promote the law centre work	**Activity I** - Provision of cases and representation in social welfare law covering the areas of community care, debt, discrimination employment, housing, immigration, asylum, public law and welfare rights	2,212 cases (1670 2020/21) We carried forward 446 cases at the start of the year.
Housing Team above	**Activity 2** - Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme	806 cases (222 2020/21)
Client Services Manager, daytime and evening reception staff, and pro bono lawyers	**Activity 3** - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service delivered remotely since March 2020	3,200 clients seen (3,283 (2020/21).

Activity 1

Outcomes - full specialist casework service in a broad range of social welfare law in the areas of community care, debt, discrimination, employment, housing, immigration and asylum, public law and welfare rights - collectively referred to as 'Social welfare law'. Our legal work has a broad range of outcomes

Impact Report

There are a range of impacts from our casework as illustrated in the examples below.

1. Community Care
We help people get the appropriate community care assessment and services that they are entitled to. Casework enables people with mental illness, learning disabilities or other care needs to get the support they are entitled to. This also helps to reduce isolation for these often very lonely individuals struggling to cope alone in the community.

2. Debt
We help people with a strategy for dealing with debts as early as possible in the process as well as challenging unenforceable debts. Work is focussed on reducing debt and finding affordable and manageable debt solutions. We work with individuals and families to calculate an affordable budget, so that they can get back on track. We also help people to apply for grants from a variety of sources to support their everyday needs.

Our debt team, which is funded through Debt Free London, supported 1,745 people last year. As a result of the pandemic, the number of people needing debt advice has increased significantly. We saw an additional 345 people as the cost of living crisis started to grow.

Through our funder the team has a Trustpilot score of 4.7 out of 5 from feedback from our clients.

"Best free professional help around. I really valued the professional help and assistance I received from SWLLC. My situation was complex and there were levels to my issues but this did not deter [the adviser]. In the end all matters were satisfactorily resolved and I am so grateful. I would definitely recommend the services of SWLLC to anyone who needs legal help." August 2021, 5 Stars

Debt Case Study: Joanna's Story

'I'd been addicted to drugs and alcohol for four years before I got support. By then I'd been dismissed from my job on health grounds due to my depression and anxiety. I'm a single parent but I wasn't claiming any benefits so there was no money coming in. I started claiming the next year but I wasn't in the right head space to deal with things so my debts started to pile up.

'The minute I made the phone call and spoke to Eva, she was so helpful. She did a breakdown of all my payments - there were some loans I couldn't even remember taking out. I found it stressful but I did it with her help. We went from there and she explained everything step by step. Because she broke it all down for me, I could understand the plan ahead.

'Her help changed my life completely. I had a massive weight on my shoulders because of my debts, and I was always worried about debt collectors turning up, but I don't have to worry any more. My debts have been written off.

'I still suffer from depression but I have never gone back to addiction. I used to use substances as a way of coping but because I don't have to worry about my debts any more, my mood is much better. My son has really noticed the difference too so by helping me, he was helped as well. I felt like I was drowning before I got the support from you. Things are so much better now.'

Joanna is a single mother with a teenage son. She suffers from mental health issues and turned to drugs and alcohol as a way of coping. She lost her job and ended up with a lot of debts, both priority and non-priority. Our money advice caseworkers have been helping her with getting her debts written off so she can get her life back on track. Over £23,600 in non-priority debts has been written off.

We were delighted that our Debt Team was named Debt Free London's Debt Team of the Year at their inaugural awards ceremony in December 2021.

3. Crisis Navigation

We support people to maximise their income; claim the right benefits and get further assistance such as claim grants for individuals in need. We continued to develop our crisis navigation service in 2021/22 and the project was externally evaluated. Our crisis navigators support the work of the whole organisation by:

a. Being the consistent point of contact for those accessing multiple services;
b. Securing additional funds for the client to enable them to stabilise their short term crisis;
c. Ensuring that our specialist caseworkers' time is spent providing expert advice and representation; and
d. Acting as case manager to ensure all internal and relevant external services are working together and that the client understands how they all fit together to resolve their issues.

Jasmine's story shows the work of the crisis navigator alongside the debt team:

'I was working throughout the pandemic, but when the pandemic lifted I went down in a spiral and got into deep depression. It was so bad I couldn't go to work, and I also had really bad back pain. I got behind on my rent and was sent a letter about rent arrears and then I received an eviction order. I think I was close to having a breakdown and I had suicidal thoughts. I was on universal credit so I only had a low income and I wasn't getting any help.

'Things really picked up when I went to the Law Centre. I got a grant to help with my rent arrears and outstanding debts. Shanice helped me get a reduction on my council tax and helped me fill out the PIP form too. It's not easy but I got through it with her support. There was also help with my heating bills and shopping for my food.

'Eunice picked up on the debt side of things and helped me deal with my outstanding debts. She got in contact with my credit card company to put a freezing motion in place. Eventually we reached an agreement with them and they agreed to write off the debt.

'When I heard they'd written off the debt, it was like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I had literally been at rock bottom but this makes life a lot easier. It's put me in a much more positive place. I'm making sure I manage my payments better, check my spending and manage my income. If it wasn't for the Law Centre I wouldn't be in the situation I'm in today.

4. Employment

We help people on a wide range of issues including; dismissal, suspension, discrimination, unpaid wages and failure to pay the minimum wage; notice or redundancy pay, holiday pay, breach of contract, grievances, appeals; and settlement agreements. Since January 2021, we also specialised in discrimination cases. Through this work we help people to remain in their jobs and where appropriate to get redress for bad employment practice.

This work is funded through grant funding, legal aid and various methods of affordable charging We now have two caseworkers. This year we took on 41 new cases and increased our reach through using volunteers to support our weekly employment advice clinics where we advised 625 people along with our general pro bono clinics.

Employment Case study - Natalie's Story

Natalie was dismissed from her role having been diagnosed with an incurable illness. She set out a complaint against her employer's decision, who responded with a final offer of a small goodwill payment. Our discrimination caseworker was able to take on her case under legal aid and assist in her discrimination claim. She eventually agreed to a final five-figure settlement in compensation for the hurt and injury to feelings caused.

"When the case settled a feeling of both joy and relief invaded me. During the last few months, I felt like I was fighting two battles at once: a battle with my illness and fighting for my rights. I feel that from now I will be able to move forward.

"The end of this story means no more stress, more time to focus on my physical recovery and to improve my mental well-being, (I hope that there will be fewer sleepless nights) and it gives me a temporary resolution of my financial worries.

"Without the Law Centre, I wouldn't have had the knowledge to be able to deal with the question of settlement negotiations. If the Law Centre hadn't acted for me under the Legal Aid scheme, I wouldn't have been able to pay my legal expenses and I couldn't have managed this alone."

5. Housing

We work with people on a wide range of different housing issues covering possession, unlawful eviction, homelessness, disrepair and anti-social behaviour, helping people keep or gain a home. We also act for the homeless by ensuring local authorities accept their statutory duties to provide housing. We started 117 new cases and 806 clients were assisted as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

Housing Case Study - Susan's Story

"My situation became bad when my husband started taking drugs. He would shout at me in front of the kids to give him money and throw things in the kitchen, telling me the dealer was coming to collect money for drugs. He made me give him money and then he accessed my online banking and transferred out the money I'd been saving for the landlord. We didn't have enough left for the rent so we got behind. There wasn't even enough money left for food. I wanted to apply to separate from my husband, but because he wasn't beating me, the Council said it wasn't a case of domestic abuse.

At the Law Centre, Claudia told the Council I was entitled to emergency accommodation and so I was given a new place to live. It wasn't safe to tell my husband we were going so we had to leave everything behind. We didn't have any furniture and there was no washing machine. Claudia got in touch with the Council again and helped us move to a better place in a different area. She helped me apply for a grant to get a fridge and helped with grants for gas and electricity. It was a big help.

Without the Law Centre I wouldn't have been able to escape my husband and I'd have been taken to court by our landlord. We are now in a flat and my children have a garden - it has turned out better than I thought and we can look ahead now. Susan was referred to the Law Centre from Victim Support".

Our housing solicitor identified that Susan was suffering from emotional and financial abuse and made representation to the council on her behalf for them to accept her homeless application on the basis that, despite her having a home, it was not safe for her to remain there. The council accepted they owed her the duty to provide temporary accommodation and she was moved out of the borough, away from her husband. Our solicitor continued to make representations to the council to demonstrate she was owed the main housing duty and she was rehoused in suitable accommodation.

Community Engagement and Housing

Over the last year our Community Engagement Manager has been talking to the community about what they want from the law centre. As a result of a community survey, we have developed and piloted a series of themed workshops on using the law to support our community. These workshops are constantly evolving and have a series of case studies that are dissected as a group to find routes to remedy the situation using the same practice on each situation: Identify, Evidence, Report, Connect.

A major theme from our consultations are issues around access to and the condition of housing. We are assessing how we can further help beyond the current strictures of the legal aid scheme to develop these themes. We have taken part in consultations with the Ministry of Justice over the expansion of the Housing Court Duty Scheme. We also contributed to the inquiry into social housing, the use of the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. We arranged for the inquiry to meet tenants at their estate to see the problems first hand.

6. Migrants and Asylum Seekers

This work is focussed on enabling clients to obtain Leave to Remain. With this 'gateway' status, they can work and earn an income legally, re-unite with family left behind and maximise their life chances. Many of the people who eventually come to us have failed to have their cases fully dealt with and were exploited by other lawyers. We also worked on the EUSS scheme.

Our small team specialises in dealing with unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, domestic violence and minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We started 70 new cases. In addition 82 vulnerable people with complex applications were helped to get settled status under the EUSS scheme. Our pro bono clinics advised 590 people on immigration issues.

Immigration Case Study - Sami's Story

Sami is a former translator who worked with American and Allied forces in Afghanistan. He was granted refugee status in 2019 and applied for family reunion visas for his wife and teenage son at the beginning of 2021; however, the Home Office did not believe the relationship and refused the initial application. Our immigration solicitor lodged an appeal and obtained DNA evidence, but due to the additional time this took, the visas were not granted until August 2021, only a few days before the deadline for the evacuation of Afghanistan.

As a result, Sami's wife and son were forced to flee to Pakistan. They were badly treated on route, all their money and medication was stolen and Sami's wife who - like him - is disabled, ended up needing treatment in hospital. He sent all the money he had to them but that still wasn't enough to cover their food, accommodation and hospital fees, not to mention the expense of their travel to the UK. We ran an emergency appeal and after a number of generous donations, and at great personal financial cost to the family, they were reunited in the UK.

"I am very very pleased. I am thankful of God that they are here. She [our immigration solicitor] helped me a lot. I really appreciate her help and her hard work from the bottom of my heart. It was very nice and kind of her and of the whole organisation."

