

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales · Charity number 1116344

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [05819537](#)

Registered 2006-10-10

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

Contact

Address F3 Leemore Community Hub
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Website www.afiril.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 4.1 TO RELIEVE THE POVERTY OF REFUGEES4.2 TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEES4.3 TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC OF THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF REFUGEES.

Activities: AFRIL aims to relieve the poverty of refugees, asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants, advance their education and advocate for their rights. We work with our service users by providing them with the tools they need to improve their own lives and fulfil their potential as members of the community and society.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE. LEWISHAM
- Bexley
- Bromley
- Greenwich
- Lewisham
- Southwark

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-05-31	£573,017	£521,953	£179,055	16
2024-05-31	£483,119	£524,210	-	-
2023-05-31	£304,989	£283,963	-	-
2022-05-31	£239,754	£231,990	-	-
2021-05-31	£196,924	£198,026	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Gareth Redmond-King	Chair	2019-11-20
Div Vaughn Burnett		2018-01-30
HASAN KHALIFAH		2023-11-13
Karleen Richards		2022-09-12
Kathleen Anne Bride Commons		2021-10-01
Kirsten Rebecca Wildgoose		2022-05-09
Lorna Sarah Barron		2022-05-09
Margaret Ruth Gravelle		2018-07-31
Neil Denis Walker		2022-05-09
Welat Sardar Ahmed Kurdi		2025-02-01

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1116344

Accounts



Action For Refugees In Lewisham

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2025**

Registered Charity Number: 1116344

Company Number: 05819537

Action for Refugees in Lewisham
F3 Leemore Centre
Bonfield Road
Lewisham
SE13 5ES

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	M R Gravelle D Burnett G J Redmond-King L S Barron K A B Commons N D Walker K R Wildgoose K Richards H Khalifah W Kurdi (appointed 01 February 2025)
Secretary	M R Gravelle
Charity number	1116344
Company number	05819537
Principal address	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES
Registered office	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES
Independent Examiner	F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA Warner Wilde 4 Marigold Drive Bisley Surrey GU24 9SF



Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 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 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

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Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Foreword

A very warm welcome to our annual report, and thank you for taking the time to read about the outstanding work delivered over the last twelve months by AFRIL's exceptional staff and volunteers, supporting ever more refugees and vulnerable migrants.

Despite the change of government last year, the political narrative and policy environment has only got more toxic, putting more pressure on some of the most vulnerable people, who need this country's protection, and on the brave and committed people who work hard to support them.

AFRIL's board of trustees and I are immensely proud of the expansion and development of AFRIL's services over the last year. And I take this opportunity to thank every single one of AFRIL's staff, and volunteers - including those who have moved on over the course of the year. I include in that my own personal thanks to each and every person who has served on AFRIL's trustee board - volunteers who give their time and expertise to ensure the good governance essential to our successful service delivery.

But I also extend our thanks to everyone who makes it possible - each of our funders, large and small, whether company, trust or individual raising money to donate to AFRIL. You, your support, and your work to deliver AFRIL's services are part of what give the lie to political narratives that suggest widespread public opposition to migration. In fact, this is a tolerant and welcoming city, in a tolerant and welcoming country; most people only need to hear the individual human stories behind that word, 'migration', to step up and offer a welcome, help, and support to those who need it most. That is the story of AFRIL - through the Rainbow Club, the foodbank, the allotment of refuge, and our advice service - offering that welcome, help and support.

This year, I also advance a very special thank you to AFRIL's director, Sophie Wickham who is, unfortunately, moving on. It is her tireless commitment to innovation with fundraising that has enabled AFRIL to grow, sustainably, so as better to meet the growing demand. And it is her nurturing and thoughtful leadership that has grown and supported AFRIL's outstanding team. We are very sad indeed to lose her, but very grateful indeed for everything she has brought to, and done for, AFRIL and AFRIL's clients and community.



Gareth Redmond-King
Chair of Trustees

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Dear friends

I am so proud of AFRIL's work in 2024/25. More people than ever engaged with our services, and they told us that this support led to meaningful and lasting improvements in their lives.

Peoples' needs this year were increasingly complex, as they endured unacceptable treatment and were systematically denied access to support. They were threatened with dehumanising barge or army barracks accommodation, families were split up in asylum 'hotels' with damp conditions and food that their children refused to eat, and people were expected to navigate the complex immigration system without a lawyer. Those who secured refugee status faced street homelessness because their asylum accommodation was terminated before they could secure alternative housing. Children are placed in temporary accommodation, moved at short notice, disrupting their schooling and social development. In this context, it is unsurprising that many of our community members had poor mental health.

In response, AFRIL's skilled and hardworking staff team provided tailored, holistic support to 749 people in 2024/25. This is more than ever before, and we still receive more requests for support than our capacity. AFRIL's Casework and Advocacy service worked intensively to prevent and alleviate homelessness, to ensure that people secure the income, healthcare, and legal support they need to rebuild their lives. Our Food Bank and destitution support worked in tandem to ensure dignity and essential food during this process. Our Immigration Project with Southwark Law Centre ensured that complex cases including those ineligible for legal aid, had access justice. Our Rainbow Club provided fun, educational support and opportunities to the children of our clients. Giving parents respite on Saturdays, and supporting children to bridge the attainment gap, make friends and thrive. Our Allotment of Refuge is an oasis of calm in the city that helps people to nurture themselves as well as the crops. Members tell us that coming to AFRIL reduces their feelings of isolation and makes them feel a welcomed part of the community. Alongside intensive service delivery this year, we yet again increased our quality marks and accreditations demonstrating our commitment to the highest possible standards: Advice Quality Standard (AQS) Casework Level in a record 5 areas, and successful registration with the Immigration Advice Authority to provide regulated immigration advice.

Against the backdrop of increased hostility against refugees and asylum seekers this year, from the government and the far right, solidarity and indeed bravery is more important than ever. Here at AFRIL, we are willing and able to stand up, speak up, and use all advocacy and legal tools at our disposal to ensure that the rights of our members - refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants with human rights protection needs - are respected and protected. Our Policy work has taken off and we are punching well above our weight - advising the Greater London Authority on several asylum matters and appointed to the London Housing Panel, with a particular focus on improving temporary accommodation.

This will be my last annual report at AFRIL, as I am shortly moving overseas with my family. It has been an immense privilege to be entrusted with such a treasured local charity, and to work with such a dedicated and dynamic group of people who are willing to speak up in times of adversity and threat. I am delighted to be leaving AFRIL in such good hands with our new Executive Director Chloe White, who has spearheaded AFRIL's Casework and Policy over the last 3 years and who will bring this expertise and passion to her new role. I would like to thank every member of staff, volunteer, funder, community supporter, donor, partner and importantly every client, for making this journey and this work possible. I hope you enjoy reading about the impact of your contributions this year and will join AFRIL in making our community even stronger in the year to come.



Sophie Wickham
Executive Director

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

About AFRIL

Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) is a dynamic local charity established in 2006. We support asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants with human rights protection needs, to lift themselves out of poverty, assert their rights and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide both crisis support to meet immediate need, and longer-term, flexible programmes to tackle the underlying problems that lead people to be in crisis. We take a rights based approach, empowering people with the tools and support they need to improve their lives and fulfil their potential.

Our vision is a just and welcoming society for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Our mission: to support asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and refugees to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide the advice, support and legal interventions that people need to improve their living situation, advance the education of displaced children, provide practical food support, co-produce wellbeing projects with the people we support, and use our evidence base for policy and advocacy work to make our vision a reality.

Our values: Our work is grounded in the values of professionalism, empowerment and inclusivity. We strive to be community-led and community-based.

Our approach: at AFRIL we:

- Work with our members to develop services and support that meet their real and not perceived needs.
- Work with our members to enable them to build their knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Work collaboratively with local and national organisations to ensure that services are relevant, appropriate and effective.

We are a team of 15 majority part-time paid staff (7 FTE) and over 100 volunteers. Our office is based in the Leemore Centre in central Lewisham and we deliver services across South East London, including the Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter in Greenwich, St Saviours primary school in Lewisham, One Tree Hill Allotments in Honor Oak, and outreach at local asylum hotels and community hubs. Our clients travel from across South East London to access our services.

Our core services are: Casework and Advocacy, Food Bank and Destitution Support, Rainbow Club supplementary school, the Allotment of Refuge, an Immigration Project in partnership with Southwark Law Centre, and our monthly Members Forum.

In addition, we use our knowledge and expertise from frontline service delivery, along with the lived experience of our clients, to **influence positive policy change** in housing, asylum support, and related issues. We advise on London wide housing policy through our position on the London Housing Panel, advise the GLA on several asylum and safeguarding related working groups, and work closely with Local Authorities to challenge and support them to deliver services that meet the needs of our client group.

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

Our strategic priorities, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2023-26 are to:

- Support people to transition from dependence to independence
- Meet crisis needs
- Advocate with and for our clients
- Maintain a sustainable and effective organisation

AFRIL is currently in the strategic planning process to develop our next organisational strategic plan, together with our staff, Trustees, clients and key partners.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Activities, achievements and performance for the year

The people we support

The people we support come from a range of backgrounds and countries. Their **immigration status** is a prominent feature in their lives, but they should not be solely defined by their immigration status; they are **parents, siblings, daughters, sons, community members, volunteers, employees and friends**. However, their immigration status does have an adverse impact on their lives, particularly by affecting their ability to access housing and income, and to **integrate** and **put down roots** in the community.

