



Her Equality Rights & Autonomy (HERA UK)

**Annual Report and unaudited financial statements for
year ended 31st December 2024**

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Gilli Coston

Maninder Paul

Stuart Newstead

Charity Number 1115628

Company Number 05401337

Registered Office: 5 Cumnor Road, Oxford, OX2 9NS

Independent examiner Nik Hurst, The Gherkin, 28th & 29th Floors, 30 St Mary's Axe, London, EC3A 8BF.

Contents

Trustee Report	4
Financial and governance review	12
Independent Examiner's Report	15
Statement of financial activities	17

Trustee Report

Objectives and Activities

a. Policies and Objectives

The objectives of the charity are:

- 1) To help formerly trafficked women (women sold or trafficked for sexual slavery and young women vulnerable to trafficking) to become economically self-sufficient in order to prevent trafficking and re-trafficking
- 2) To help improve trafficked women's self-esteem and social and emotional support networks
- 3) To increase public awareness and understanding of the plight of trafficked women and young women vulnerable to trafficking.

b. Activities for achieving objectives

HERA UK organises the following programmes to address our objectives:

- Monthly seminars, for all trafficked women survivors, who have attended past and present HERA programmes ("Wednesday Wisdoms");
- Professional and business mentoring;
- Three-week Business & Entrepreneurial Training during the summer
- Raising money by various means to achieve the objectives

c. Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that due regard has been given to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular confirm that the charity provides the public benefit for the advancement of education and, training and well-being and the relief of those in need.

d. Main activities undertake to further the charity's purpose for public benefit

The main activities undertaken to further the charity's purposes for public benefit are synonymous with the activities for achieving objectives detailed above.

Vision & Mission

HERA empowers women survivors of modern slavery & exploitation to achieve a better life, working with business and academic mentors, to become financially independent.

Our mission is built on five core values: Trust, Autonomy, Empowerment, Collaboration and Compassion.

We focus on three key deliverables:

- 1) The delivery of a summer training programme
- 2) The delivery of mentoring support
- 3) The delivery of ongoing support such as alumni groups and Wednesday Wisdom talks

In order to deliver this, we have five foundation stones, each of which is owned by one of our trustees:

- 1) Team building and direction setting
- 2) Fundraising
- 3) Partnership development (corporate, charitable and academic)
- 4) Marketing and communications
- 5) Operational support (including governance and statutory requirements)

2024 review

2024 was a watershed financial year for HERA. It became clear that the cost structure of the organisation was unsustainable, especially the people-related costs. This resulted in the sad necessity of terminating the contracts of our three contractors once the summer programme was complete. Michelle Hammersley also stepped down as a trustee and treasurer. All the trustees are extremely grateful to Michelle for the professionalism, diligence and time commitment she brought to HERA.

We were still able to deliver the mentoring programme and the Wednesday Wisdoms through the efforts of the trustees and volunteer assistance. We were also able to assess options for planning and delivering the 2025 summer programme.

We continued the focus that we had started in 2023:

- **Ensure delivery of the 2024 summer programme** ensuring we take account of the changing world, with more students based outside of London and a need to balance entrepreneurship, education and employment as likely future paths for our students. The programme also includes, wherever possible, input from 'people like us', ie those from different backgrounds that reflect those of our students. This focus continues through the Wednesday Wisdoms.
- **Run the mentoring programme** to deliver more tailored support for our students, and ensure mentors are fully trained and have access to a wider resource library
- **Grow partnerships** by clarifying relationships and making our partnerships more transparent. In particular we will focus on **partnerships with funders**.
- **Maintain HERA as a going concern**

HERA Team

At the end of the year, HERA was led by its three trustees:

- Gilli Coston – mentoring
- Maninder Paul – comms
- Stuart Newstead – Interim Chair and academic director

Achievements and performance

Review of activities

This year's training programme was the 16th programme hosted in the UK by HERA. The programme saw 18 women survivors present their individual plan for their next 100 days and graduate from the three-week summer programme.

The summer programme comprised seven in-person days, including a Q&A morning at Borough Market, and the rest as online sessions, mostly delivered live. We were very thankful to our corporate partners and hosts, who provided highly stimulating days with a range of speakers – AMEX, NatWest, Marriott and Salesforce. The programme ended with a graduation ceremony and presentation of certificates for the course.