EUSS Case Study - Antonio's story

"I came to live in the UK from Spain in the winter of 1965 and it's been my home ever since. I was working in a hospital and was given freedom to work in 1970 and I have all the paperwork from the Home Office to prove it. In 2021 I was coming back from holiday and the border police stopped me and asked how long I would be staying in the UK. They told me they'd never seen my paperwork before and said that because of Brexit a lot of people had to reapply for the right to stay in the country.I went on the internet and tried to get to the Home Office website but I couldn't get my head straight. Because I'd had a nasty accident, my left hand wasn't working properly and I could only use my right hand. I couldn't do it. I was put me in touch with Sabira at the law centre: she was very sympathetic to my case and because I couldn't walk at the time, she said she would come to where I was.
It took a long time to sort it out. I didn't understand why the Home Office was putting us through it all, but Sabira did a fantastic job and was very professional.

I was so relieved when my up-to-date status came through. It's grand to know I can stay in the country. The world had been closing in on me… I am so grateful everything is now sorted."

Antonio is a Spanish national who received Indefinite Leave to Remain in the 1970s. He is now in his late 70s and has multiple health issues. He required an up-to-date immigration status as the documentation he was originally sent was no longer recognised and he needed to access NHS services. He is digitally excluded and was unable to complete an online application himself. Our EUSS caseworker submitted an online application and uploaded supporting evidence on his behalf and requested the EUSS grants team make a quick decision because of his vulnerabilities. Antonio has now received his settled status under the EUSS. Our caseworker also submitted an application for his partner as his joining family member. This was granted a few days after Antonio's.

7. Public law
We have the ability to litigate against public authorities, this includes dealing with Home Office delays and refusals to make decisions on immigration and asylum cases.

8. Welfare Rights
We assist people with cases including appeals to the second tier Tribunal. We can further litigate suitable cases beyond this. Most of this work is now undertaken by our Crisis Navigation team.

Activity 2

Outcome - Emergency housing representation across 3 county courts: Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston for hearings listed that day. This helps clients to defend themselves against possession and home evictions in both rented and mortgage cases.

Our duty solicitors have provided emergency legal advice/representation to clients last year in three courts and saved many from eviction often providing pro bono benefit assistance to address underlying issues relating to the benefit cap/bedroom tax.

Impact - We continue to achieve a high success rate. In 2020/21 we represented 806 people.

"When we got to court it was really quite straightforward! The [County Court Duty Scheme] was extra helpful. We have paid for a solicitor before but the help we received in the last hour is worth more than the £700 we had to pay to someone to represent us in the past."

"My knees were shaking so much. I haven't been sleeping. I'm much relieved. You were very good. I came here expecting the worst today. I never envisaged being in this situation. It's a relief I can pay half of what I was paying before."

"You were brilliant. You were there when we needed help. We would certainly have lost our home without you."

Activity 3

Outcome - Our Volunteering Programme Our clinic programme has run remotely since March 2020 addressing legal problems in their early stages covering a wide range of legal subjects: Crime, Criminal Injury, Consumer, Employment, Family, General Litigation, Housing, Immigration, Inquests, Motoring Offences, Personal Injury, Small Claims, Wills and Probate.

Impact - The impact of a timely, accurate legal advice through a personalised intervention can prevent a problem from escalating and becoming far more damaging for an individual (as well as costly to taxpayers). Our pro bono advice clinics not only provide an avenue for clients to seek legal redress; they also empower them with new knowledge of the law and their rights, thereby increasing their confidence and capacity to approach legal problems. Our advice also helps improve the efficacy of other public services such as education, health or social services by helping eligible people exercise their rights to access these services in a timely fashion.

Pro Bono Case Study - Sophie's story

Sophie had been in a relationship with a man with a history of mental health issues and drug abuse. One night he assaulted her and the police were called. Despite her obvious injuries, they took his word against hers; she was arrested and given a caution.

'I didn't realise at the time the negative impact this was going to have on my life. I've had job offers withdrawn because of having a caution on my record. I studied Law ten years ago and I've put off pursuing a career in Law because of it. When I finally decided I had to do something about it, I approached a solicitor who told me it would cost between £4K and £6K to sort it out.'

Sophie was given an appointment in our free legal advice clinic. The volunteer solicitor explained about the AROC Records Deletion and how she could apply to have her caution removed.

'I explained what had happened and within five minutes he told me how to apply to have my record removed, saying the facts should stand for themselves. He also said it was something I could do myself without needing to pay for a solicitor. I was totally unaware of this, so when I heard it, it wasn't just legal advice, it was life-changing advice. It means I can now pursue being a barrister and I can finally let go of what I've been carrying round with me for 15 years.'

Other major achievements

Operational successes

Throughout this period, the Law Centre has taken various steps to secure its future, which have borne fruit:

Maintaining Financial Control - Much of the Senior Management Team's work has been involved in maintaining our cashflow in a difficult operating environment in a restricted legal aid environment and limited new grant funding opportunities Overall there was reduced financial support and many funding streams remained closed meaning a greater focus was needed on careful financial control.

Increased grant funding - We are grateful for the support provided by our funders that allowed us to continue to operate in these difficult times. As well as our being supported by our existing funders, we continued to be successful in a number post covid grants and have been piloting and evaluating new work which has put us in a good position to apply for larger grants.

Maintaining quality - We continued to pass both our Lexcel and Legal Aid quality audits remotely with a positive audit assessment.

Despite the current difficulties and challenges, SWLLC achieved a high level of compliance against the Lexcel Standard. There will still be short term challenges around continuing to sustain those high levels of compliance in the face of continuing change and development both internally and externally. It remains very clear, however, that compliance remains a well embedded part of the culture and, in Lexcel terms, SWLLC is an extremely efficient and extremely well run organisation. The significant ongoing work, and influence, of the Head of Legal Practice/Lexcel SRO does continue to provide a stable platform from which to address those challenges.

Given the current context, SWLLC will need to consider what that "new normal" might mean both for culture, working methods, funding, supervision and compliance. There is also a need to continue to protect our culture - it is the culture that has both enabled, and will continue to enable, the successful development of the organisation. In addition, SWLLC will continue to proactively address the critical need to secure additional funding streams and protect its current ones. It will also need to proactively address the longer term succession plan issues and fully embed the Community Engagement Managers roles. Integral to all of this will be the need to maintain a cost effective organisation structure and the continued refinement of the culture focussed on client care, funding sources, funding models/sources, agile decision making and agile working. Some very significant progress has been made on these issues, but more can be done.

External Awards

The Law Centre was Highly Commended in the Excellence in Access to Justice Award in the Law Society Awards 2021.The judges were particularly impressed that we continued to offer legal advice throughout the pandemic and for the breadth of work done for clients, many of whom are extremely vulnerable. They also commended our new website with its bespoke triage forms that ensure people are quickly directed to the help they need.

Our Money Advice team was awarded the Debt Team of the Year Award in the inaugural Debt Free London Awards 2021.One of our housing solicitors was awarded an Outstanding Contribution Award from the Law Centres Network for her work in representing victims of domestic violence and championing new projects, including the establishment of the law centre's weekly appearance on a community radio show.

We were also shortlisted for the following awards in 2021:
- Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (Housing) - Jeinsen Lam
- IMA Money Adviser of the Year - Roni Marsh
- IMA Innovation and Impact Award - Money Advice Team
- The Society Excellence Awards: Access to Justice

Financial position

Financially, this year has been challenging coming out of the Covid19 pandemic. Overall there was reduced financial support and many funding streams remained closed and our legal income continued to be supressed. At the end of 2021 -22 our unrestricted reserves decreased to £453,368 which includes the value of our work in progress at £422,249. Importantly we continue to carry positive cash reserves.

Restrictions of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) continue to make it extremely difficult for the Law Centre to operate as fairly and effectively as it should, and we continue to find ways to address these difficulties. These include thinking of ways we can further harness the legal profession's support as well as increasing the number of grant-funded projects we can undertake. The charity's income for the year was £1,509,383 compared to £1,707,190 in 2020/21. The total expenditure in the year were £1,574,499 compared to £1,526,547 in 2020/21. The net result produced a deficit of £65,116 (2020/21 £180,643). Restricted funds decreased by £21,902 and unrestricted general funds decreased by £43,214.

SWLLC held funds of £615,555 at the year-end, of which £119,847 was restricted and £495,708 was unrestricted.

In 2021/22, South West London Law Centres' main source of funding was Grant Income, due to challenges around Legal Aid income. We received funding and grants from AB Charitable Trust, Access to Justice Foundation, Battersea Power Station, Blackrock - Tides Foundation, City Bridge Trust, Croydon Advice Providers, Debt Free London, Law Centre Network, Locality, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Merton, London Borough of Wandsworth, London Community Foundation, London Legal Support, Lottery - Help Through Crisis Fund, Providence House, Therium Access and Trust for London. SWLLC retained a number of donors and corporate sponsors as well as raising funds through various fundraising activities.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the following factors when considering a reserves policy:

- The organisation's contractual obligations to its staff in terms of parental rights, sickness pay and redundancy provisions;
- The organisation's obligations to maintain a safe and clean working environment;
- That certain equipment is essential for our work; and
- That the timing of legal aid income is uncertain.

The nature of the law centre's business means that at any one moment in time it has very considerable work in progress. This is reflected in its material reserve position. The Trustees have adopted a target for unrestricted reserves of three months expenditure which is approximately £427,500 At March 2022, our unrestricted reserves stood at £495,708 (2020/21 £538,922). Because reserves are effectively held as work in progress rather than cash the Trustees continue to prioritise effective management of work in progress turning it into cash as well as looking for other means whereby cash reserves can be built up. This will continue to be a major focus of the law centre's work in the coming year.

Going concern

The ongoing impact of Covid19 on the operational activities of South West London Law Centres has increased the focus on going concern. We still see considerable impact on the ability of the Law Centre to earn Legal Aid income through an effective 20 year freeze on rates and continual difficulties resulting from court restrictions during covid slowing down cases. Although there continued to be opportunities for Covid funding many other funding opportunities remained restricted in 2021/22. The Trustees continued measures to deal with this crisis, by undertaking a scenario-based budgeting exercise to quantify the potential deficit and put in place early savings measures.

As a result it was recognised early on that the current financial year to March 2023 would be difficult. Work continued on pilot projects which could be developed into longer term funding. Through the current year 2022/23 funding opportunities have opened and we have been successful in a number of longer three year commitments which provide more stability. New funding has been awarded from the Community Fund National Lottery, Trust for London and Greater London Authority.

A budget is being set for 2023/24, which continues to reflect the challenges that we face going forward. However, we are optimistic that the relationships that we have recently developed this year with new funders, and the efforts put into diversifying our fundraising based on new areas of demand, will assist towards meeting our commitments as well as seeing our legal income start to gradual increase back to more normal levels. The Budgets are regularly reviewed by the Trustees at Board level and through a Finance Sub Committee.

Fundraising note

We are mindful of the code issued by the Fundraising regulator. We did not use any third parties in our fundraising activities and no complaints were received in the year.

Principal risks and uncertainties

South West London Law Centres undertook a strategic review and developed a revised three year strategic plan. The law centre undertakes a formal risk management review throughout the year. This forms part of the business plan cycle. This involves identifying the types of risk the charity faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying ways of mitigating the risks. The major risks are reviewed regularly by the trustees on a quarterly basis through a risk register covering governance, regulatory and compliance, financial, operational and external factors.