Our clients, whom we also call **our members**, are all seeking sanctuary in the UK and broadly fall into three categories: newly recognised **refugees**, people who are still **seeking asylum**, and **migrants with human rights protection needs** who are 'vulnerabilised' by the system and their experiences. Many of the latter have protection issues that include gender based violence or trafficking, but have been unable to successfully claim asylum due to complexity, the scope of the Refugee Convention, and/or the culture of disbelief in the system, so are now on a longer human rights based route to settlement due to having children in the UK but without access to public funds.

This year, the majority of the people we supported had made an application for asylum at some point in their protection journey. Their current immigration status was a mix of those still in the asylum system, newly recognised refugees, and other vulnerable migrants. We have seen an increase in the number of elderly vulnerable migrants with complex care needs on the 20 year route to settlement. Upon approaching AFRIL this year, **88% of people were living in insecure housing arrangements** like asylum hotels or temporary accommodation, including **38 households who were street homeless**. In addition to this, **50% had no formal income** whatsoever and **47% had very low income** - the majority of those with low income were in receipt of asylum support payments which is just £49.18 per person per week, or for those living in **overcrowded asylum "hotels"** just £9.95 per week and food that is often inedible.

Our Impact

"AFRIL is truly a lifeline for people in need. They go above and beyond to support individuals and families, offering not just practical help but also kindness, respect, and understanding. Their team is compassionate and dedicated, treating everyone with dignity and making sure no one feels alone in difficult times. The work they do has a real and lasting impact on people's lives, and I am deeply grateful for their support and commitment to the community." Ayomide, 2025

This year we supported **749 people from 321 families**, the majority of whom accessed more than one AFRIL service. Demand increases year on year, reflecting the impact of hostile immigration policies, high cost of living, and the quality and relevance of our services. This results in increasing numbers of people arriving at AFRIL in crisis, often experiencing destitution and homelessness. They require intensive holistic support and complex casework in order to resolve the interwoven issues resulting from their immigration restrictions. We prioritise the most vulnerable and those with complex needs who may otherwise struggle to access mainstream services e.g. people with high mental health needs, trafficking survivors, destitute families with young children, and asylum seekers with disabilities.

Our approach is one of longer-term, holistic support. We provide emergency relief during crises, alongside support to resolve the underlying issues that are the root cause. This year, our food bank distributed food parcels, food vouchers, and other essential items to 181 people from 64 families; our Casework and Advocacy Service supported 489 people from 280 families with comprehensive advice, complex casework and legal interventions; Rainbow Club provided early intervention to support 122 children from 77 families to improve their educational attainment, confidence and wellbeing. Our Immigration Project in partnership with Southwark Law Centre supported 82 people with complex immigration matters.

Since working with AFRIL, **45% of the people we supported improved their immigration status and a further 39% were supported to maintain their leave to remain status, or remain in the asylum system whilst they awaited a Home Office decision**. In addition to this, **51% reported that their access to formal income had improved since**

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

joining AFRIL, and a further 33% were supported to maintain regular access to their income entitlements. With regards to housing, **50% reported that their housing arrangements had become more secure since joining AFRIL, and a further 33% were supported to maintain access to their housing entitlements,** for example by resolving disrepair issues or addressing safeguarding issues in asylum support accommodation.

As well as supporting our members with the practical matters of income, housing and immigration, we have a keen awareness of the impact of experiences prior to, during and after forced migration on the wellbeing, confidence and sense of community belonging of our members. We have therefore developed our projects to support our clients in these areas too. In our 2025 annual survey, **98% of people said coming to AFRIL had improved their wellbeing, 95% said coming to AFRIL improved their confidence, 89% said AFRIL has helped them to feel less isolated, and 95% said AFRIL has helped them to feel a part of a community.** The people we support have often been let down by structures, systems, and organisations that should support them, which impacts their trust and engagement. We build strong professional relationships with our members and prioritise building trust - **98% of people said they trust AFRIL a lot or mostly.** Supporting people from the dependence that is inherent in the asylum system framework, to independence, is an AFRIL strategic priority. This year, 82% of our clients said that coming to AFRIL has helped them become more independent.

Casework and Advocacy Service

"One to one service and you can ask questions and be advised fairly." Anwar, 2025

Our Casework and Advocacy service provides Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accredited advice and casework support in complex welfare rights, asylum support, community care, housing and homelessness, and related matters. In March 2024, we were awarded AQS Casework Level in a record five areas: Housing, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Welfare Benefits, Disability, and Community Care. In April 2025 AFRIL became accredited to provide Level 1 regulated Immigration Advice from the Immigration Advice Authority (previously OISC), and the team are working to Level 2 under formal supervision from Praxis Community Projects, through support from the Refugee Action Frontline Immigration Advice Project funded by the GLA.

In the last year **this service supported 489 people from 230 families.** 63% of clients this year had complex needs and 40% of households presented as statutorily homeless. Our skilled and tenacious Casework team engage in advocacy with statutory bodies to support clients to access their entitlements. We have worked hard to establish and utilise escalation routes when faced with gatekeeping. **Our success rates are high: 97% of households this year resolved part or all of their co-produced casework actions.** We secured **safe accommodation** for all but one of our street homeless clients (for whom we have a solicitor representing). This is no small feat when the people we work with are frequently ineligible for statutory housing and benefits. Our intensive advocacy ensured **100% of homeless families** with children were accommodated within 12 hours. When informal advocacy has been exhausted, our Caseworkers prepare Pre Action Protocol Letters (PAPs), checked by solicitors with a **100% success rate this year, ensuring access to justice.**

We are the main provider of asylum support casework locally. We deliver regular outreach advice sessions in the largest local asylum hotel as well as community locations. **We resolved 100% of asylum support payment cases,** ensuring people access their full entitlement. As the Home Office is clearing the backlog of asylum claims, we are supporting more recently granted refugees with intensive casework - welfare benefits, employment and housing, in the face of the housing crisis. The extension of the cessation period to 56 days during the year was a welcome relief, although the increase in numbers of recently granted refugees meant that this period was very time pressured. We have worked with local Councils this year to curate effective housing pathways to prevent these clients from becoming street homeless. At the time of writing this had unfortunately been rescinded for single people without priority need so street homelessness is again on the rise.

"After three years of homelessness, I lost everything in me, including my health and confidence. After meeting AFRIL, things turned round positively although not completely, but I am on the right course now." Faheem, 2025

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Foodbank and Destitution support

AFRIL runs one of the few local food banks dedicated to supporting vulnerable asylum seekers, migrants and refugees with no recourse to public funds to access culturally appropriate food on a cash first approach. It runs fortnightly on Saturdays in conjunction with the volunteer team from Good Shepherd St Peter's Church, in Lee. All the families registered with the food bank have sought sanctuary in the UK, with priority given to residents from Lewisham and Greenwich. Notwithstanding our Casework team working hard to maximise the income that families are able to access, 87% of clients reported that they do not have access to enough money to support themselves and their family without help from charities. This reflects low levels of government support, and policies of the hostile environment such as asylum seekers being prohibited from working whilst they await a decision on their claim, unless they meet very specific requirements. This results in people being unable to meet their essential needs, especially in the current context of high living costs.

This year we distributed **1904 food parcels** (double parcels fortnightly) consisting of supermarket vouchers, fresh produce from our allotment, grocer's surplus and donated household supplies to 181 people from 64 families. In our 2025 annual survey, **92% reported that knowing they will have a regular supermarket voucher with fresh food, or food parcel helps them to feel more secure.** This year we consolidated our destitution work under one project and in addition to food bank clients, we provided emergency destitution grants or small essentials grants to an additional **83 households** across AFRIL services during moments of crisis whilst our Casework and Advocacy service worked intensively to resolve these problems. **This brings the total families supported with food support to 147 households.** We also distributed donated winter coats, blankets, baby items, household items, sim cards and data.

Client feedback: *"The best thing about [the] food bank is the way they support families with kindness and respect. They provide not just food but comfort and hope during difficult times. The items received are very useful and it helps us get through the week. The staff and volunteers are really friendly and caring, they make everyone feel welcome. It is a place where you feel seen, supported and not alone."* Binta, 2025

The networks that our clients in poverty are forced to rely on are frequently exploitative. This year we co-produced a **Support and Safety Guide** with our food bank members to help people identify the signs of different types of exploitation and know what to do. **95% said that the guide helps them to know what to do when they feel unsafe, and 90% said that they feel safer since coming to AFRIL.**

People can be supported by our food bank for extended periods whilst our Caseworker and Advocacy service and Immigration Project work to resolve the often complex immigration, housing and income issues that have caused destitution. This has resulted in a strong community feel and trusting professional relationships with AFRIL staff and volunteers. Members are keen to share their feedback and lived experiences with AFRIL staff, particularly when this is used to improve policy and practice within and outside of AFRIL, for example we have recently successfully advocated for a cash first approach locally. This is a result of consistent feedback from our members that they prefer supermarket vouchers to food parcels because it promotes choice and dignity. Food bank members provided their evidence and views in AFRIL's consultation response to the government on the Healthy Start Scheme.

Rainbow Club

"It is a supportive and welcoming environment. The teachers are patient and encouraging which helps the children to learn better. The classes also give my child extra help with school subjects and build her confidence. It is a safe space where they feel happy and motivated to learn. As a parent, I really appreciate the dedication of the staff and how they genuinely care about each child's progress." Rainbow Club parent 2025

AFRIL's Rainbow Club Supplementary school supports primary aged displaced children. Every Saturday morning during term time, children receive specialised English, maths, music, art and sport lessons, pastoral support and termly school trips. The school is split into 3 classes, whose names were chosen by the children themselves: Passion Fruit (ages 4-6), Starfruit (ages 6-8), and Mango (ages 8-11).