The training ran from in July and was predominantly taught between 10am and 3pm. This year we had six students via an Oxford-based charity, Refugee Resource. This presented some logistics and cost challenges, but the six were highly engaged and stimulating students. We had five students with university degrees (including one PhD) and most students were above the age of 30.

We collaborated with our supporters and educational partners to create regular online campaigns, events, and workshops for our students allowed us to minimise costs by receiving in-kind donations such as free office space for in person sessions plus food & beverages.

The 2024 summer programme built on successes and feedback from 2023. In particular, we continued to have HERA alumnae as in-person volunteers, which helped our new students to relate immediately to the programme; we asked our corporate partners to let our students hear from “people like us”, ie employees from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds. We also introduced the 100-day plan template right at the start of the programme, so that our students had a clear sense of personal direction for the next three weeks.

Speakers for the 2024 Business Training Programme

- Sarah Temple-Smith – Tree of Life
- Stuart Newstead – Ideas Generation; 100-day plan
- Shelley Spence – IT fundamentals
- Gilli Coston – building rapport
- Ian Kaye – emotional intelligence
- Dennis Long – business cashflow
- Andrew Collinson – marketing
- Lorna Lanigan – managing your presence
- Beth Kirk – personal branding
- Ruth Bender – business finance
- Arlyne Chinyanganya – personal finance
- April Oakley – CV clinic; interview skills
- Lara Miller – business plan
- Mary Donovan – mentoring
- Kristy Merson – products
- Laura Bradnam – accessing higher education; Birkbeck College
- Chris Merrington – price, profit & customers; behavioural profiling
- Dorothy Griffiths – team working; desert survival exercise
- Maninder Paul – social media

Events

During 2024 we saw all our activities continue to grow along with the number of supporters, partners and volunteers at HERA.

After the summer business training programme, our students, mentors and volunteers enjoyed outdoor events. We had a Christmas party for the class of 2024. Those in attendance exchanged gifts, pleasantries and enjoyed some Christmas games and quizzes.

We were delighted to join Adobe in March to celebrate International women's day. The event was a great opportunity for our students to meet with their mentors, catch up with other students and network with HERA Alumni.

We held eight Wednesday Wisdom Workshops so far this year building on each student's 100-day plan and some of the specialist topics related to business and self-confidence skills.

Mentoring Program

The mentoring programme in 2024 continued to run in the more focussed way that had started in 2023. It has a number of aims:

- 1) To fit more closely with the delivery of the summer programme (aligning to the concept of a “100-day plan”
- 2) To improve safeguarding by assessing how and when mentoring is provided
- 3) To provide a more sustainable pool of mentors

Partnerships & Collaborations

2024 has been another strong year in the development of our corporate partnerships. We continue to be supported by our longstanding partners in Vodafone, Salesforce and American Express, and have developed partnerships with Marriott and Adobe. Our corporate partners support us with:

- SIM cards with free mobile broadband (Vodafone)
- 15 reconditioned laptops (Thorlux).
- Ethique and Tropic (international woman-owned skincare companies based in UK) have kindly donated gifting packs to our students which is used for introduction and farewell totes / gift bags to students.
- Hosting for the summer programme and events such as graduation including food and drink for our students (Salesforce, Marriott, NatWest)
- People and expertise, whether that be summer programme speakers, Wednesday Wisdom speakers, mentors or volunteers

We also benefitted from the final six months from the Women of Impact Programme, which provided us special access to experts in the field of legal, governance and strategy. One of the firms, Simmons & Simmons, has become a core partner and has kindly offered to continue to give pro bono legal advice and process support.

Monitoring & Evaluation

To ensure the continued effectiveness and suitability of our programs, HERA employs three core processes for gathering and assessing student well-being and overall satisfaction.

1) Student Feedback:

Following the first part of the HERA programme i.e. the Summer Business & Entrepreneurial 3 Week training course, we gather feedback from the students,

- **‘we want to see more people like us’** We have brought in more alumni and added more inspirational speakers and have put more self-confidence sessions in the first days of the first week of the programme
- **‘I wanted to gain knowledge in IT’** – we have added more IT Skills training.

2) Student Engagement:

We maintain ongoing interactions with our students through social events, workshops, and WhatsApp

Our Trustees and Programme Director also maintain regular contact with students to ensure their safety and well-being.