Plans for the future: The Year Ahead – Our Strategic Objectives 2022–23

We appear to be entering a significant economic downturn which is likely to extend over a sustained period. Our plans will adjust to a changing environment that Covid and changing economic circumstances leave in their wake. Our potential client base is increasing as they feel the impact of the economic situation whilst the law centre itself has to ensure it is robust enough to survive the continuing initial economic and cash flow impact.

In 2021/22 we were able to pilot and start a number of projects. These have put us in a good position to bid for grants to expand our work through a number of multi-year grants which were gained post year end. We are looking to add additional grants to expand our work and tackle cases at an initial stage which will help feed work into our specialist teams.

Following on from the pilot crisis navigation work which was externally evaluated along with our five year welfare rights project Stepping Stones, we have been able to apply for larger project funding. We are looking to build upon this work so that tackling the cost of living crisis is at the heart and centre of the law centre. This means using crisis navigators to triage clients coming to the centre, to look at other support needed. This will give us more scope to carry out outreach in the community.

In 2020/21 we had pilot funding for a Community Engagement Manager. Through her work we have established a justice network giving us the ability to consult the local community on the services they want from the law centre. From this work we have able to obtain multiyear grants to secure this post.

We are in further discussions about expanding the scope of our pro bono work to undertake some limited casework. We are looking to pilot and integrate this as part of our cost of living work.

Our detailed strategy therefore, over the 3-year period is sound and flexible enough to adapt to the changing circumstances, but the timing of each component will inevitably need significant flexibility as we enter an uncertain period. The Management Team will have that flexibility to defer and pull forward strategic actions in this Plan and others that need to be embraced in a changing environment, with the support of the Trustees, as they progress through the uncertainty of the next 3 years. Whilst the Plan provides a background of our aspirations, SURVIVAL and BASIC PROTECTION of our Clients' interests and that of the Law Centre itself are paramount in this uncertain period and our key drivers.

Summary of the Next 3 years: Success is Unlocking Justice through...
- Growth with enhanced funding to match our clients' needs, both geographically and in areas of legal need.
- A good employer developing staff.
- Working smarter with technology in a smarter working environment.
- Convincing more sponsors that funding SWLLC is the right thing to do in order to meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable in our society: we have to succeed in this.

Where do we see the Law Centre in 3 years' time? SWLLC is...
- An established voice in London and nationally; a cutting-edge legal advocate for those in most need with professional external communications developing and promoting policy and campaigns developed from casework and strategic cases
- Financially stable, attractive to more and varied funders
- A One Stop Shop for our clients delivering holistic and integrated advice and casework: we deal with the whole of the problem, not just the symptoms
- Pro Bono clinics generating more than 50% of our caseload.
- Attracting and retaining staff including qualified staff through innovation in our staff offer and development opportunities.
- An efficient case and documentation management system.
- Smart premises.
- All brought together through great internal communications.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution and Organisational Structure

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended 15 December 2017, and was granted charitable status on 2 March 2004.

The overall responsibility of SWLLC belongs to the Trustees (board of directors) which meets bi-monthly. The Board is supported by a Finance Subcommittee. Day to day responsibility for managing the law centres is delegated to the charity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Marples and the Senior Management Team, comprised of the Deputy CEO, Stacey Edgar, Head of Legal Service and Housing Solicitor, Katy Forkah, and (until February 2022) Finance Manager, Gayathiri Nadarajah whose position is being recruited to. The remuneration for key management staff is determined by following a criteria of consistency with the responsibilities assigned, and alignment and success in achieving the organisation's overall strategic aims and prevailing market trends.

Appointment of trustees

SWLLC is a charitable company managed by a board of voluntary trustees comprised of local groups and individuals. Voluntary organisations from SWLLC's catchment area, representing vulnerable individuals and groups in need of our services, are encouraged to become members of the organisation and stand for election to the board as are concerned individuals from across the six boroughs. The amended articles changed the way that trustees are appointed. The size of the board is now restricted to 12 and trustees are eligible to stand for up to 2 terms of 4 years before a break. Trustees due for re-election retire from office at the AGM and those eligible can stand for re-election.

Trustee induction and training

Skill gaps on the Board are regularly identified and as a result efforts are made to identify new Trustees capable of filling any gaps. Induction and training of trustees is currently carried out on an ad-hoc basis as and when the needs arise. The Trustees have developed an induction programme and are reviewing training policies as part of its current review.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

There are no related parties' transactions.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of South West London Law Centres for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 30 January 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:

Allan Blake
Trustee

Independent auditor's report to the members of South West London Law Centres

Opinion
We have audited the financial statements of South West London Law Centres for the year ended 31 March 2022, which comprise the Statement of Financial activities, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of 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 2022 and of the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 charitable company'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 trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:
- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception
In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' 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 by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company 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 for the financial statements
As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on pages 15 and 16, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

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

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

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the regulatory requirements of the Charity Commission, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, and Payroll and Sales Taxes.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the posting of inappropriate journal entries or the manipulation of accounting estimates, such as the recognition of work in progress. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;

- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their critical accounting estimates.

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

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

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

Lee Stokes (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

Date: 30 January 2023

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Grants and donations	3	307,219	834,773	1,141,992	1,396,065
Legal and advice services	4	367,373	-	367,373	311,084
Investment income	5	18	-	18	41
Total		674,610	834,773	1,509,383	1,707,190
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	38,573	-	38,573	39,489
Charitable activities	7				
Legal and advice services		679,251	856,675	1,535,926	1,487,058
Total		717,824	856,675	1,574,499	1,526,547
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(43,214)	(21,902)	(65,116)	180,643
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		538,922	141,749	680,671	500,028
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		495,708	119,847	615,555	680,671

The notes form part of these financial statements

BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	13	11,951	-	11,951	18,566
CURRENT ASSETS					
Work in progress	14	422,249	-	422,249	392,350
Debtors	15	393,599	-	393,599	568,461
Cash at bank		113,993	119,847	233,840	343,968
		929,841	119,847	1,049,688	1,304,779
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(446,084)	-	(446,084)	(642,674)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		483,757	119,847	603,604	662,105
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		495,708	119,847	615,555	680,671
NET ASSETS		495,708	119,847	615,555	680,671
FUNDS	18				
Unrestricted funds				495,708	538,922
Restricted funds				119,847	141,749
TOTAL FUNDS				615,555	680,671

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 30 January 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

Allan Blake
Trustee

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(109,501)	121,074
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		(109,501)	121,074
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(645)	(21,134)
Interest paid		-	(146)
Interest received		18	41
Net cash used in investing activities		(627)	(21,239)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(110,128)	99,835
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		343,968	244,133
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		233,840	343,968

The notes form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(65,116)	180,643
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	7,260	2,568
Interest received	(18)	(41)
Interest paid	-	146
Increase in work in progress	(29,899)	-
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	174,862	(40,749)
Decrease in creditors	(196,590)	(21,493)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	(109,501)	121,074

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.21 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.22 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	343,968	(110,128)	233,840
Total	343,968	(110,128)	233,840

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF PREPARING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

GOING CONCERN

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The financial position, reserves levels and future plans gives the trustees confidence the Charity remains a going concern for the foreseeable future.

INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Legal Aid Agency income is accounted for on a receivable basis when the income is measurable and certain. In the case of Legal Aid, the Legal Aid Agency income is usually recognised once they have confirmed the payment. Legal Help income is recognised under the Unified Contract when SWLLC has closed the cases and is entitled to claim the fee.

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and covenants and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable.

Grant income is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is receivable or received whichever is the earlier.

EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Overheads have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of charitable activities.

Support costs are those incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Any irrecoverable VAT is written back to general expenditure.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with enabling the company to comply with external regulation, constitutional and statutory requirements, and in providing support to the Trustees in the discharge of their statutory duties.

TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised, where the benefits of capitalisation are material.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following basis:

Furniture, fittings and equipment - Over 3 years

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

WORK IN PROGRESS
Work in progress represents the value of all open legally aid funded cases. These cases had been opened but were not yet completed, as at 31 March 2022. Work in progress has been valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value taking into account payments that have already been received.

TAXATION
The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

FUND ACCOUNTING
General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

HIRE PURCHASE AND LEASING COMMITMENTS
Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS
The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Although these estimates are based on the trustees' best knowledge of the amount, events or actions actual results ultimately differ from these estimates. Estimates have been used in the calculation of the pension liability and valuation of the contribution by volunteers. The valuation of our work in progress is normally looked at on a quarterly basis, to assess the value of time earned but not billed. A provision is held against legal casework where it has been determined that the likelihood of recovery of costs is low.

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
General donations	19,483	13,875
City solicitors donations	116,863	161,000
Pro bono volunteers	37,500	48,580
London borough of Merton	56,000	56,000
London borough of Croydon	38,551	40,000
Other grants	873,595	1,076,611
	1,141,992	1,396,065

The charity received no donations in kind in 2022 (2021: NIL).

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS - continued

The charity has benefited during the year from pro bono legal volunteers, whose professional services had we paid for would have been valued at £1.6m (2021: £1.6m).

We have calculated the financial benefit provided to SWLLC, by the volunteers by estimating the cost of day time volunteers only. At a conservative estimate, daytime volunteers provide the equivalent of £37,500 in added value (£7.50ph administration/reception and £15ph casework support).

We estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers at around £1.6 million pounds - on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £168ph). We have used an estimated high street rate, which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover, and also assumed that rates have stayed fixed since last year.

4. LEGAL AND ADVICE SERVICES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Legal and advice services	367,373	311,084

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest receivable	18	41

6. RAISING FUNDS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Support costs - staff	31,122	31,948
Other support costs (see note 8)	7,451	7,541
	38,573	39,489

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Legal and advice services		
Direct staff costs	812,895	829,776
Direct activity costs	76,431	157,511
Support costs (see note 8)	646,600	499,772
	1,535,926	1,487,058

8. SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	Fundraising £	Charitable £	2022 £	2021 £
Staff costs	31,122	355,953	387,075	277,828
Premises costs	3,134	113,238	116,372	113,993
Office and administration	4,317	149,865	154,182	118,067
Insurance costs	-	6,115	6,115	29,374
Governance costs	-	21,429	21,429	-
Total	38,573	646,600	685,173	539,261

Overhead costs have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES – PRIOR YEAR

	Fundraising £	Charitable £	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs	31,948	245,880	277,828	306,580
Premises costs	3,288	110,705	113,993	107,762
Office and administration	3,406	114,661	118,067	-
Insurance costs	847	28,526	29,374	130,440
Governance costs	-		-	22,792
Total	39,489	499,772	539,261	567,574

9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2022	2021
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	15,000	13,345
Depreciation - owned assets	7,260	2,568
Hire of plant and machinery	32,408	13,805

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

TRUSTEES' EXPENSES

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

11. STAFF COSTS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,053,777	990,719
Social security costs	106,151	81,310
Other pension costs	43,838	35,654
	1,203,766	1,107,683

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Legal service and advice	26	29
Support and fundraising	11	13
	37	42

11. STAFF COSTS - continued

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year. The remuneration of the Charity's key management personnel in the year was £54,975 (2021: £56,716).