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Rainbow Club children experience destitution and poverty due to hostile immigration policies, which can create challenging environments at home. They experience multiple disadvantages - it is well evidenced that both living in poverty and being from a refugee or asylum seeking background affects a child's educational attainment. This year, Rainbow Club continued to provide a consistent, supportive and fun environment to make sure children can bridge the attainment gap, develop their future aspirations, and thrive both socially and in their mainstream education.

In the last 12 months, 122 children from 77 families attended Rainbow Club where they each received 50 hours of English and Maths lessons, in addition to music, art and sports activities and school trips. In our formal assessments **72% of children showed a marked improvement in English level**, with 21% of children moving fully up into the next band. In the children's end of year pupil questionnaires, 84% felt they had improved at English, and 86% felt they had improved at Maths. We provide **creative sessions and team working** opportunities including Art, Music and Sport that help empower children to **express themselves, developing confidence, self-esteem and social skills**. The sessions also serve as an alternative medium for English acquisition, particularly for those who have English as an additional language (EAL). **79% of children felt their confidence improved** over the year, and 80% felt their social skills improved. **89% of parents also reported positive changes in their children's confidence**. Feedback from parents when asked about the impact of Rainbow Club: **"[My daughter] has become more confident in speaking and interacting with others. She now more excited about learning. I also noticed she is more focused and happier in general [sic]."** We organise termly trips and extracurricular activities for our students to local museums, city farms and our Allotment of Refuge. We developed our Rainbow Club Youth Council this year to give the children more voice and influence at the Saturday School, alongside our Youth Volunteer Programme to provide leadership opportunities to Rainbow Club alumni and older siblings.

Literacy skills are essential for unlocking attainment in all other subjects and for supporting children from refugee, asylum seeking and migrant backgrounds to **integrate** and make friends. This year we have been taking a **deep dive into our literacy provision** thanks to multi-year funding from the St Paul's Schools Foundation, managed by the Mercers Company. We have been working with a learning partner at the **Open University** to further develop our literacy expertise and evaluate our activities so that more children can reach their full potential. We are focusing on Reading and Writing for Pleasure after research from the Open University showed that levels of Reading for Pleasure of 8 to 18 year olds in the UK are the lowest they have been since 2005, and highlighted the social and emotional benefits of those who choose to read and/or write in their own time. In addition to this, we **expanded our reach** this year to Lewisham's **pre-school children** and their parents through our BookTrust Storytime Project which aims to encourage positive and regular reading habits whilst children are very young. We joined Literacy Link, a new network where literacy focused charities and programmes collaborate and share learnings and experience.

In June 2024, **Rainbow Club was officially awarded sanctuary status** following a detailed assessment process, and we have been encouraging mainstream schools through Lewisham's Schools of Sanctuary working group by sharing good practice and resources on how best to support their sanctuary seeking children. This means that Rainbow Club children will have a **more positive mainstream experience** and that we can **improve the educational and cultural environment** for far more children in this diverse part of London.

Allotment of Refuge

"Being at the allotment, in the nature itself makes me feel happy as well as being with the people at there is."
Nsaku, 2025

AFRIL's Allotment of Refuge is part of the One Tree Hill Allotment Society (OTHAS) allotment site at Honor Oak Park. The Allotment of Refuge is a welcoming and integrated community of food growers **improving health, wellbeing, dignity and food access** for sanctuary seekers and other members of the local community alike, through regular volunteer sessions. **Co-production is a key** - with all decisions made together with our Allotment Steering Group. This year **205 people participated in activities** at the Allotment of Refuge, with **29 regular volunteers** coming to the weekly growing and harvest sessions, around half of whom have lived experience of forced migration, making it a **truly integrated project**. Our Allotment Project Lead led weekly Tuesday gardening sessions where activities included food growing and harvesting, learning and sharing knowledge, and generally maintaining and improving the site. Each session ended with a **shared lunch and warm drinks** where volunteers

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

come together to make plans and share ideas for the site. During harvest season, we also ran fortnightly Friday sessions to harvest fresh produce which was distributed at AFRIL's Food Bank. **This enabled 181 individuals from 64 families experiencing destitution to access fresh, locally grown, healthy produce.** We ran ad hoc work days where volunteers including local residents and employees helped with larger tasks, such as building a shed and moving manure. We **improved site accessibility** so that more people can benefit from this restorative space, for example improving and maintaining paths, removing ditches, creating a walk-in shed for easy access to tools, and improving seating in the polytunnel. Our Allotment members with lived experience of seeking sanctuary were asked if coming to the project had any impact on their wellbeing and sense of belonging. **100% of members said that coming to the Allotment of Refuge regularly improved their wellbeing** and likewise people unanimously said it made them feel part of a community, since this is exactly what it is. 67% also said that they had particularly learned climate friendly growing practices at the project. When asked this year by a visiting staff member what they hoped to grow at the Allotment, one of our new and now very regular members said: 'just myself'.

Climate friendly practices, climate resilience, and **environmental protection** are a priority at the Allotment of Refuge. We have continued our transition of the site into an eco-friendly hub and used climate friendly practices for example through creating deadwood areas for habitat and ponds for **biodiversity** and using organic matter and **no chemicals** to feed our plants. We have used climate friendly practices, for example we have improved soil health through making our own compost, practicing the "no dig" method, and mulching once a year with manure from a local farm. Members reported that they have learnt about climate friendly ways to grow food and about protecting the environment.

Once a term, children from Rainbow Club came to the Allotment of Refuge to use the site as an **outdoor classroom**, with 48 children attending fun, educational allotment workshops. **The children learnt about sustainable food growing and environmental protection** which is important as the climate crisis will only become a more prominent part of each of their lives as they grow up. These sessions also gave them an opportunity to have **fun and play in a safe outdoor space**.

Immigration Project

Our Immigration Project in **partnership** with **Southwark Law Centre** provides **free immigration advice and representation** to people with insecure immigration status, no recourse to public funds and little to no income, most of whom fall outside the scope of legal aid, meaning they are not able to afford the expensive legal fees to regularise their status. This **service is interlinked** with AFRIL's other services, supporting our members to resolve complex immigration issues that so often result in housing problems and destitution. Our Casework and Advocacy Service's recent **Level 1 IAA accreditation** means that our immigration solicitor can focus on the most complex immigration cases, whilst the Casework team can deal with more straightforward immigration matters.

Last year, the project solicitor provided representations in 33 cases plus 9 instances of one-off detailed immigration advice to **34 clients with 48 dependents (82 individuals)**. So far, 7 of these clients have received a **successful grant of leave to remain**, 1 client was successful in appealing their asylum decision, and 2 children from families with insecure immigration status were supported to regularise as British Citizens. The majority of the remaining clients are waiting for decisions from the Home Office. Since the project started in 2021, all Home Office decisions but one have been granted leave to remain, with the one being represented at appeal stage. The high costs of LLR applications are a barrier for many of our clients in regularising their status and we have a **100% success rate in fee waiver applications.**"

Policy and Influencing

AFRIL is a **small charity that punches well above our weight** in using our frontline evidence to **positively influence systemic change**. We are increasingly approached by statutory bodies and national charities for input and have been a key sector voice on **asylum hotel maximisation** and **migrant housing**. As a small organisation working on the ground and conducting complex casework, we see **trends as they emerge**, meaning that our policy responses are dynamic, timely and relevant. Due to our strong working relationships and high levels of trust with our clients, our policy work is **rooted in the lived experience** and voices of our clients. We work with our clients to provide **political education** and ensure opportunities for people to share their experiences, opinions

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

and ideas as part of our Policy work. AFRIL sits on the **London Housing Panel**, through which we advise the **Mayor of London** on housing policy as it impacts our client group. Through this forum we have worked on amendments to expand the standards in the Renters Rights Bill to include Asylum Support and NRPF housing, in order to prevent embedding a two tier housing system. This year AFRIL was appointed **Chair of the Panel's Temporary Accommodation Working Group**, to coordinate the Panel's work on improving temporary forms of housing across the capital. We advise the GLA on 3 **asylum related working groups**, D/deaf asylum seekers, asylum hotels, and asylum safeguarding, and this year we co-produced GLA commissioned **research** on migrant sector resilience to emergencies. AFRIL has submitted a number of formal policy submissions to **central government consultations** on the extension of healthy start vouchers, asylum support safeguarding, the impact of temporary accommodation on children with SEN and standards of temporary accommodation. Through developing strategic relationships with our Local Authorities AFRIL has successfully curated **escalation routes** to prevent gatekeeping and reduce homelessness. Our clients **formally advise Lewisham Council** on their sanctuary strategy and are central to our policy and influencing work.

Other Activities

As is customary, we started the year with our annual celebration of **Refugee Week** at our Allotment of Refuge, with the 2024 theme being 'Our Home'. Our **Members Forum** continues to thrive, as a forum for bringing people together to build social connections, partake in workshops on topics decided by our members, and have voice and influence over AFRIL services and Policy priorities.

"The best thing about [the] members forum is having a safe space to connect with other parents who understand what you are going through. It's been so helpful to share experiences, get advice and feeling that you are not alone in your journey." Amina, 2025

Staff support: vicarious trauma and burnout are common in frontline delivery, and the rise in far-right violence in the UK exacerbates this risk. We have maintained our regular **clinical supervision** for staff, alongside our Employee Assistance Programme support. Staff had an **away day** this year thanks to the AB Charitable Trust, with a brilliant, facilitated session on work profiles and ways of working, and a much needed wellbeing session. We continue to review our policies and offer to our staff and volunteers to do everything in our control to provide support in this difficult line of work.