3) Mentor Feedback:

HERA now organises an online gathering for mentors to connect, reflect, and exchange best practices to better support both one another and their mentees throughout the year. Subsequently, we introduced regular monthly "catch-up" sessions, allowing mentors to share their experiences within the HERA mentor community and collaboratively identify areas for improvement.

Fundraising

HERA continues to operate, like many other UK charities, within a challenging funding environment. The general economic climate and political uncertainty have created a difficult environment, particularly for small charities, with some reports suggesting that fundraising performance is now worse than at the peak of the Covid crisis. HERA has recognised that we need to resource and plan to meet these challenges for our future success. We are therefore very grateful to The Tribe Foundation and The Bromley Trust for giving us grants in 2024.

Financial and governance review

Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Financial Review

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with charity's memorandum of association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy is set to ensure there is no disruption of HERA's services in the event of an unforeseen reduction in income or increase in expenditure. It also allows for contingencies aimed at the mitigation of any major risks identified that would have a financial impact should they materialise.

The Trustees have determined a requirement for freely available funds in order to fund the following:

- To maintain uninterrupted the ongoing activities of the Charity, in particular the following year's summer programme
- To cover management, administration, fundraising and other support costs.

The Trustees believe that, in line current commitments the level of free reserves should be sufficient to cover four months' costs, being the approximate equivalent of delivering the summer programme. At 2024 prices this equated to approximately £25,000. When it was clear that the threshold would be breached, then the cost reduction plan was put in place and costs reduced to almost £0 after the notice periods given to contractors.

The level of reserves is continually monitored by the Trustees and the policy is reviewed at least every three years (next review due 2025).

The Charity works to build its reserves to the level required to meet the policy to remain sustainable, build a safer future and protect the Charity in the long term.

Income and Expenditure

In the period total income to the charity including grants, donations (both cash and in kind) and Gift Aid totalled £78,994 whilst expenditure was £98,455.

Structure and governance

The charity is registered as a company limited by guarantee and was set up by a memorandum of association on 22nd March 2005.

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 December 2024.

Trustees

- Gilli Coston (reappointed 1/1/24)
- Maninder Paul
- Stuart Newstead

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Her Equality Rights and Autonomy 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
- 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 have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in January 2015.

Reference and Administrative Details

Registered Company number: 05401337 Registered Charity number: 1115628

Registered office: 5 Cumnor Road, Oxford, OX2 9NS

Method of appointment and election of trustees

Trustees (as listed by the Charities Commission) and Directors (as listed at Companies House) are elected and serve according to the provisions laid down in paragraphs 19 through 37 of the memorandum of association as lodged at Companies House. In brief:

- There should be no fewer than three trustees.
- Trustees are expected to serve for a minimum of two and a maximum of seven years
- At each AGM the most longstanding trustee is expected to stand down, but may be re-elected
- The selection and appointment of trustees is carried out by the trustees.

The trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees

Stuart Newstead

Interim Chair of the Board of Trustees

27/09/2025

Independent Examiner's Report

TO THE TRUSTEES OF HERA – CHARITY NUMBER 1115628

I report on the Accounts and accompanying notes of the company for the year ended 31 December 2024

Respective Responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2012 (the 2012 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to an audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2012 Act.
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2012 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

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

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements below have not been met.

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006.
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or
- to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Nik Hurst *Nik Hurst*

Date 25/09/2025

Statement of financial activities

Income and expenditure and balance sheet for year ended 31 December 2024

Income and expenditure

In Kind funding	57,712
Grant Income	21,282
Total income	78,994

less Cost of Sales	65,155
---------------------------	---------------

Consulting, speakers and trainers	24,629
Facilities and meeting rooms	29,500
Materials and supplies for summer program	3,787
Student travel and expenses	5,422
Other summer programme costs	1,816

less Administration Expenses	8,084
-------------------------------------	--------------

Fundraising costs	5,753
Computer Software	619
Internet & Telephone	83
Legal and Professional Fees	394
Miscellaneous	848
Bank/Finance Charges	103
Insurance	283

less Staff Costs	25,216
-------------------------	---------------

Operating Profit	-19,461
-------------------------	----------------

Retained Profit this period:	-19,461
Retained Profit brought forward:	30,779
Distributable Reserves / Retained Profit carried forward:	11,413

Balance Sheet

Opening bank balance	30,875
Retained Profit this period:	-19,461
Closing bank balance:	12,142
Expenses owing	-729
P&L	11,413