Redundancy payments were £2,690 (2021: NIL) in the year.

12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Grants and donations	336,193	1,059,872	1,396,065
Legal and advice services	311,084	-	311,084
Investment income	41	-	41
Total	647,318	1,059,872	1,707,190
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	39,489	-	39,489
Charitable activities			
Legal and advice services	509,792	977,266	1,487,058
Total	549,281	977,266	1,526,547
NET INCOME	98,037	82,606	180,643
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	440,885	59,143	500,028
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	538,922	141,749	680,671

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery £
COST	
At 1 April 2021	128,222
Additions	645
At 31 March 2022	128,867
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2021	109,656
Charge for year	7,260
At 31 March 2022	116,916
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2022	11,951
At 31 March 2021	18,566

14. WORK IN PROGRESS

	2022 £	2021 £
Work-in-progress	422,249	392,350

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	58,205	52,288
Other debtors	208,673	288,170
Prepayments and accrued income	126,721	228,003
	393,599	568,461

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022	2021
	£	£
Clients' funds held	109,916	165,960
Trade creditors	239,889	303,817
Social security and other taxes	30,729	32,545
Other creditors	21,083	14,167
Accrued expenses	44,467	126,185
	446,084	642,674

17. LEASING AGREEMENTS

As at 31 March 2022, the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Within 1 year	58,700	58,700	17,706	19,275
Between 2 and 5 years	51,958	94,800	56,368	70,824
Over 5 years	-	15,858	-	3,250
	110,658	169,358	74,074	93,349

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.21	Net movement in funds	At 31.3.22
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	520,356	(36,599)	483,757
Fixed asset fund	18,566	(6,615)	11,951
	538,922	(43,214)	495,708
Restricted funds			
General fund	141,749	(21,902)	119,847
TOTAL FUNDS	680,671	(65,116)	615,555

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Income	Expenditure	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	674,610	(711,209)	(36,599)
Fixed asset fund	-	(6,615)	(6,615)
	674,610	(717,824)	(43,214)
Restricted funds			
General fund	834,773	(856,675)	(21,902)
TOTAL FUNDS	1,509,383	(1,574,499)	(65,116)

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.20	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.3.21
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	440,885	98,037	(18,566)	520,356
Fixed asset fund	-	-	18,566	18,566
	440,885	98,037	-	538,922
Restricted funds				
General fund	59,143	82,606	-	141,749
TOTAL FUNDS	500,028	180,643	-	680,671

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Income	Expenditure	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	647,318	(549,281)	98,037
Restricted funds			
General fund	1,059,872	(977,266)	82,606
TOTAL FUNDS	1,707,190	(1,526,547)	180,643

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.20	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.3.22
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	440,885	61,438	(18,566)	483,757
Fixed asset fund	-	(6,615)	18,566	11,951
	440,885	54,823	-	495,708
Restricted funds				
General fund	59,143	60,704	-	119,847
TOTAL FUNDS	500,028	115,527	-	615,555

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Income	Expenditure	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,321,928	(1,260,490)	61,438
Fixed asset fund	-	(6,615)	(6,615)
	1,321,928	(1,267,105)	54,823
Restricted funds			
General fund	1,894,645	(1,833,941)	60,704
TOTAL FUNDS	3,216,573	(3,101,046)	115,527

Fixed Asset Fund
This represents the net book value of fixed assets held within unrestricted funds.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Carried Forward £
AB Charitable Trust	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Access to Justice Foundation	-	60,000	(60,000)	-
Battersea Power Station	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Blackrock - Tides Foundation	-	7,241	(7,241)	-
City Bridge Trust	2,121	52,500	(54,621)	-
Croydon Advice Providers	-	32,410	(32,410)	-
Debt Free London	-	251,167	(251,167)	-
Here for Good	-	53,493	(53,493)	-
Law Centre Network Crisis	-	13,000	(13,000)	-
Law Centre Network Employment	-	12,527	(12,527)	-
Locality	-	7,500	-	7,500
London Borough of Croydon	-	39,773	(30,841)	8,932
London Borough of Merton (EUSS)	-	34,355	(9,578)	24,777
London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS	-	24,000	-	24,000
London Borough of Wandsworth Home Office	-	32,799	(32,799)	-
London Borough of Wandsworth	-	7,500	(7,500)	-
London Community Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
London Legal Support Trust	5,000	-	-	5,000
London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey Grants	38,816	27,457	(31,802)	34,471
Lottery - Help Through Crisis Fund	63,256	-	(63,256)	-
Lottery	136	-	(136)	-
Providence House	-	8,574	(8,574)	-
Therium Access	26,163	26,163	(52,326)	-
Trust for London (Elan)	6,257	32,314	(38,571)	-
Trust for London	-	32,000	(29,333)	2,667
Trust for London - London Community Response Fund	-	50,000	(37,500)	12,500
Total	141,749	834,773	(856,675)	119,847

Purpose of restricted funds:

AB Charitable Trust is funding to pay for the post of a Communications manager.

Access to Justice Foundation - Post covid funding to support the continuing case work of the law centre

Battersea Power Station - A grant to temporarily fund a crisis navigator

Blackrock - Tides Foundation - a grant to start up a complaints clinic

City Bridge Trust is a grant to fund a volunteer support worker and related volunteer costs which successfully concluded in March 2022

Croydon Advice Providers - a partnership grant with Croydon Citizens Advice under Croydon Council's Community Fund for the provision of a pro bono clinic service in Croydon

Debt Free London income was received under a partnership grant with Toynbee Hal a consortium of other London advice agencies, funded by the Money and Pensions Service for face to face debt advice across South West London

Here for Good a grant to fund a EU Settlement Scheme caseworker seconded to Here for Good.

Law Centre Network Crisis, a partnership grant with Law Centres administered by the Law Centres Network to provide welfare rights and immigration support to Crisis Hubs.

Law Centre Network Employment funding to recruit and provide start up funding for a discrimination caseworker

Locality - a grant towards refurbishment cost of the Merton office

London Borough of Croydon was a grant received towards rent of the office at Davis House

London Borough of Merton - EUSS - a grant towards the funding of part of an immigration post specialising on helping those needing support with EUSS applications

London Borough of Wandsworth - EUSS - a grant towards the funding of part of an immigration post specialising on helping those needing support with EUSS applications

London Borough of Wandsworth - Home Office - a grant funded by the Home Office in partnership with Wandsworth Council and Citizens Advice Wandsworth to assist people with EUSS applications.

London Borough of Wandsworth - a temporary grant to provide a housing advice line and develop a housing clinic

London Community Foundation - A grant to temporarily fund a crisis navigator

London Legal Support Trust a donation towards core cost under their Centres of Excellence Scheme. Monies carried forward for the refurbishment of our offices in Merton

London Legal Support Trust - Kingston & Surrey Grants and funding raised to support the development of work in Kingston and Surrey.

Lottery - Help Through Crisis Fund is a five-year collaboration project funded by the Big Lottery to

provide casework and wraparound support under the project of Stepping Stones. The project successfully concluded in September 2021

Providence House - Funding through Wandsworth Council to temporarily fund a crisis navigator

Therium Access - A grant to fund a crisis navigator

Trust for London (Elan) a grant to support a coordinator for the Employment Legal Advice Network, a forum for employment advice agencies across London

Trust for London was a grant received towards the cost of an employment caseworker.

Trust for London - London Community Response Fund - Funding under the renewal funding that funded a new post of a Community Engagement Manager.

19. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The aggregate of donations received from the Trustees in the year was £360 (2021: NIL).

There were no other related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2022 (2021: NIL).

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

England & Wales - Charity number 1102433

Accounts

South West London Law Centres

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Company No. 05018587
Charity No. 1102433

Report and financial statements

For the year ended

31 March 2021

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Reference and administrative information

Trustees:	Chair	Allan Blake
	Treasurer	Ranil DeSilva
	Trustee	Olivier Ribert (resigned 30th March 2021)
	Trustee	Simon Tinkler
	Trustee	Sarah Towler
	Trustee	John Linwood
	Trustee	Marion Edge
	Trustee	Clara Clint
	Trustee	Sarmad Qureshi
Company Secretary:	Secretary	Clara Clint
Chief Executive:	Chief Executive	Patrick Marples
Company number:	05018587	
Charity number:	1102433	
Registered office:	5th Floor Davis House Robert Street Croydon CR0 1QQ	
Auditors:	Haysmacintyre LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1AG	
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ	

The trustees, who are also directors under company law, present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The trustees confirm that the financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association, Charities Act 2011 and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

Purposes and aims

The objects of the Charity are: the relief of poverty, suffering and distress by the provision of legal advice, assistance and representation, and the advancement of education for those resident, working or in full time education in South West London, including the London boroughs of Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth and, in exceptional circumstances, residents from other areas; and the promotion of other such purposes which are exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

The main activities undertaken in relation to those purposes are:

- Activity 1 - Delivery of professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law
- Activity 2 - Delivery of the housing court duty solicitor scheme in housing cases in Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston County Courts.
- Activity 3 - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service.

Public benefit

The Trustees referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the law centres aims and objectives and in planning and reviewing all our activities South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a community based, legal practice working to relieve poverty, suffering and distress for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our communities, in need of help at difficult times in their lives to resolve legal problems. We broadly help those who cannot afford a lawyer to access social welfare law. Public benefit is delivered by the provision of free legal advice or affordable charges for services and representation at court in social welfare law. The professional services and the housing court duty scheme are funded by legal aid, by grants, and donors, which operates from four branches in, Battersea, Croydon, Merton, and Kingston. Due to the pandemic, we adapted our services in 2020 so they could be delivered remotely through. Changes also had to be made to our outreach services and we were no longer able to visit clients in their own homes. We continue to charge for some services in employment and immigration where funding through legal aid is no longer available. Our Pro Bono legal advice clinics are free and staffed by volunteer advisors.

By these means, the Charity aims to improve access to justice to vulnerable members of the community in South West London.

Changes due to Covid 19

2020/21 was a really challenging year which, like many organisations, we were not fully prepared for. However, over the last year we have continued to operate and adapt with the same energy and commitment from the whole of our team; staff, trustees and volunteers.

When lockdown first happened in March 2020, the Law Centre rapidly moved to delivering our services remotely. Although a small number of staff have continued to go into our offices throughout lockdown, the majority have been working from home. The initial challenge this brought was huge due to our antiquated paper-based systems and limited admin support. Casework and clinics continued but productivity has been affected throughout the year by both internal and external factors. We have made progress through various Covid grants to keep services going after a significant fall off in legal aid income, and to update our IT equipment so that we can more effectively operate remotely. Every caseworker now has a laptop as well as other support. We continued to adapt our services, for example we have successfully hosted online money advice webinars - https://swllc.org/webinars/ which we are continuing to continue to bring in those needing money advice. As lockdown eases, we are resuming some face-to-face advice and much work has been done to ensure the safety of both our staff and clients.