Future plans

In 2025/26 we welcome our new Executive Director, Chloe White, who has been instrumental in the development and growth of AFRIL's Casework and Policy functions over the last three years. We plan to maintain the scaled up services that we have developed in response to need, supporting asylum seekers, refugees and 'vulnerabilised' migrants to lift themselves out of poverty, assert their rights, and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We will ensure that these services continue to be delivered to the highest possible standards and aim to secure sustainable funding for them to continue so long as they are needed.

We plan to become registered to provide regulated immigration advice at IAA Level 2, which will be embedded within our wraparound casework support model. Our Food Bank will continue to make the case for cash first approaches, providing dignity and essential support for people on the journey to rebuilding their lives. Our Allotment of Refuge will continue to work holistically and welcome clients from other AFRIL Projects and play our part in local climate resilience. Our Rainbow Club will take a deep dive into Literacy, not only improving our own offer to displaced children, but contributing to learning and research in this area with the Open University. Policy and Influencing will be a key focus in the coming year, using our frontline experience in pursuit of systems change, with a growing number of key partners, at a time when it is more needed than ever.

We are in the final year of our current strategic plan, and we have started our inclusive strategic planning process with a focus on increasing lived experience in our governance decisions. At the time of writing, we have just recruited our first Expert by Experience Coordinator to lead on our Members Forum activities and development of our co-production across the organisation.

In order to maintain a sustainable and effective organisation, we will build on the work that has been done this year to diversify our funding streams, and we will resource our central support functions to provide strong governance

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

and organisational support in proportion to our growing front line services. We will continue to invest in wellbeing support for our outstanding staff and volunteer team so we can continue to deliver positive outcomes with and for asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and refugees across South East London in light of the increased pressure and threats aimed at our client group and sector.

Our funders, supporters, partners and volunteers

Thank you to our funders, supporters, and partners. We would not have been able to provide the services and support detailed in this report without you. We are enormously grateful for your support, and for the solidarity and compassion that you show towards refugees, asylum seekers and migrants seeking sanctuary in our community.

Thank you to our wonderful team of volunteers for donating your precious time to AFRIL. We would not be able to deliver the quality of services that we do without your time, commitment, and dedication.

Trusts and Foundations

- AB Charitable Trust
- Allen, Overy Shearman Stirling Foundation
- Angus Lawson Memorial Trust
- Barnett and Sylvia Shine Charity Trust No2
- Bromley Relief in Need
 - The Bromley Trust
- Dentons Charitable Trust
- Fund for Human Need
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Heinz, Anna and Carol Kroch Foundation
- The Lee Education Charity of William Hatcliffe
- Lewisham Local
- Lewisham Safer Neighbourhoods Board
- London Catalyst
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- Robbins Family Charitable Trust
- Feed UK

- The Childhood Trust
- The Henry Smith Foundation
- The Hillcote Charitable Trust
- The National Lottery Communities Fund
- NACCOM (Guardian and Observer Appeal)
- St Paul's Schools Foundation (The Mercers' Company)
- The Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- The Strategic Legal Fund
- Swan Mountain Trust
- Topinambour Trust
- Trust for London

Community groups and organisations

- ABC Book Club
- Blackheath Quakers
- Burgess Park Plant Nursery
- Dulwich College
- Forest Hill Quakers

- Goldluxel Services
- Lewisham 14th Scouts
- Lewisham Food Bank
- Lewisham Free Cakes For Kids
- Lewisham Lottery
- Nowaal
- NEPOMAK
- Read for Good
- Salvation Army
- Schools include: Coinsborough College, Trinity Church of England School, Deptford Green School, Forest Hill School,
- South East London Humanist Group
- Staff at IBM
- St. Augustine's with St. Luke's Churches
 - Vodafone
- Women's Institute ● WrapUp London
- Youth Against Crime Not Crime Against Youth

Thank you to our **statutory funders**: the Greater London Authority, funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund, and Lewisham Council, London's first Borough of Sanctuary, who have supported our work with contracts, grants and policy engagement.

Thank you to our **Service delivery partners**: Fairbeats, Creating Ground, the Church of the Good Shepherd and St Peter (Lee), The One Tree Hill Allotment Society, Southwark Law Centre, Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, Citizens Advice Lewisham, West London Welcome, Carlson Pepper Collaborative, Salvation Army Lewisham, Salvation Army Deptford, St Saviour's Primary School, our referral partners GRACE Aid, Mammakind and Little Village, Catbytes, Facework, the Trussell Trust, and the museums and organisations that support our Rainbow Club trips and activities - the National Maritime Museum, the Horniman Museum, Discovery Story Centre, the Book Trust, Lewisham Youth Theatre and The Migration Museum.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Thank you to all our supporters who wish to remain anonymous, and those who regularly donated via direct debit, made one-off donations, or donated to one of our fundraising campaigns.

Organisational Structure, Governance and Management

AFRIL has a strong and effective Board of Trustees that brings a diverse range of experience and expertise, including lived experience of forced migration and professional backgrounds in finance, law, policy, charity management, education, fundraising, and HR. The trustees, who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

G J Redmond-King (Chair)	L S Barron
K A B Commons (Vice-Chair)	N D Walker
M R Gravelle (Secretary)	K R Wildgoose
D Burnett	K Richards
H Khalifah	W Kurdi (appointed 01 February 2025)

Trustee recruitment is led by the Chair of the Board and the recruitment process is delivered by at least 2 trustees along with the Executive Director. We recruit trustees to meet a gap in board skills and experience identified via regular skills audit against needs, prioritising lived experience of forced migration. We advertise on Charity Job and publicise widely. Trustees are inducted by the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director in line with the charity's Induction Policy, which includes an introduction and visit to the charity's operations and activities. They are asked to read all relevant policies, the Charity Guidance 'The Essential Trustee', to declare any conflicts of interest, undergo a DBS check and sign fit and proper and confidentiality declarations. Trustees are provided with training where required to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively and a pairing up 'buddy system' to support first time trustees.

The Charity is a Company limited by guarantee. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Organisational Structure

Executive Director: Sophie Wickham (until October 2025); Chloe White (since October 2025)

Food Bank

Food Bank Coordinator: Louise Vangheluwe (until April 2025); Omar Shayah (since April 2025)

Rainbow Club

Rainbow Club Manager: Kieran Tang-Wright
 Passion Fruit Class Teacher: Ruth Michaels
 Starfruit Class Teacher: Vita Baliyaj
 Mango Class Teacher: Ndaiziyei Murimba
 Art Teachers: Sadegh Aleahmad, Lucie MacGregor, Hannah Conway
 Sport Teacher: Daniel Espinosa

Immigration Project

Southwark Law Centre Immigration Solicitor: Ed O'Driscoll

Allotment of Refuge

Allotment of Refuge Project Lead: Rose Kappling
 Allotment of Refuge Project Lead (Maternity Cover): Rue Refson-Dye (Jan-July 2024); Sarah Evans (July-September 2025)

Casework and Advocacy Service

Casework and Advocacy Manager: Chloe White
 Senior Caseworkers: Bevlyn Annokye; Jess Fogarty; Sarah Evans (since May 2025)
 Caseworker: Awaatif Muktar

Office

Monitoring and Operations Officer: Jess Hughes (until May '25); Louise Vangheluwe (since May '25)

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

Risk Management

The trustees have given due consideration to the risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems and processes are established in order to identify, manage and mitigate those risks. The charity has a risk management policy and maintains a risk register which is reviewed by Trustees every 8 weeks, alongside emerging risks and plans for mitigation as presented by the Director to the Board. In addition to this, the charity maintains and regularly reviews a wide range of organisational policies and procedures that address mitigating risk. Risk is a standing agenda item at the board meetings every 2 months.

Financial Review

The financial results for the year which ended on 31 May 2025 are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. The charity's expenditure is similar to the year prior, but our income has increased.

Income: During 2024/25 our income increased by 19% to £573,017. The majority is grants (both restricted and unrestricted) from Trusts and Foundations, with an increasing proportion of Local Authority contracts for the provision of services to our client group. We maintain a consistent level of donations from individuals and local community groups each year. £69,520 is income passed directly to our partners for the delivery of services where AFRIL is the lead grant holder for a project, which this year included our Immigration Project with Southwark Law Centre (SLC), our Asylum Hotels Project with SLC and Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, and our PAP Project partnership with Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors. After a deficit of £41,091 in 2024, which was a calculated risk to use our unrestricted funding as we anticipated a number of funding sources to materialise in the first quarter of 24/25 which they subsequently did, we have made this up with a surplus of £51,064 in the current year. Our fundraising strategy has resulted in an increase in multi-year grant commitments, and income from services provided to our client group from statutory sources.

Expenditure: The total organisational expenditure during the year was £521,953 with 99% spent on charitable activities. Of the total expenditure 65% was on staffing, our greatest asset. Staff are key in delivering all our services and casework.

Reserves: It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. This calculation excludes the partner costs that we only incur should we secure funding for multi-agency projects for which AFRIL is the lead partner. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue and adapt the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Reserves at the balance sheet date were £179,055, being £142,879 unrestricted reserves and £36,176 restricted reserves.

Going concern

As a grant-funded organisation that depends on restricted grants for a large part of its income, AFRIL begins each financial year without having secured all the income to cover its operational costs in the year. Trustees and the Executive Director monitor the financial position regularly and identify any upcoming risks and mitigations that may impact our reserves position. Our fundraising strategy of increasing unrestricted funds and diversifying our income streams to include statutory contracts that align with our aims and values, means that we have an increasing number of multi-year funding commitments for sustainability. At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2025

The trustees' report has been approved by the Board of Trustees.



.....
G J Redmond-King

Trustee

Date: 22/10/25
.....

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Action for Refugees in Lewisham (the charity) for the year ended 31 May 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, the independent examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006.
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

FJWilde

F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA

Warner Wilde
4 Marigold Drive
Bisley
Surrey
GU24 9SF
Date: 27/10/2025

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

		Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
	Notes						
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	124,423	-	124,423	121,528	3,869	125,397
Charitable activities	4	115,000	320,232	435,232	84,155	259,972	344,127
Investments	5	1,151	-	1,151	1,259	-	1,259
Other income	6	2,851	9,360	12,211	179	12,157	12,336
Total income		<u>243,425</u>	<u>329,592</u>	<u>573,017</u>	<u>207,121</u>	<u>275,998</u>	<u>483,119</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	7	120	-	120	90	147	237
Charitable activities	8	219,362	302,471	521,833	224,476	299,497	523,973
Total expenditure		<u>219,482</u>	<u>302,471</u>	<u>521,953</u>	<u>224,566</u>	<u>299,644</u>	<u>524,210</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		23,943	27,121	51,064	(17,445)	(23,646)	(41,091)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 June 2024		<u>118,936</u>	<u>9,055</u>	<u>127,991</u>	<u>136,381</u>	<u>32,701</u>	<u>169,082</u>
Fund balances at 31 May 2025		<u>142,879</u>	<u>36,176</u>	<u>179,055</u>	<u>118,936</u>	<u>9,055</u>	<u>127,991</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MAY 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		1,025		39
Current assets					
Debtors	14	9,469		2,000	
Cash at bank and in hand		184,471		136,264	
		<u>193,940</u>		<u>138,264</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(15,910)</u>		<u>(10,312)</u>	
Net current assets			178,030		127,952
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>179,055</u>		<u>127,991</u>
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	18	36,176		9,055	
Unrestricted funds	19	142,879		118,936	
		<u>179,055</u>		<u>127,991</u>	

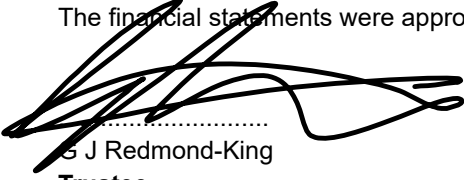
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 May 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 22/10/25


.....
J Redmond-King
Trustee

Company registration number 05819537 (England and Wales)

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	22		48,390		(71,313)
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,334)		-	
Investment income received		1,151		1,259	
Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities			(183)		1,259
Net cash generated from financing activities			-		-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents			48,207		(70,054)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			136,264		206,319
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			184,471		136,264

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Action for Refugees in Lewisham is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is F3, Leemore Central Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 5ES.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	20% straight line
------------------	-------------------

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and gifts	43,201	-	43,201	54,018	3,869	57,887
Grants	71,000	-	71,000	46,500	-	46,500
Donated goods and services	10,222	-	10,222	21,010	-	21,010
	<u>124,423</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>124,423</u>	<u>121,528</u>	<u>3,869</u>	<u>125,397</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

3 Income from donations and legacies (Continued)

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Grants						
AB Charitable Trust	16,500	-	16,500	16,500	-	16,500
Indigo Trust	-	-	-	20,000	-	20,000
Hillcote Charitable Trust	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	-
NACCOM Guardian & Observer Grant	15,000	-	15,000	-	-	-
The Bromley Trust	30,000	-	30,000	-	-	-
The Northwick Trust	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
Other	4,500	-	4,500	-	-	-
	<u>71,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>71,000</u>	<u>46,500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,500</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Charitable activities						
Services provided under contract	115,000	8,000	123,000	84,155	-	84,155
Performance related grants	-	312,232	312,232	-	259,972	259,972
	<u>115,000</u>	<u>320,232</u>	<u>435,232</u>	<u>84,155</u>	<u>259,972</u>	<u>344,127</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

4 Income from charitable activities (Continued)

Performance related grants analysis

	Charitable activities 2025 £	Charitable activities 2024 £
Garfield Weston Foundation	25,000	-
Angus Lawson Memorial Trust	27,700	2,700
Henry Smith Charity	24,400	32,050
The National Lottery Community Fund	18,860	-
Trust for London	33,800	50,700
GLA Grow Back Greener Fund	-	8,751
The St Paul's Schools Foundation (Mercers Company)	70,000	-
London Community Foundation	-	31,250
AB Charitable Trust	2,175	-
Shared Prosperity Fund	42,125	-
London Catalyst Samaritans Grant	1,500	1,500
London Churches Refugee Fund	1,000	2,650
Lewisham Local Essentials Grant	7,290	8,350
The Lee Education Charity of William Hatcliffe	5,000	-
Hillcote Charitable Trust	-	5,000
Society of the Holy Child Jesus	10,000	-
GLA Migrant Advice and Support Fund	-	39,441
Other	43,382	77,580
	<u>312,232</u>	<u>259,972</u>

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	1,151	1,259
	<u>1,151</u>	<u>1,259</u>

6 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Other income	2,851	9,360	12,211	179	12,157	12,336
	<u>2,851</u>	<u>9,360</u>	<u>12,211</u>	<u>179</u>	<u>12,157</u>	<u>12,336</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

7 Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Fundraising and publicity						
Advertising	30	-	30	-	14	14
Other fundraising costs	90	-	90	90	133	223
	<u>120</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>237</u>

8 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2025 £	Charitable activities 2024 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	337,907	293,580
Depreciation and impairment	348	1,463
Advice and Advocacy project	7,573	7,329
Foodbank project	17,493	21,970
Immigration project	33,618	61,231
Rainbow Club project	33,397	35,222
Wellbeing Activities and Allotment of Refuge	9,718	17,204
Destitution fund	3,808	2,963
Interpreting	9,204	14,524
Other volunteer and other staff costs	1,785	1,965
Travel and training	2,820	2,427
External partner costs	35,902	33,750
	<u>493,573</u>	<u>493,628</u>
Share of support and governance costs (see note 9)		
Support	25,028	25,522
Governance	3,232	4,823
	<u>521,833</u>	<u>523,973</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	219,362	224,476
Restricted funds	302,471	299,497
	<u>521,833</u>	<u>523,973</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

9 Support costs allocated to activities

	Charitable activities 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Office and core costs	24,362	24,956
Insurance	666	566
Governance	3,232	4,823
	<u>28,260</u>	<u>30,345</u>
	2025 £	2024 £
Governance costs comprise:		
Legal and professional	1,500	3,200
Independent examiner fees	1,680	1,620
Bank and other charges	52	3
	<u>3,232</u>	<u>4,823</u>

10 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received reimbursement of travel expenses (2024: £20) from the charity during the year.

11 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>
	2025 £	2024 £
Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	306,620	266,396
Social security costs	18,171	15,252
Other pension costs	13,116	11,932
	<u>337,907</u>	<u>293,580</u>

The Trustees consider that they, together with the Executive Director, are the key management of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

11 Employees

(Continued)

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	1	-

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	64,270	56,491

12 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 June 2024	4,522
Additions	1,334
At 31 May 2025	5,856
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 June 2024	4,483
Depreciation charged in the year	348
At 31 May 2025	4,831
Carrying amount	
At 31 May 2025	1,025
At 31 May 2024	39

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

14 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other debtors	511	2,000
Prepayments and accrued income	8,958	-
	<u>9,469</u>	<u>2,000</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2025	2024
		£	£
Other taxation and social security		-	3,987
Deferred income	16	12,350	-
Other creditors		1,111	954
Accruals		2,449	5,371
		<u>15,910</u>	<u>10,312</u>

16 Deferred income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other deferred income	12,350	-
	<u>12,350</u>	<u>-</u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	12,350	-
	<u>12,350</u>	<u>-</u>
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 June 2024	-	38,086
Resources deferred in the year	12,350	(38,086)
	<u>12,350</u>	<u>-</u>
Deferred income at 31 May 2025	<u>12,350</u>	<u>-</u>

17 Retirement benefit schemes

	2025	2024
	£	£
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	13,116	11,932
	<u>13,116</u>	<u>11,932</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

17 Retirement benefit schemes

(Continued)

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

18 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 June 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	At 31 May 2025
	£	£	£	£
Casework and Advocacy Service	-	88,668	(87,163)	1,505
Client Grants	2,547	4,493	(7,040)	-
Core Costs	-	72,425	(71,675)	750
Destitution Fund	2,280	11,295	(8,768)	4,807
Foodbank and Allotment of Refuge	-	24,051	(18,218)	5,833
Rainbow Club	3,613	76,000	(70,399)	9,214
Immigration Project with SLC	615	33,800	(34,415)	-
Coproduction across Projects and Members Forums	-	18,860	(4,793)	14,067
	<u>9,055</u>	<u>329,592</u>	<u>(302,471)</u>	<u>36,176</u>

Previous year:	At 1 June 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	At 31 May 2024
	£	£	£	£
Advice and Advocacy Service	153	87,120	(87,273)	-
Client Grants	912	7,710	(6,076)	2,546
Core Costs	15,438	76,541	(91,979)	-
Destitution Fund	-	7,123	(4,843)	2,280
Foodbank and Allotment of Refuge	3,661	25,975	(29,636)	-
Rainbow Club	12,031	19,929	(28,346)	3,614
Immigration Project with SLC	18	50,700	(50,103)	615
Summer Projects: Summer school and refugee week	488	900	(1,388)	-
	<u>32,701</u>	<u>275,998</u>	<u>(299,644)</u>	<u>9,055</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

18 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Casework and Advocacy Service (formerly Advice and Advocacy Service): costs related to the provision of Advice, Advocacy and Casework

Client Grants: grants secured from Trusts or specific donations for the purpose of specific items for individual clients.