In 2020/21 we assisted 5,802. Overall, the numbers we have helped are down from the previous year's total of 7452. This has been due to a combination of the difficulty of running a remote service as well as some of the impacts of Covid. Some of our more vulnerable clients have been protected through the increase in welfare benefits - universal credit, hold on evictions and many debt enforcement actions as well as the slowing down in the statutory decision making process that adversely affects our clients. We are also aware that there may be many more people with hidden problems are not reaching us, including those who are digitally excluded. We are pleased to have obtained funding for two crisis navigators, who were recruited in the year, and a community engagement manager, recruited in July 2021, to address both the immediate and anticipated increase in levels of demand as the various restrictions ease and saving measures of furlough and universal credit come to an end in autumn 2021, as well as helping bring some of the more difficult to reach to the law centre.

Volunteers

The use of volunteer has been, for a long time, at the heart of what this law centre does, with SWLLC running one of the largest Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic services in the country through a team of around 400 volunteer lawyers. This service aims to empower clients by encouraging them to take better steps to resolve problems themselves, with some limited follow-up by advisers' e.g. drafting documents or writing letters on clients' behalf.

Prior to the pandemic we hosted around 15 to 16 different clinics each week. In March 2020 the first national lockdown obliged us to transfer our busy drop in clinics to a fully remote service.

Although 2020/21 was a really challenging year we are very pleased that our collaborators adapted quickly to the remote telephone advice and that we continued to run the legal advice clinics, meeting the surge in new Covid related employment and housing enquiries as people faced with unprecedent problems caused by the national lockdown.

To facilitate the remote advice, we moved the service to appointment-based only, creating a new booking form to capture the service users information and case summary to pass on to the advisers. A new designated email address was created to receive supporting evidence from clients. The launch of our new website in June 2020 facilitated online triage with a contact form, which has made the journey for someone seeking help to being booked in with an adviser (or signposted to an alternative source of help) simple, easy and efficient. We have also updated the case management system which has shown that the demand for our services has expanded out of our geographic boundaries of our 6 boroughs, as we now receive request from assistance from around London and further afield. In Spring 2021 we carried out a survey with both the volunteers and clients who accessed the service with much positive feedback as well as areas to develop and change. We are currently working on developing a hybrid model of both remote and face to face service, including further technology and support to make this work more effectively.

Volunteers have normally helped us in every aspect of our work from supporting reception during the daytime and in the evening with administrative tasks, to working as casework assistants to support our casework teams. Work includes undertaking legal research, assisting with creating bundles of documents, note taking and drafting letters. Unfortunately the impact of the pandemic has meant we were unable to use these volunteers to the same extent and had to let most of them go as we did not have the capacity and resources to support them. As our offices have become more fully open, we are starting to rebuild our base of volunteers and we are looking more systematically at the roles we need to fill. Typically, our volunteers have been those seeking new skill/experience to get back into the job market or are students wishing to further their legal careers. On average our daytime volunteers, stay with the law centre between 3 to 6 months.

"The experience I've gained from volunteering has been really beneficial. The work can be challenging, and you never know what situation you'll have to deal with when you answer the phone, but it's been hugely valuable and a great opportunity to network and to learn from the team who've really taken the time to explain things to me. I don't think the same opportunity would have existed in private practice." Ilnta, volunteer

We estimate the value of our daytime volunteering to be £48,580 (23% of the previous year £210,945). An estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers is more than £1.5 million pounds – on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £164 per hour. This is a high street rate which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover at for our professional services in casework and representation in various areas of social welfare law.

"*Access to justice is a human right, but the legal world can be a maze of frustration and can exploit those not able to navigate it. I find it very rewarding to use my knowledge and experience to help those in need."* Simon, pro bono lawyer

Achievements and performance

In 2020/21, we assisted 5,802 clients (7,452 in 2019/20), with direct services and received over 60,000 calls for assistance. Much of the reduction in our work was due to the suspension of housing possession and eviction hearings. The suspension of housing possession cases lasted until September 2020 and evictions until June 2021. Even when restarted the court process has been slow. Other cases progressed more slowly as much the statutory decision making such as Home Office decisions slowed down.

In June 2020 we launched a new website with a dynamic, user friendly webform allowing enquirers to be triaged to get the help they need or to be signposted elsewhere. Since then we have regularly updated the website with news and articles to give information and help on a range of topics. The new website design featured in the digital fund learning blog on 9 October 2020: https://medium.com/digitalfund/law-centres-network-lessons-learned-so-far-c1c93f80c24c

Inputs	Activities	Outputs
Housing Team: Six solicitors, including one who undertakes community care and welfare rights cases plus one trainee (who qualified in the year) and two paralegals attached to the team **Debt Team;** Six case workers; **Immigration Team:** Seven (three solicitors and four OISC registered caseworkers) including one who undertakes public law **Employment Team:** Two caseworkers In addition 2 crisis navigators who were recruited to support the work of the housing and debt teams	**Activity I** - Provision of cases and representation in social welfare law covering the areas of community care, debt, discrimination employment, housing, immigration, asylum, public law and welfare rights	1,670 new cases (slowing down of statutory decision making reflected on the numbers of cases taken on. (1,758 2019/20) We carried forward 627cases at the start of the year.
Housing Team above	**Activity 2** – Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme	222 (1,172 2019/20) For much of the year the courts ceased to hear possession and eviction actions. Possession hearings resumed in September 2020 with eviction in June 2021

Client Services Manager, daytime and evening reception staff, and pro bono lawyers	**Activity 3** - Pro Bono Legal Advice Clinic service delivered remotely since March 2020	3,283 clients seen (3,975 2019/20).

Activity 1

Outcomes - full specialist casework service in a broad range of social welfare law in the areas of community care, debt, discrimination, employment, housing, immigration and asylum, public law and welfare rights – collectively referred to as 'Social welfare law'. Our legal work has a broad range of outcomes:

- **Community Care Law -** We help people get the appropriate community care assessment and services that they are entitled to.
- **Debt** - We help people with a strategy for dealing with debts as early as possible in the process as well as challenging unenforceable debts.
- **Employment Law –** We help people on a wide range of issues including; dismissal, suspension, discrimination, unpaid wages and failure to pay the minimum wage; notice or redundancy pay, holiday pay, breach of contract, grievances, appeals; and settlement agreements. We have specialised in discrimination cases
- **Housing -** We work with people on a wide-range of different housing issues covering possession, unlawful eviction, homelessness, disrepair and anti-social behaviour.
- **Immigration and asylum -** We cover a broad range of services including those that that are no longer covered by legal aid on immigration and asylum issue focusing on applications for leave to remain on human rights grounds and procedures to stop deportation. We have worked on the EUSS scheme
- **Public law -**We have the ability to litigate against public authorities, this includes dealing with Home Office delays and refusals to make decisions on immigration and asylum cases.
- **Welfare Rights -** We can assist people with cases including appeals to the second tier Tribunal. We can further litigate suitable cases beyond this.
- **Crisis Navigation** – We can support people to maximise their income; claim the right benefits and get further assistance such as claim grants for individuals in need.

Impact – There are a range of impacts from our casework including:

- Our **community care** casework enables people with mental illness, learning disabilities or other care needs to get the support they are entitled to. This also helps to reduce isolation for these often very lonely individuals struggling to cope alone in the community.

- Our **debt** work is focussed on reducing debt and finding affordable and manageable debt solutions. We work with individuals and families to calculate an affordable budget, so that they can get back on track. We also help people to apply for grants from a variety of sources to support their everyday needs.

  Our debt team, which is funded through Debt Free London, supported 1,400 people last year.

Daniel is a single father of young children. He came to the Law Centre with a number of debts, including gas and electric arrears, council tax, credit card bills and benefits overpayments and was struggling to meet the repayments. Our debt adviser helped him identify his priority debts so he could pay off his council tax and helped arrange a pre-payment meter for his gas and electricity. As a result his anxiety has significantly reduced and he has a clear path ahead for repaying his debts.

"Going to the Law Centre was the best choice I ever made. Everything worked out perfectly. They balanced everything out for me. I feel so reassured: they motivated me and built up my confidence. My financial situation is much better. I have money to feed my family. I can move on with my life. I'm so happy."

As a result of the pandemic, the numbers of people needing debt advice has increased significantly. To address this, our debt team has devised and run a number of hour-long webinars on a range of topics. These have been greatly appreciated both by members of our community and other advice agencies. "Of those surveyed, 100% said they felt more confident managing their money having attended one of our free webinars."

During the year we also expanded our debt work to bridge the gap with our housing team, through the introduction of our new crisis navigation service. Our two crisis navigators work with people who are unable to afford their essential payments and are at risk of losing their home as a result. Through their urgent intervention they can apply for discounts and grants on a client's behalf and advise on benefits claims to help people stay in their homes.

Charlie has a long-term health condition. He came to the Law Centre because his Personal Independence Payment had stopped and he did not understand why. Our crisis navigator helped him write a mandatory letter of reconsideration and helped his gather proof to show that he was unable to do a lot of the different activities in the daily living and mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment. As a result, he was awarded both the enhanced rate for mobility and enhanced rate for daily living and his payments were backdated to the date they stopped.

"If it were not for the services of South West London Law Centres, I would not be able to get my Personal Independence Payment back."

- Our **employment** work helps people to remain in their jobs and where appropriate to get redress for bad employment practice.

This role is funded through grant funding and through various methods of affordable charging. This year we took on 22 new cases and increased our reach through using volunteers to support our weekly employment advice clinics where we advised 805 people along with our general pro bono clinics. We have increased our capacity to take on more casework and have recruited a further part time employment caseworker to specialise in discrimination cases.

Ellie came to the Law Centre having been dismissed from her job because she refused the sexual advances of her employer. We were able to represent her and take her former employer to an employment tribunal for sexual harassment and victimisation. We won as the employer declined to give any evidence on the day, preferring to advance his wife as the only witness. There were difficulties enforcing the tribunal award which in the end was secured by bailiffs and amounted to a little over £10,000.

"When I got the news that the money had been paid, I sat on my living room floor and cried with relief. I can now close that chapter of my life. It's done. I've been through it and come out on top."

- Our **housing** work helps keep people in their homes by defending eviction proceedings, live in decent homes by getting repairs carried out. We also act for the homeless who are eligible by ensuring local authorities accept their statutory duties to provide housing. We started 62 new cases and 222 were assisted as part of Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme

  Sara was working a zero hours contract. When her son was diagnosed with a rare brain disorder, she had to spend a lot of time with him in hospital and her income reduced as a result. She got behind on her rent and was also struggling with mental health difficulties. Her landlord tried to evict her due to her rent arrears but our housing solicitor raised that their failure to take into account the impact of both her son's illness and her mental health issues on her ability to pay the rent and deal with her benefits, was a breach of the Equality Act 2010, and that the property was in a state of disrepair.

  "L-- looked into my housing benefit and discovered that there had been a mistake with the payment and I was owed £4,200. This not only covered the rent arrears but left my account in credit of about £1,000! The case was settled by consent: the local authority landlord agreed for the possession order to be discharged and that they would inspect and carry out repairs to the property. I was so relieved – paying the rent had always been a struggle but now I knew my children would have a roof over their heads. I felt like crying!"