Core costs: general running costs of the organisation, including central staff, rent and rates, and general running costs of projects that are not covered by project specific funding.

Destitution Fund: destitution payments for food or emergency accommodation.

Foodbank and Allotment of Refuge: costs relating to the delivery of Food Bank, Art@home group and Allotment of Refuge.

Rainbow Club: Costs relating to the delivery of Rainbow Club Supplementary School.

Immigration Project: costs relating to the solicitor employed by Southwark Law Centre and related costs.

Co-production across Projects and Members Forums:

Monitoring and Evaluation: costs related to monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Summer projects: Summer school educational activities.

19 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 June 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 May 2025 £
Lewisham Asylum Support Contract	-	-	-	25,415	25,415
General funds	118,936	243,425	(219,482)	(25,415)	117,464
	<u>118,936</u>	<u>243,425</u>	<u>(219,482)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>142,879</u>
Previous year:	At 1 June 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 May 2024 £
General funds	136,381	207,121	(224,566)	-	118,936
	<u>136,381</u>	<u>207,121</u>	<u>(224,566)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>118,936</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2025

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 May 2025:			
Tangible assets	-	1,025	1,025
Current assets/(liabilities)	142,880	35,150	178,030
	<u>142,880</u>	<u>36,175</u>	<u>179,055</u>
Per balance sheet	142,879	36,176	179,055
Balance to allocate	(1)	1	-

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 May 2024:			
Tangible assets	39	-	39
Current assets/(liabilities)	118,897	9,055	127,952
	<u>118,936</u>	<u>9,055</u>	<u>127,991</u>

21 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2024 - none). Two trustees accessed the charity's Service provision in line with the criteria for these projects.

22 Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations

	2025 £	2024 £
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	51,064	(41,091)
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(1,151)	(1,259)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	348	1,463
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase) in debtors	(7,469)	(1,078)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(6,752)	8,738
Increase/(decrease) in deferred income	12,350	(38,086)
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	<u>48,390</u>	<u>(71,313)</u>

23 Analysis of changes in net funds

The charity had no material debt during the year.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1116344

Accounts



Action For Refugees In Lewisham

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2024**

Registered Charity Number: 1116344

Company Number: 05819537

Action for Refugees in Lewisham
F3 Leemore Centre
Bonfield Road
Lewisham
SE13 5ES

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	M R Gravelle D Burnett G J Redmond-King R Tran L S Barron K A B Commons N D Walker K R Wildgoose K Richards H Khalifah	(Resigned 10 July 2023) (Appointed 13 November 2023)
Secretary	M R Gravelle	
Charity number	1116344	
Company number	05819537	
Principal address	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES	
Registered office	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES	
Independent Examiner	F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA Warner Wilde 4 Marigold Drive Bisley Surrey GU24 9SF	



Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 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 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Objects

The charity aims to relieve the poverty of refugees, asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants, advance their education and advocate for their rights, and to provide them with the tools they need to improve their own lives and fulfil their potential as members of the community and society.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

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Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

Letter from the Chair of the Board

It is a privilege to be able to introduce you to the outstanding work of Action for Refugees in Lewisham over the past year. We, the board of trustees, are immensely proud of the impressive services being delivered by the staff and volunteers at AFRIL.

Some of the worst political rhetoric around people migrating and seeking refuge in this country has declined with the change of government in 2024, and the welcome ditching of the cruel and inhumane Rwanda scheme. However, at a time of fiscal constraint for the new government, and with far-right individuals and parties, here and in other countries, using anti-immigration narratives to channel people's anger over unrelated issues like the cost of living, the fundamentals remain depressingly similar.

AFRIL's staff are still responding to people seeking asylum who are left to fend for themselves shortly after having endured the most appalling imaginable journeys to get here, without money, shelter or the means of accessing basic services. Time and again our brilliant team swing into action, working with partners in local government and a range of voluntary agencies, to support and protect some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Time and again, they go into the grim 'hotels' to advise and help people faced with a bureaucracy that has, over time, become difficult to navigate by design, as much as by default. And time and again they go over and above what is expected, to raise funds for our services, to manage and spend that money for the greatest impact, to support and inspire the children of migrants as they learn and grow in their second or third language, to support people to work in and with nature to grow food on our allotment and make connections with others in the community, and to provide food and other basics in a friendly and welcoming place of safety. What is more, they continued to do it during a particularly grim period this year when far-right politicians and social media grifters literally raised a mob against people seeking refuge and those who help and support them.

We, the trustees of AFRIL, thank every single member of staff, every volunteer, every supporter, every partner organisation, every fundraiser, every trust and foundation and company and guild and local authority and place of faith that funds and supports our work. I, as chair, thank my fellow trustees and our outstanding director. And we take particular pride that more of the people working with and for AFRIL, at every level, bring with them their lived experience of migration and of seeking refuge.

What everyone in this extended team does and enables is that most basic, beautiful and important thing in a complex and turbulent world – people helping and supporting people. Please do read about that work here in this report, and please do continue to support AFRIL to continue to deliver for our community; the job is not getting any easier any time soon.



Gareth Redmond-King

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

About AFRIL

Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) is a dynamic local charity established in 2006. We support asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide both crisis support to meet immediate need, and longer-term, flexible programmes to tackle the underlying problems that lead people to be in crisis.

We are a team of 15 majority part-time paid staff (7.3 FTE) and 125 volunteers. Our office is based in the Leemore Centre in central Lewisham and we deliver services across Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark, including the Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter in Lee, St Saviours primary school, One Tree Hill Allotments in Honor Oak, and outreach at local asylum hotels and community hubs. Our clients travel from across South East London to access our services.

Our core services

Casework and Advocacy Service: We provide AQS accredited advice, casework and legal interventions in complex welfare rights, community care, housing and homelessness, asylum support and related matters to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). We draft in-house legal letters to challenge unlawful public law decisions through our PAP Project in partnership with Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors, and we provide second tier advice on complex cases to statutory, voluntary and community organisations.

Helping Hands Food Bank: We address food insecurity through distributing food parcels, food vouchers, toiletries, clothes and essential items to destitute and low income asylum seeking and migrant families and individuals with no recourse to public funds. We offer destitution support through the direct provision of emergency grants for food or urgent short term accommodation, and applying for grants for essential items for individuals. In partnership with St Peter's Church, our Food Bank includes a warm community hub, free cafe, information and peer support, social and wellbeing activities including our art@home group.

Rainbow Club Supplementary School: We provide supplementary Saturday School education and wellbeing activities to children aged 4-11 years from asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families to improve educational attainment, confidence and social development (NRCSE Quality Mark).

Allotment of Refuge: A welcoming and integrated community of food growers improving the health, wellbeing and healthy food access for people seeking sanctuary in South East London through weekly growing sessions and workshops focused on learning and community building.

Immigration Project: In partnership with Southwark Law Centre, an experienced immigration solicitor provides free, in-depth immigration advice and legal representation to enable our clients who are ineligible for or cannot access sufficient legal aid to resolve the underlying immigration issues that lead to poverty and crisis.

In addition, we use our knowledge and expertise from frontline service delivery, along with the lived experience of our clients, to influence positive policy change in housing, asylum support, and related issues. We advise on London wide housing policy through our position on the London Housing Panel, advise the GLA on several asylum and safeguarding related working groups, and work closely with Lewisham Council to track and support progress in developing their services and policies so that they meet the needs of our client group.

Our values and approach

At AFRIL we:

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

- Work with our members to develop services and support that meet their real and not perceived needs.
- Work with our members to enable them to build their knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Work collaboratively with local and national organisations to ensure that services are relevant, appropriate and effective.

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

Our strategic priorities, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2023-25 are to:

- Support people to transition from dependence to independence
- Meet crisis needs
- Advocate with and for our clients
- Maintain a sustainable and effective organisation

Activities, achievements and performance for the year

The people we support

The people we support come from a range of backgrounds and countries. Their immigration status is a prominent feature in their lives, but they should not be solely defined by their immigration status; they are parents, siblings, daughters, sons, community members, volunteers, employees and friends. However, their immigration status does have an adverse impact on their lives, particularly by affecting their ability to access housing and income, and to integrate and put down roots in the community.

Our members are all seeking sanctuary in the UK and fall into three categories: newly recognised refugees, people who have an asylum claim, and 'vulnerablised' migrants. Many of the latter have outstanding protection issues, including issues around gender based violence or trafficking, but have been unable to successfully claim asylum due to complexity and the culture of disbelief in the system, and are now on a longer human rights based route to settlement due to having children in the UK and are struggling with no recourse to public funds. The underlying reason that our members are in need of support is that the hostile environment makes it extremely difficult for people seeking sanctuary in the UK to navigate the complicated immigration system, access safe accommodation, and meet their essential needs.

This year, the majority of the people we supported had made an application for asylum at some point in their protection journey. Their current immigration status was a mix of those still in the asylum system, newly recognised refugees, and other vulnerable migrants who were on longer human rights based routes to settlement. Upon approaching AFRIL this year, 77% were living in insecure housing arrangements, including 47 families who were street homeless. In addition to this, 46% had no formal income whatsoever and 48% had very low income - the majority of those with low income were in receipt of asylum support payments which is just £49.18 per person per week, or for those living in overcrowded asylum "hotels" just £8.86 per week and food that is often inedible.

Our impact

Last year we supported 682 people from 301 families, a 59% increase on the year before. The majority of people accessed more than one of our services. The continuous increase in need and demand for our services is due to high costs of living, hostile immigration policies, and related failings in the systems and structures that should support people seeking sanctuary to meet their needs and rebuild their lives. This results in increasing numbers of people arriving at AFRIL in crisis, often experiencing destitution and homelessness. They require intensive holistic support and complex casework in order to resolve complicated issues resulting from their immigration status. The people we support show high levels of independence and resourcefulness and have often tried to resolve situations themselves but have reached a crisis point due to being repeatedly let down by the systems that should be there to support them.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

Our approach is one of long-term, holistic support. We provide emergency relief during crises, alongside support to resolve the underlying issues that are the root cause. This year, our food bank distributed food parcels, food vouchers, and other essential items to 160 individuals from 56 families, including 90 children; our Casework and Advocacy Service supported 210 clients with 104 dependents (445 individuals) with detailed advice and complex casework to resolve the issues they are facing; Rainbow Club provided early intervention to support 88 children from 58 families to improve their educational attainment, confidence and wellbeing. Our Immigration Project in partnership with Southwark Law Centre supported 35 clients with 50 dependents (85 individuals) with 42 cases. 34 of these clients received full legal representation and 8 were provided comprehensive written advice as a one-off following assessment or on a separate matter to their main representation.

Immigration, housing and income

This year, 43% of the people we supported improved their immigration status and a further 43% were supported to maintain a more secure immigration status or remain in the asylum system whilst they awaited a decision on their asylum claim. For our members, maintaining an immigration status can mean progressing on the 10 year humanitarian route to resettlement. The UK immigration system makes this particularly difficult as applications for leave to remain cost £3,845.50 for every adult in the family and £3,198 for every child in the family every 2.5 years for 10 years. However people on this route have a 'no recourse to public funds' restriction that requires legal support to be lifted, and at least at first do not have the right to work. If a deadline to extend this leave is missed, then they must start the 10 year process again. Our Immigration Project supports people to understand this complication system, apply for fee waivers, and make applications. In addition to this, we supported clients to remain in the asylum system, for example by ensuring they had access to asylum support so that they could afford to travel to present at the Home Office when requested, and supporting people to access immigration solicitors to support with complications. An improvement of immigration status is most commonly our clients seeking asylum receiving a grant of refugee status and people who were previously undocumented receiving limited leave to remain through the 10 year route.

We support clients to access the income and housing that they are entitled to, when access is difficult due to the government's hostile environment. We have established and utilise escalation routes, and when informal advocacy fails, we prepare Pre-Action Protocol (PAP) letters to overturn unlawful decisions made by Local Authorities or the Home Office with a 99% success rate. 44% of people we supported this year reported that their access to income had improved since joining AFRIL, and a further 36% were supported to maintain regular access to their income entitlements. In addition to this, 41% percent reported that their housing arrangements had become more secure since joining AFRIL, and a further 42% were supported to maintain access to their housing entitlements, for example by resolving disrepair issues or addressing safeguarding in asylum support accommodation.

Despite AFRIL working hard to maximise the income that families are able to access, 87% of clients reported that they do not have access to enough money to support themselves and their family without help from charities. This reflects low levels of government support, and policies of the hostile environment such as asylum seekers being prohibited from working whilst they await a decision on their claim, unless they meet very specific requirements. This results in people being unable to meet their essential needs, especially in the current context of high living costs.

Wellbeing, confidence and community

Experience prior to, during, and after forced migration impacts upon the wellbeing and confidence of the people we support, and they often report feeling isolated when they arrive at AFRIL. The people we work with have fled highly unsafe situations and have come to the UK to seek sanctuary. However, they are instead faced with the harsh reality of the UK's hostile environment, and high costs of living. Few of the people we support speak English as a first language and therefore

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

have to navigate the immigration, education and healthcare systems in an unfamiliar language, all whilst adapting to life in the UK and caring for their children.

In our annual survey, we asked our members about AFRIL's impact on their wellbeing, confidence, feelings of isolation and community. **96% said coming to AFRIL had improved their wellbeing, 93% said coming to AFRIL improved their confidence, 90% said AFRIL has helped them to feel less isolated, and 94% said AFRIL has helped them to feel a part of a community.** The people we support have often been let down by structures, systems, and organisations that should support them which impacts how much they trust. We build strong working relationships with our members and prioritise building trust - **96% of our members said they trust AFRIL a lot or mostly, compared to 58% saying they trust other organisations a lot or mostly.**

Member experience of AFRIL

"For six years, I had the chance to be involved with AFRIL (Action for Refugees in Lewisham). Their help was invaluable to me and my family. They supported us on many fronts, including immigration, guiding us through often complex and daunting processes. Thanks to them, my children were able to receive free meals, which significantly eased our financial burden. In addition, AFRIL provided us with food and clothing, meeting essential needs and offering us security and dignity that we would have struggled to maintain without their help. Beyond material support, it was within AFRIL that I made some of the most meaningful connections of my life. I met people who shared similar experiences, and we formed a supportive and understanding community. This period with AFRIL not only helped me overcome daily challenges but also enriched my life with valuable relationships and a deeper understanding of human solidarity." - AFRIL member, 2024

Helping Hands Food Bank

The Helping Hands food bank runs fortnightly on Saturdays in conjunction with the volunteer team from Good Shepherd St Peter's Church, Lee. All the families registered with the food bank have sought sanctuary in the UK. Priority is given to residents from Lewisham and Greenwich, but we also support people living in Southwark, Bromley and Bexley.

The food bank aims to increase food security for individuals and families experiencing destitution as a result of their immigration status. **This financial year, we distributed 2016 food parcels consisting of supermarket vouchers and fresh produce to 56 families with 104 dependents, including 90 children.** In our annual survey, **97% reported that knowing they will have a regular supermarket voucher with fresh food, or food parcel helps them to feel more secure, and 85% said that the food bank improved their child or baby's health and wellbeing.** We regularly ask for feedback from our members to ensure the food bank is meeting their needs. In our annual survey, an overwhelming majority of food bank members (94%) reported once again that they preferred receiving supermarket vouchers to traditional food parcels, citing reasons such as being able to budget better, and to purchase food which is culturally appropriate and meets their children's preferences and dietary requirements. Due to this consistent feedback, we have been pioneering cash first approaches for food banks in Lewisham.

The people we support do not have enough money to buy enough food for themselves or their families, and this means that they also face challenges meeting their other essential needs too. This year we distributed sanitary towels and toiletries to our members, as well as nappies and baby wipes to 23 mothers experiencing destitution. A grant from Team Feed enabled us to give 13 grants to purchase baby formula to mothers who use formula. We made 23 referrals to baby banks, 6 referrals to clothing banks, and 18 referrals to the Household Support Fund to support people to keep warm and pay their energy bills. We distributed winter coats from Wrap Up London, handmade crocheted blankets from a local church, sim cards with free calls and data from Unconnected.org and 27 grants for essential household items from the Lewisham Local Essentials fund. We distributed laptops from The Good Things Foundation and referred 13 of our members

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to Catbytes so that they could receive a laptop to help them to complete online forms, access education and keep in touch with friends and family, addressing digital exclusion.

As part of our destitution support, **we provided emergency destitution grants to 65 families across AFRIL services during particular moments of crisis.** These payments offered temporary and immediate relief, for example for transport to emergency accommodation for people with disabilities or young children, food for destitute people, or a safe overnight hostel for someone who is homeless and vulnerable. Not only do these payments mean that people can meet their essential needs, but the temporary relief and security that they offer enables people to have more capacity to engage with the often complicated and daunting process of resolving the underlying immigration, housing and income issues that have resulted in crisis.

“You have peace of mind - food on the table and personal cleanliness” - Food bank member, 2024

Usually our food bank members are supported for over a year whilst our Casework and Advocacy Service, and Immigration Solicitor at Southwark Law Centre, work to resolve the underlying immigration issues, and the resulting housing and access to income issues, that are the cause of their extreme food poverty. The food bank therefore has a strong sense of community; in addition to supporting people to meet their essential needs, it provides a warm, safe place for people to have a hot drink and a free breakfast at our cafe, access information, social activities, and meet other people who may or may not have similar experiences.

Once our Caseworkers and Immigration Solicitor have worked with members to resolve underlying causes of destitution, we support them to sustainably move on from the food bank and rebuild their lives in South East London. Last year, we supported 19 people to move on and welcomed new members. This support includes referrals to employment support, to our Casework service or an external casework service to ensure they have access to any welfare benefits that they are entitled to, and to our partner, GRACEAid, so that they can access free clothes with dignity. We also refer to trusted ESOL providers and our Allotment of Refuge to support clients to reduce isolation and support with community belonging.

“Having food to eat and a sense of belonging.” - Food bank member, 2024

Rainbow Club Supplementary School

Our Rainbow Club Supplementary school supports children from asylum seeking, refugee, and vulnerable migrant families. The school runs every Saturday morning during term time, where children receive specialised English, Maths, Music, Art and Sport lessons, wellbeing support and termly school trips. The school is split into 3 classes: Passion Fruit (ages 4-6), Starfruit (ages 6-8), and Mango (ages 8-11).

Rainbow Club children frequently experience destitution or extreme poverty, and are living in challenging home environments. Many live in insecure housing such as temporary accommodation or asylum hotels, which rarely have space for playing or doing homework, and they are often moved or made homeless at very short notice by the home office or local authority. Rainbow Club provides a safe, consistent space for these children to learn, play, make friends, and develop their confidence and self-esteem, whilst providing respite and wraparound support to parents.