- Our work with **migrants and asylum seekers**, is focussed on enabling them to get Leave to Remain. With this 'gateway' status, they can work and earn an income legally, re-unite with family left behind and maximise their life chances. Many of the people who eventually come to us have failed to have their cases fully dealt with and were exploited by other lawyers.

  Our small team specialises in dealing with unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, domestic violence and minority groups such as LGBTQ+. We started 91 new cases - 76 of them from various Home Office funded projects to help vulnerable people with complex applications to get settled status under the EUSS scheme. The later of which was in a joint project with Wandsworth Citizen Advice and the council helping rough sleepers to get EUSS status.

  Helene is a political activist but had to flee her home country having been tortured and gang raped. She was also suffering from mental health difficulties as a result of her experience and has since received more than five years of therapy and counselling in the UK from Freedom

from Torture. Helene made an initial asylum claim in the UK, which failed, and having exhausted her appeal process she then came to the Law Centre in 2017 at which point our solicitor took on her case. After a very long process, Helene finally won her fresh asylum claim appeal.

> *"*I would just like to express my sincere thanks to you for all the help you have provided me throughout what has been quite a stressful period in my life. That period goes from the day I came to the UK (19 September 2013) to the day I received your call (29 June 2021) informing me that my asylum case was sorted out."

- Our **welfare rights** work helps people to win welfare rights challenges and get them properly heard by a tribunal. We also run innovative projects – such as Stepping Stones run with project partners Zacchaeus 2000 Trust to help people address the underlying causes of benefits problems, such as a language barrier or mental health difficulties, while a caseworker helps bring benefit appeals to ensure people have enough money to meet their basic needs. In the last reported year, we worked on 302 cases; 92 of these were brought forward from previous years, Across the project we recovered £1,165,140 in financial benefit for our clients. Over the 5 years of the project, we have worked with 504 clients, assisting them to recover over £5.5m in financial gains.

  Sally had accumulated over £2,000 of rent arrears as a result of complications with her Universal Credit payments and issues around financial awareness. She had an introductory tenancy with the local authority who sought possession on mandatory grounds, resulting in an outright order for possession. She was facing eviction but we have supported her over the past 18 months to manage her benefits to ensure that she was paying her rent and the arrears payments set by the court. We've also provided ongoing wraparound support and earlier this year asked her local MP to intervene in her homelessness case. As a result, the local authority decided not to evict Sally because she's been staying on top of her rent payments and is reducing the arrears. She's been given a second chance and she can stay in her home.

Activity 2

Outcome - **Emergency housing representation across 3 county courts**: Croydon, Wandsworth and Kingston for hearings listed that day. This helps clients to defend themselves against possession / home evictions in both rented and mortgage cases.

Our duty solicitors have provided emergency legal advice/representation to our clients last year in three courts and saved many from eviction often providing pro bono benefit assistance to address underlying issues relating to the benefit cap/bedroom tax.

Work was severely curtailed in the last year as there was a suspension of possession hearings and a ban on evictions. The courts restarted to hear cases under a new mainly remote system of a hybrid 2 stage process of a review and a final hearing. The number of cases being brought to court has dramatically reduced. The suspension of housing possession cases lasted until September 2020 and evictions until June 2021.

Impact - We continue to achieve a high success rate. In 2020/21 we represented 222 people with a success rate in 57% of cases. This is reduction on previous years reflecting the fact that only the most serious cases reached a court hearing making them more difficult to overturn and in many of these cases the court had little discretion. We are able to help people to gain time to sort out their affairs.

Helen had a possession case brought against her by her housing association for rent arrears. Our court duty solicitor raised that the housing association was in breach of their repairing obligations. She also helped Helen apply for backdated housing benefit, and the award of £8,200 meant Helen could clear the arrears in full.

"When I heard that my rent arrears had been cleared, it was such a relief – it felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I'd lived in my house for over 20 years and we'd worked hard to make it a home. Knowing my son and I wouldn't have to move changed everything, and for the first time in a long time I'm in credit again."

Activity 3

Outcome – Our Volunteering Programme Our clinic program ran remotely from March 2020 addressing legal problems in their early stages covering a wide range of legal subjects: Crime, Criminal Injury, Consumer, Employment, Family, General Litigation, Housing, Immigration, Inquests, Motoring Offences, Personal Injury, Small Claims, Wills and Probate.

Impact - The impact of a timely, accurate legal advice through a personalised intervention can prevent a problem from escalating and becoming far more damaging for an individual (as well as costly to taxpayers). Our pro bono advice clinics not only provide an avenue for clients to seek legal redress; they also empower them with new knowledge of the law and their rights, thereby increasing their confidence and capacity to approach legal problems. Our advice also helps improve the efficacy of other public services such as education, health or social services by helping eligible people exercise their rights to access these services in a timely fashion.

"Access to justice is one of the foundations of our society; without it, in my view, the system simply cannot work. A major barrier to accessing justice is a lack of knowledge and understanding of the law among the population in general. With the legal system in the shape it is in currently, it will not work without ongoing support from the pro bono advice sector." Jonathon, pro bono lawyer

"I was very impressed with the professionalism and the way my issues were handled. Thank you very much again."

"I think SWL Law Centre gives [an] amazing service, even during the pandemic they have advised us promptly. Thank you everyone."

"I just wanted to say thank you for giving me an appointment yesterday with such a great solicitor! He was really helpful and lifted a huge weight off my shoulders. Thank you to all your team who works so hard to help us all out."

Our other major achievements have included:

Operational successes

Throughout this period, the Law Centre has taken various steps to secure its future, which have borne fruit:

Continued operating surplus – Much of the Senior Management Team's work has been involved in maintaining our cashflow in a difficult operating environment. This became more difficult with a large fall off in legal aid income following the closure of courts and slow down in statutory decision making which drives much of our casework. We were successful in getting a number of covid related and short-term grants which covered these losses; enabled the law centre to facilitate remote working as well as increase our casework team.

- **Increased grant funding -** We are grateful for the support provided by our funders that allowed us to continue to operate in these difficult times. As well as our being supported by our existing funders we were able to obtain a range of new funding and covid related support from Community Justice Fund, Law Centres Network, Funders Plus, Lottery Community Fund, Croydon Council, Battersea Power Station Foundation, Wandsworth Council. New project funding was obtained from Wandsworth Council and Therium Access.

- **Maintaining quality** – We continued to pass both our Lexcel and Legal Aid quality audits remotely with a positive audit assessment. Our last audit took place at the beginning of the pandemic: *"Despite the current difficulties and challenges, SWLLC should be highly commended for achieving a high level of compliance against the Lexcel Standard. There will still be short term challenges around continuing to sustain those high levels of compliance in the face of continuing change and development both internally and externally. It remains very clear, however, that compliance remains a well embedded part of the culture and, in Lexcel terms, SWLLC is an extremely efficient and extremely well-run organisation!! The significant ongoing work, and influence, of the Head of Legal Practice/Lexcel SRO does continue to provide a stable platform from which to address those challenges.*

  Going forward, the key challenges will continue to be around sustaining those high levels of compliance in a continuing period of significant change, development and not a little uncertainty. There is a clear priority to continue to proactively monitor performance, ensure prompt and effective billing, and reduce WIP. In addition, the Centre will need to continue to proactively address the critical need to secure additional funding streams and/or protect its current ones in order to stabilise, and then improve, its financial position. Given the current context, a critical challenge for the Centre will be to continue to build upon the proactive work being done to develop and implement a strategy which will enable an effective exit from lockdown/working from home. This should enable the Centre to then continue to both develop and grow. The Centre will need to consider what any "new normal" might mean both for culture, working methods, funding, supervision and compliance. Integral to all of this will be the need to maintain a cost effective organisation structure, and the continued development

of a culture which will need to remain proactively focussed on client care, funding sources, agile decision making and agile working."

- **Staff Team** – Increased the staff team to meet growing areas of demand and to help reach out to people as we emerge from the pandemic. Over the year we recruited a part time discrimination caseworker; an EUSS immigration project caseworker; 2 crisis navigators. We also increased our management capacity by recruiting a deputy CEO. After year we have recruited a Community Engagement Manager who role is to engage with our local communities and find out from them what they want from a law centre.
- **Excellence recognised**: In July 2020 the Law Centre was awarded the Legal Aid Firm of the Year Award 2020 in The Legal Aid Lawyers of the Year Awards (LALYs), 'the Oscars of the legal aid world'. The awards recognise excellence among social justice lawyers and firms, including not-for-profit law centres like ours. The judges summed up our work as follows:

> "*Your energy and commitment seem absolutely limitless. You do incredibly serious and important work."*

Our work in 2020 has also been recognised with shortlisting's in the following 2021 awards:

- Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year (Housing) – Jeinsen Lam
- IMA Money Adviser of the Year – Roni Marsh
- IMA Innovation and Impact Award – Money Advice Team
- The Society Excellence Awards: Access to Justice

Financial review

Financially, this year has been challenging due to Covid related challenges. The receipt of Covid relief grants, as well as other savings measures were instrumental in finishing the year with a surplus. We anticipate that the impact of successive lockdowns, and the knock-on impact this had on our ability to earn new work will be felt more in future years. At the end of 2020- 21 our unrestricted reserves increased to £538,922 which includes the value of our work in progress at £392,350 and continuing the trend from last year we are carrying cash reserves.

Restrictions of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) continue to make it extremely difficult for the Law Centre to operate as fairly and effectively as it should, and we continue to find ways to address these difficulties. These include thinking of ways we can further harness the legal profession's support as well increasing the number of grant funded projects we can undertake. The charity's income for the year was £1,707,191 compared to £1,568,376 in 2019/20. The total expenditure in the year were £1,526,548 compared to £1,527,052 in 2019/20. The net result produced a surplus of £180,643 (2019/20 £41,692). Restricted funds increased by £82,606 and unrestricted general funds increased by £98,037.

SWLLC held funds of £680,671 at the year-end, of which £141,749 was restricted and £538,922 was unrestricted. The free cash balance at the end of the year was £36,259 (2019/20: £24,193) –(Cash at bank less monies held on client account and restricted funds)

In 2020/21, South West London Law Centres' main source of funding was Grant Income, due to challenges around Legal Aid income. We received funding and grants from AB Charitable Trust, Battersea Power Station Foundation, Big Lottery Help through Crisis, City Bridge Trust, Community Justice Fund, Croydon Council, Debt Free London (Money and Pensions Service), Law Centres Network, Funders Plus, Legal Education Fund, London Legal Support Trust, Lottery Community Fund, Merton Council, Therium Access, Trust for London and Wandsworth Council. SWLLC retained a number of donors and corporate sponsors as well as raising funds through various fundraising activities.

Reserve policy

The Trustees have considered the following factors when considering a reserves policy:

- The organisation's contractual obligations to its staff in terms of parental rights, sickness pay and redundancy provisions;
- The organisation's obligations to maintain a safe and clean working environment;
- That certain equipment is essential for our work; and
- That the timing of legal aid income is uncertain.

The nature of the Centre's business means that at any one moment in time the Centre has very considerable work in progress. This is reflected in its material reserve position. The Trustees have adopted a target for unrestricted reserves of three months expenditure which is approximately. £250,000. At March 2021, our unrestricted reserves stood at £538,922 (2019/20 £440,885) Because reserves are effectively held as work in progress rather than cash the Trustees continue to prioritise effective management of work in progress turning it into cash as well as looking for other means whereby cash reserves can be built up. This will continue to be a major focus of the law centres work in the coming year

Going concern

The impact of Covid19 on the operational activities of South West London Law Centres has increased the focus on going concern. The lockdown had a considerable impact on the ability of the Law Centre to earn Legal Aid income, particularly on our housing team. The Trustees put in place early measures to deal with this crisis, by undertaking a scenario-based budgeting exercise to quantify the potential deficit and put in place early savings measures.

SWLLC received £274,000 from the Community Justice Fund during 2020/21, along with several other COVID-19-related grants and reliefs totalling up to £58,526. Part of this was used to invest in new IT equipment to facilitate homeworking and new ways of providing our services. We also invested in new posts to expand our services in immigration and employment. The balance will be used to cover for the loss in income resulting from the lower volume of new legal aid matters opened during this year, which is likely to have an impact on our Work in Progress going forward. We are also aiming to bill out our existing Work in Progress at a faster rate.

A budget for 2022 - 23 has been set, which reflects the challenges that we will face next year. However, we are optimistic that the relationships that we have recently developed ~~this year~~ with new funders, and the efforts put into diversifying our fundraising into based on new areas of demand, will assist towards meeting our commitments as well as seeing our legal income start to gradual increase back to more normal levels. The Budgets are regularly reviewed by the Trustees at Board level and through a Finance Sub Committee.

Fundraising note

We are mindful of the code issued by the Fundraising regulator. We did not use any third parties in our fundraising activities and no complaints were received in the year.

Principal risks and uncertainties

South West London Law Centres undertook a strategic review late last year to develop a new 3 year strategic plan The law centre undertakes a formal risk management review throughout the year. This forms part of the business plan cycle. This involves identifying the types of risk the charity faces, prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence, and identifying ways of mitigating the risks. The major risks are stated below and the full risk review is contained in business plan.

Risk Description	Potential Implications	Mitigating Actions
Loss of staff in the Senior Management Team	Loss of knowledge within the team - inability to carry out various management/facilities functions	Share knowledge within the team - 3 month notice period
Loss of casework staff together with the challenge of replacing/recruiting suitable staff	Loss of knowledge within the relevant team- inability to perform contracts	Continue to develop the team with trainees and newly qualified solicitors and in small teams - need to train up other caseworkers who are able to meet the supervisor requirements - 3 month notice period - Review of remuneration to remain competitive
Negligent advice - Failure to pass Legal Aid Agency audit	Poor service - Loss of contracts – recovery of costs – extrapolation of recovery	File reviews – supervision systems - Lexcel accreditation
Failure to meet income targets for casework	Cause severe financial difficulties for the law centre and may affect our viability	Performance review – regular billing and work in progress reports distributed to all casework staff Dedicated billing co-ordinator in post
Failure to meet targets under various grant funded projects	Loss or reduction of grant	Regular monitoring and review Project based meeting

Failure of equipment – unable to use an office	Unable to work in office	Use another SWLLC office – Business continuity plan

Plans for the future: The Year Ahead – Our Strategic Objectives 2020–23

Impact of COV-19

The year 2020, and probably some considerable time after this, has been torn apart by COV-19 and its aftermath. Our plans will have to adjust to an as yet unknown future environment that COV-19 leaves in its wake. It is highly likely there will be a significant economic recession over a sustained period. All of our aspirations and priorities will be impacted in an unknown way. Our potential client base is likely to expand significantly as they feel the impact of the economic consequences of COV-19 whilst SWLLC itself has to ensure it is robust enough to survive the initial economic (cash flow) shock which may or may not be mitigated by central government support. Our detailed strategy over the 3 year period is sound and flexible enough to adapt to the changing circumstances but the timing of each component will inevitably need significant flexibility as we enter a very uncertain period. The Management Team will have that flexibility to defer and pull forward strategic actions in this Plan and others that need to be embraced in a changing environment, briefing the Trustees as they progress through the uncertainty of the next 3 years. Whilst the Plan provides a background of our aspirations, SURVIVAL and BASIC PROTECTION of our Clients' interests are paramount in this uncertain period and our key drivers.

Summary of the Next 3 years: Success is Unlocking Justice through…

- Growth with enhanced funding to match our clients' needs, both geographically and in areas of legal need.
- A good employer developing staff.
- Working smarter with technology in a smarter working environment.
- Convincing more sponsors that funding SWLLC is the right thing to do in order to meet the legal needs of the most vulnerable in our society: we have to succeed in this.

Where do we see the Law Centre in 3 years' time 2023? SWLLC is…

- An established voice in London and nationally; a cutting-edge legal advocate for those in most need with professional external communications developing and promoting policy and campaigns developed from casework and strategic cases
- Financially stable, attractive to more and varied funders
- A One Stop Shop for our clients delivering holistic and integrated advice and casework: we deal with the whole of the problem, not just the symptoms
- Pro Bono clinics generating more than 50% of our caseload.
- Attracting and retaining staff including qualified staff through innovation in our staff offer and development opportunities.
- An efficient case and documentation management system.
- Smart premises.
- All brought together through great internal communications.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution and Organisational Structure

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were amended 15 December 2017,and was granted charitable status on 2 March 2004. The overall responsibility of SWLLC belongs to the Trustees (board of directors) which meets bi-monthly. The Board is supported by a Finance Subcommittee. Day to day responsibility for managing the law centres is delegated to the charity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Patrick Marples and the Senior Management Team, comprised of the Deputy CEO, Stacey Edgar, Head of Legal Service and Housing Solicitor, Katy Forkah, and Finance Manager, Gayathiri Nadarajah. The remuneration for key management staff is determined by following a criteria of consistency with the responsibilities assigned, and alignment and success in achieving the organisation's overall strategic aims and prevailing market trends.

Appointment of trustees

SWLLC is a charitable company managed by a board of voluntary trustees comprised of local groups and individuals. Voluntary organisations from SWLLC's catchment area, representing vulnerable individuals and groups in need of our services, are encouraged to become members of the organisation and stand for election to the board as are concerned individuals from across the six boroughs. The amended articles changed the way that trustees are appointed. The size of the board is now restricted to 12 and trustees are eligible to stand for up to 2 terms of 4 years before a break. Trustees due for re-election retire from office at the AGM and those eligible can stand for re-election. During the transition from the old board structure the board is going through a process of recruiting new trustees.

Trustee induction and training

Skill gaps on the Board are regularly identified and as a result efforts are made to identify new Trustees capable of filling any gaps. Induction and training of trustees is currently carried out on an ad-hoc basis as and when the needs arise. The Trustees are in the process of developing an induction pack and reviewing training policies as part of its current review.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

There are no related parties' transactions.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2021 was 85 (2020: 85). The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Statement as to disclosure to our auditors

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

The trustees' report has been approved by the trustees on 31 January 2022

And signed on their behalf by;

Meena Jaka 31/1/22

.....

Name

Trustee

South West London Law Centres

Independent auditors' report to the members of South West London Law Centres

For the year ended 31 March 2020

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the South West London Law Centres for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of 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 2020 and of the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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.

Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 14, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but this 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.

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charitable company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared 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 charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report (which incorporates the directors' 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 by the charitable company; or
- the charitable company 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.

Use of this 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.

Murtazza Jessa

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Murtaza Jessa
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP, Statutory Auditors

10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

31 January 2022

South West London Law Centres

Statement of financial activities (Incorporating income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total funds 2021	Total funds 2020
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Grants and Donations	2	1,059,873	336,193	1,396,066	1,029,880
Legal and advice services	3	-	311,084	311,084	538,765
Investments		-	41	41	99
TOTAL INCOME		1,059,873	647,318	1,707,191	1,568,376
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Raising Funds	4	-	39,488	39,488	40,165
Charitable Activities - Legal and advice services	5	977,267	509,793	1,487,060	1,486,887
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		977,267	549,281	1,526,548	1,527,052
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR		82,606	98,037	180,643	41,692
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS: Total funds at 1 April 2020		59,143	440,885	500,028	458,336
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2021		141,749	538,922	680,671	500,028

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 22 to 31 form part of these financial statements

All amounts derive from continuing activities.

South West London Law Centres company number: 05018587

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	9		18,566		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Work in progress	10	392,350		392,350	
Debtors	11	568,461		527,712	
Cash at bank		343,968		244,133	
		1,304,780		1,164,195	
CREDITORS: mounts falling due within one year	12	(642,675)		(664,167)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			662,105		500,028
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			680,671		500,028
NET ASSETS			680,671		500,028
CHARITY FUNDS					
Restricted Funds	13		141,749		59,143
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	13		538,922		440,885
			680,671		500,028

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf on

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Allan Blake
Director and Trustee (Chair)

.....

Ranil DeSilva
Director and Trustee (Treasurer)

The notes on pages 22 to 31 form part of these financial statements.

South West London Law Centres

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2020

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Net cash provided (used in)/by operating activities	A	120,781	(12,696)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest income		41	99
Interest paid		146	(94)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(21,134)	
Cash provided by/used in) investing activities		(20,947)	5
(Decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year		99,834	(12,691)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		244,133	256,824
Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		343,967	244,133

A: RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period	180,643	41,692
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(41)	(99)
Interest paid	146	94
Depreciation charge	2,276	
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(40,749)	(68,311)
(Increase)/decrease in work in progress	-	
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(21,493)	13,928
Net cash provided (used in)/by operating activities	120,781	(12,696)

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash held at bank	343,968	244,133

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019 – (Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and Companies Act 2006.

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

1.2 Company status

The company is a company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales (Company no. 05018587). The members of the company are the Directors named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company.

1.3 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

All income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the company is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy and receipt is probable.

Legal Aid Agency income is accounted for on a receivable basis when the income is measurable and certain. In the case of Legal Aid, the Legal Aid Agency income is usually recognised once they have confirmed the payment. Legal Help income is recognised under the Unified Contract when SWLLC has closed the cases and is entitled to claim the fee.

Voluntary income is received by way of donations and covenants and is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable.

Grant income is recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which it is receivable or received whichever is the earlier.

1.5 Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Overheads have been allocated on the basis of staff time.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Support costs are those incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the company. Any irrecoverable VAT is written back to general expenditure.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with enabling the company to comply with external regulation, constitutional and statutory requirements, and in providing support to the Trustees in the discharge of their statutory duties.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Assets costing more than £100 are capitalised, where it the benefits of capitalisation are material

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Furniture fittings and equipment - Over 3 years

1.7 Work in progress

Work in Progress represents the value of all open legally aid funded cases. These cases had been opened but were not yet completed, as at 31 March 2021. Work in progress has been valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value taking into account payments that have already been received.

1.8 Operating leases

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to the SOFA as incurred.

1.9 Pensions

The company contributes to defined contribution pension schemes for employees which are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable under the scheme by the company to the schemes. The society has no liability under the scheme other than for payment of those contributions.

1.10 Investment policy

The charity does not hold sufficient funds to invest for the medium or long term. Investment income derives from bank interest paid on current and deposit accounts. All reserves are needed for working capital requirements. Should the charity find itself in a position to invest for the longer term, the Trustees would select low risk investment opportunities, such as fixed deposits and short term bonds.

1.11 Preparation of accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue

as a going concern the review of our financial position, reserves levels and future plans gives Trustees confidence the charity remains a going concern for the foreseeable future.

1.12 Financial Instruments

The charitable company only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.13 Debtors

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

1.14 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account. Cash includes monies held in client account relating to client monies and monies owed to third parties such as the Legal Aid Agency. The client account stood at £165,960.

1.15 Creditors and provisions

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

1.16 Estimates and Judgements

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Although these estimates are based on the trustees' best knowledge of the amount, events or actions actual results ultimately differ from these estimates. Estimates have been used in the calculation of the pension liability and valuation of the contribution by volunteers. The valuation of our work in progress is normally looked at on a quarterly basis, to assess the value of time earned but not billed. A provision is held against legal casework where it has been determined that the likelihood of recovery of costs is low.

2. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Total Funds 2021	Total Funds 2020
	£	£
General donations	13,875	32,156
City solicitors' donations	161,000	146,717
Pro Bono Legal Volunteers	48,580	206,955
London Borough of Merton	56,000	56,000
London Borough of Croydon	40,000	73,0002
Other Grants	1,076,611	515,052
	1,396,066	1,029,880

The charity received no donations in kind in 2021 (2020 – nil).

The charity has benefited during the year from pro bono legal volunteers, whose professional services had we paid for would have been valued at £1.6m (2020: £2m).
We have calculated the financial benefit provided to SWLLC, by the volunteers by estimating the cost of day time volunteers only. At a conservative estimate, daytime volunteers provide the equivalent of £48,580 in added value (£7.50ph administration/reception and £15ph casework support)

We estimate the value of pro bono work provided by our evening volunteers at around £1.6 million pounds – on the basis that each client (including follow up work and supervision time can take a combined total of volunteer 3 hours at a cost of £168p). We have used an estimated high street rate, which is higher than the legal rates that the law centre staff recover, and also assumed that rates have stayed fixed since last year.

3. LEGAL INCOME	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Legal and Advice Services	311,084	538,765
	311,084	538,765

4. RAISING FUNDS	2021 £	2020 £
Support costs – staff	31,948	28,742
Other support costs (see note 6)	7,541	11,243
	39,488	39,985

5. EXPENDITURE ON ACTIVITIES	2021	2020
	£	£
LEGAL AND ADVICE SERVICES		
Direct staff costs	829,776	684,793
Direct activity costs	157,511	274,685
Support costs (see note 6)	499,772	527,409
	1,487,060	1,486,887

6. SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES

	Fundraising £	Charitable £	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs	31,948	245,880	277,828	306,580
Premises costs	3,288	110,705	113,993	107,762
Office, administration and	3,406	114,661	118,067	
insurance costs	847	28,526	29,374	130,440
Governance costs				22,792
Total	39,488	499,772	539,261	567,574

Overhead costs have been allocated to activities on the basis of staff time.

SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES -PRIOR YEAR

	Fundraising £	Charitable £	2020 £	2019 £
Staff costs	28,742	277.838	306,580	267,206
Premises costs	4,717	103,045	107,762	99,430
Office, administration and insurance costs	5,709	124,731	130,440	126,501
Governance costs	997	21,795	22,792	20,288
Total	40,165	527,409	567,574	513,425

7. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
This is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets:		
- owned by the charity	2568	-
Auditors' remuneration - audit services	13,345	11,097
Pension costs	35,654	35,654

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or benefits in kind (2020- £Nil).
During the year, no Trustees received reimbursement of expenses (2020 - £Nil).

8. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs were as follows:		
Wages and salaries	990,639	874,408
Social security costs	81,310	81,310
Pension costs	35,654	35,654
	1,107,604	991,372

	No.	No.
Legal service and advice	29	25
Support and fundraising	13	13
	41	38

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year. The remuneration of the Charity's key management personnel in the year was £56,716, (2020: £47,599).

Redundancy payments were nil (2020: £0) in the year.

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Furniture, fittings and equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2020	107,088
Addition in the year	21,134
At 31 March 2021	128,222
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2020	107,088
Charge for the year	2568
At 31 March 2021	109656
Net book value	
At 31 March 2021	18,566
At 31 March 2020	-

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

	2021 £	2020 £
Work in progress	392,350	392,350

11. DEBTORS

	2021 £	2020 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	52,288	81,295
Other debtors	288,170	311,091
Prepayments	42,843	31,767
Accrued income	185,160	103,559
	568,461	527,712

12. CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Clients' funds held	165,960	160,797
Trade creditors	303,817	370,299
Social security and other taxes	32,545	31,864
Other creditors	14,168	9,329
Accruals	126,185	91,879
	642,675	664,168

13. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Carried Forward £
General funds	440,885	626,184	(546,713)	520,356
Fixed Asset Fund	-	21,134	(2,568)	18,199
Total	440,885	647,318	(549,281)	538,922

Fixed Asset fund
This represents the net book value of fixed assets held within unrestricted funds.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£
Debt Free London	-	202,449	(202,449)	-
London Borough of Croydon	-	40,000	(40,000)	-
London Borough of Croydon (Covid Grants)		9,636	(9,636)	-
Croydon Advice Providers		34,211	(34,211)	-
Merton Voluntary Service Council	4,000	-	(4,000)	-
The Legal Education Foundation		19,771	(19,771)	-
City Bridge Trust	-	51,500	(49,379)	2,121
Help Through Crises	10,126	152,930	(99,800)	63,256
London Legal Support Trust	5,000	10,000	(10,000)	5,000
Access to Justice		4,985	(4,985)	-
Funder Plus-Access to Justice		6,000	(6,000)	-
Trust for London		16,500	(16,500	-
Trust for London(Elan)		50,980	(44,723)	6,257
EUSS		17,692	(17,692)	-
LCN Crisis		7,000	(7,000)	-
AB Charitable Trust		20,000	(20,000)	-
The National Lottery	7,000		(7,000)	-
LLST Kingston & Surrey	32,518	9,208	(2,910)	38,816
Therium Access		26,163		26,163
Wandsworth Council		4,227	(4,227)	-
Wandsworth (EUSS)		20,464	(20,464)	-
Battersea Power Station		4,978	(4,978)	-
Community Justice Fund (LCN)		274,000	(274,000)	-
Lottery Community Fund		23,686	(23,549)	136
Here for Good		53,493	(53,493)	-
Total	58,644	1,059,872	976,767	141,749

Purpose of restricted funds:

Debt Free London income was received under a partnership grant with Toynbee Hal a consortium of other London advice agencies, funded by the Money and Pensions Service for face to face debt advice across South West London

The London Borough of Croydon was a grant received towards rent of the office at Davis House

London Borough of Croydon (Covid Grants) was a grant to provide additional telephone advice during covid

Croydon Advice Providers – a partnership grant with Croydon Citizens Advice under Croydon Council's Community Fund for the provision of a pro bono clinic service in Croydon.

Merton Voluntary Service Council – monies carried forward for the provision of training in Merton where we provided a series of money advice webinars

The Legal Education Foundation grant was to fund a trainee solicitor

City Bridge Trust is a grant to fund a volunteer support worker and related volunteer costs.

Help Through Crisis Fund is a five-year collaboration project funded by the Big Lottery to provide casework and wraparound support under the project of Stepping Stones.

London Legal Support Trust a donation towards core cost under their Centres of Excellence Scheme. Monies carried forward for the refurbishment of our offices in Merton

Access to Justice – monies carried forward for the provision of services in Kingston and Surrey by way of a weekly clinic.

Funder Plus-Access to Justice - an additional grant under the Community Justice Fund to support a management training course for the deputy CEO.

Trust for London was a grant received towards the cost of an employment caseworker.

Trust for London (Elan) a grant to support a coordinator for the Employment Legal Advice Network, a forum for employment advice giving advice agencies across London.

EUSS is grant funding to assist EU citizens in their bid to settlement rights in the UK under the EU Settlement Scheme. Work was carried out in a consortium of Law Centres under a Home Office grant run by the Law Centres Network.

LCN Crisis, a partnership grant with Law Centres administered by the Law Centres Network to provide welfare rights and immigration support to Crisis Hubs.

AB Charitable Trust is funding to pay for the post of a Communications manager.

The National Lottery was a grant received towards funding the cost of a new website under the Awards for All Scheme capital costs carried forward.

LLST Kingston & Surrey Grants and funding raised to support the development of work in Kingston and Surrey.

Therium Access a grant for a new crisis navigators post which started in April 2021.

Wandsworth Council a grant to provide additional telephone advice and support during covid.

Wandsworth (EUSS) a partnership project to support vulnerable people apply under the EU Settlement Scheme with Wandsworth Citizens Advice and Wandsworth Council.

Battersea Power Station - was a grant to provide additional telephone advice and support during covid.

Community Justice Fund Law Centre Network – emergency grant funding to support the work and to keep the doors open during covid.

Lottery Community Fund grant towards the cost of a crisis navigators post.

Here for Good a grant to fund a EU Settlement Scheme caseworker seconded to Here for Good.

14.

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	18,566	18,566	-
Current assets	141,749	1,163,031	1,304,780	1,164,195
Current Liabilities	-	(642,675)	(642,675)	(664,167)
	141749	538,922	680,303	500,028

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS – PRIOR YEAR	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2019 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Current assets	59,143	1,105,052	1,164,195	1,108,575
Current Liabilities	-	(664,167)	(664,167)	(650,240)
	59,143	440,885	500,028	458,335

15. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 March 2021, the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Land and buildings		Other	
	2021 £	2020 £	2021 £	2020 £
Expiry date:				
Within 1 year	58,700	64,200	19,275	6,275
Between 2 and 5 years	94,800	133,175	70,824	25,099
Over 5 years	15,858	27,758	3,250	-

16. TAXATION

The Company is a Charity and therefore exempt from Corporation Tax on its charitable activities.

17. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The aggregate of donations received from the Trustees in the year was £nil (2020: £nil).
There were no other transactions with related parties as at 31 March 2021 (2020: £nil).

18. COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (2020):

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total funds 2020
INCOME FROM			
Donations	561,061	468,819	1,029,880
Charitable Activities - Legal and advice services		538,765	538,765
Investments	-	99	99
TOTAL INCOME	561,061	1,007,683	1,568,744
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising Funds	-	40,165	40,165
Charitable Activities - Legal and advice services	549,024	937,863	1,486,887
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	549,024	978,028	1,527,052
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR	12,037	29,655	41,692
NET MOVEMENT OF FUNDS	12,037	29,655	41,692
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:			
Total funds at 1 April 2019	47,106	366,461	458,336
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2020	59,143	440,885	500,028