In the 2023/24 academic year, **Rainbow Club supported 88 children from 58 families. Each child received 140 hours of English, Maths, Art, Music, and Sport provision to support integration and success in their mainstream schools.** It is widely understood that children from low-income families and refugee and asylum seeking children experience educational disadvantage (IPPR, 2012; UNICEF, 2018). Tailored English and Maths provision at Rainbow Club works to reduce the attainment gap and support children to thrive and integrate. Lessons were delivered by our 3 experienced

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teachers, who each bring valuable lived experience of migration. Children were also supported by our team of 33 volunteer teaching assistants. **17 older children attended Rainbow Club** as youth volunteers aged 11-18, accessing training and support. **The results of our formal assessments showed that 91% of Rainbow Club children made progress in Maths and English, with 59% making significant progress.**

“The Saturday school helps me during normal school days, it makes it a bit easier.” - Rainbow Club child, 2024

As well as improving educational attainment, Rainbow Club develops the confidence, self-esteem and aspirations of sanctuary seeking children. **In the 2023/24 academic year, 86% improved in self esteem and confidence, and 82% developed their future aspirations.** Children enjoyed regular creative and sports activities provided by our experienced art and sports teachers, as well as music and instrument lessons from our partner, Fairbeats. Our Allotment of Refuge became part of the Rainbow Club curriculum this year. Once a term, each Rainbow Club class spends a morning at our 160m² allotment site where they participate in fun food growing and environmental workshops, providing learning and joy in an accessible green urban space. Other extracurricular activities and trips included the Discover Children’s Story Centre, Mudchute Farm, Museum of London Docklands, the Horniman Museum, and a series of holiday workshops with our art teacher at the National Gallery where children co-produced resources for the National Gallery’s new family area.

We significantly developed our youth engagement projects to give children more voice and influence in Saturday school matters, and enable them to gain leadership skills and responsibility. In January, we launched the Rainbow Club Youth Council, where student representatives collect and share their class’ views, feedback, and suggestions for Rainbow Club. We significantly expanded our youth volunteer programme, growing from 5 to 17 youth volunteers. Youth volunteers are usually former pupils and/or older siblings of current pupils. They support the class teachers to deliver sessions, and receive formal inductions and training so they are equipped with the skills to support the younger children with their learning. As many attended Rainbow Club themselves, they are well-placed to share their experiences and understanding with the younger pupils.

The Rainbow Club Education Manager provides pastoral, safeguarding and integration support to families throughout the year, including joint working with AFRIL’s Advice Service, Lewisham Council and other statutory bodies to make sure children and families get the support they need. We closed the summer term with a brilliant Sports Day that Rainbow Club Year 6s and Dulwich College Year 6s planned and delivered together, and our Refugee Week Showcase.

Notable success outside of the classroom this year was being awarded Sanctuary status by City of Sanctuary, in recognition of our culture of welcome and inclusion for children seeking sanctuary in South East London. We have also been helping mainstream schools through Lewisham’s Schools of Sanctuary working group, and directly with Southwark and Bromley Councils, sharing good practice and resources on how best to support their sanctuary seeking children. This not only means that Rainbow Club children will have a more positive mainstream experience but that we can improve the educational and cultural environment for far more children in this diverse part of London. We recently joined the appraisal panel for another school’s application, and aim to encourage more local schools to work towards accreditation.

The impact of Rainbow Club is widely acknowledged in our area, and this year we have been approached by two local authorities and another local organisation who are interested in setting up similar projects in their areas. We have shared our knowledge and expertise, and will continue to offer support as these prospective projects develop.

“I feel excited when I come here. Sometimes, I even wake up early when I know I am coming here. My favourite subject is art.” - Rainbow Club child, 2024

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Allotment of Refuge

AFRIL's Allotment of Refuge is part of the One Tree Hill Allotment Society (OTHAS) allotment site at Honor Oak Park. We acquired the plot in 2017 and thanks in a large part to grants from the Mayor of London, have developed it into a space of sanctuary where AFRIL members and people in the local community come together in a truly integrated project to learn about food growing, climate resilience, meet new people, and work together to improve this safe, green space.

This year, 184 people participated in activities at the Allotment of Refuge. **54 local community members** volunteered regularly at the allotment this year, **31% of whom have lived experience of seeking sanctuary**. Our Allotment Project Lead led weekly Tuesday gardening sessions where activities included food growing and harvesting, learning and sharing knowledge, and generally maintaining and improving the site. Each session ended with a shared lunch where volunteers come together to make plans and share ideas for the site. During harvest season, our Allotment Project Lead ran fortnightly sessions on a Friday afternoon to harvest fresh produce to supplement the food parcels that are distributed at AFRIL's food bank on Saturday morning. **This enabled 160 individuals from 56 families experiencing destitution to access fresh, locally grown, healthy produce**. We ran Sunday work days where volunteers came to help with larger tasks, such as building a shed and moving manure. We have improved accessibility of the site, for example improving and maintaining paths to make them steady to walk on, removing ditches, creating a walk-in shed for easy access to tools, and improving seating in the polytunnel.

Climate friendly practices, climate resilience, and environmental protection are a priority at the Allotment of Refuge. We have transitioned the site into an eco-friendly hub, for example through creating deadwood areas for habitat and ponds for biodiversity, and using organic matter and no chemicals to feed our plants. We have used climate friendly practices, for example we have improved soil health through making our own compost, practicing the "no dig" method, and mulching once a year with manure from a local farm. Members reported that they have learnt about climate friendly ways to grow food and about protecting the environment. In March, this was particularly prominent as we experienced the impact of climate change as the site flooded and our beautiful willow tree came down in the storms. We therefore worked quickly and collaboratively to repair the site. The willow tree played an important role in regulating the water levels on the site, so we have since factored this into our plans for food growing. Going forward we can only expect further disruption due to climate change, but we are confident that, with our experienced Allotment Project Lead and enthusiastic and dedicated team of volunteers we will be able to effectively respond to these new challenges.

Once a term, children from AFRIL's Rainbow Club Saturday school came to the Allotment of Refuge to use the site as an outdoor classroom, **enabling 88 children to benefit from accessing this relaxing, fun environment**. Workshops included building a wormery and making seed bombs. The children learnt about sustainable food growing and environmental protection, which is important as the climate crisis will only become a more prominent part of each of their lives as they grow up. These sessions also gave them an opportunity to have fun and play in a safe, natural, outdoor space. In our annual survey, **88% of parents said their child enjoyed going to the allotment, and 79% said the allotment improved their child's wellbeing** (the remaining 12% and 21% respectively responded "don't know"). This impact of the project is particularly important for the families we support as many live in poor quality, overcrowded housing with little access to outdoor space.

Co-production is a key element of the project and this year we set up our Allotment Advisory Panel which acts as a project steering group. The panel have set their values as a group, agreed how it should be run, reflected on their best moments, highs, lows and challenges, and discussed leadership, community, outreach, barriers to attending, and what resources are needed.

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Allotment members reported improvements in their mental and physical health and wellbeing from the physical activity involved with gardening, from spending time in a beautiful, restorative greenspace, and from building social connections with others. **In our annual survey, 89% said that going to the allotment improved their wellbeing, and 79% said it helped them to feel part of a community.** This includes those who attended the Refugee Week allotment celebration, as well as regular volunteers.

“A place to meet friends, learn new skills on gardening and feel as part of a family.” Allotment member 2024

Casework and Advocacy Service

Our Casework and Advocacy service provides Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accredited advice and casework support in complex welfare rights, asylum support, community care, housing and homelessness, and related matters to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. Formerly referred to as our ‘Advice and Advocacy Service’ we have expanded and developed this work significantly in the course of the year and recently changed our name to reflect our focus on complex casework as opposed to one off advice. In March 2023, we were awarded AQS Casework Level for Housing, and Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and Advice Level for Welfare Benefits. At time of writing we had been reassessed and awarded Casework Level in a record five areas: those already listed plus Disability and Community Care.

In the last 12 months, our Casework and Advocacy service has supported **445 individuals from 210 families, with 218 cases. This is an increase of 131% since the previous 12 months.** We take a holistic and person centred approach, working together with our clients to co-produce a personal casework plan with short and long term goals, agreeing together the steps to achieve them. **Our success rates are high:** 100% of cases made progress towards resolving at least one casework issue; 98% of cases had at least one casework issues resolved; and 77% of cases were fully resolved, with the remaining 23% continuing to receive casework support.

Demand significantly and continually increased over the year, with client needs becoming more complex due to changes to UK immigration and asylum support policy. Most clients present with multiple pressing casework needs which require complex casework support to resolve, but have often only been able to receive one-off advice from other organisations. We have expanded and developed our Casework and Advocacy team in response to this demand. This increased capacity enabled us to continue to be dynamic and flexible in our approach to ensure the development of our service continued to meet the real and not perceived needs of our clients, and to identify and meet gaps in local service provision.

A significant area of expansion this year has been our outreach advice and casework in local asylum “hotels”. This expansion followed the government policy during the Covid-19 lockdowns to house asylum seekers in hotels which has since continued. We delivered fortnightly outreach advice sessions in the largest local asylum hotel where we met people with extremely complex casework needs due to unhygienic and overcrowded conditions and ample safeguarding concerns, including toddlers allocated and falling out of top bunks, families forced to co-sleep, adults and children with complex health needs and disabilities being housed inappropriately in the hotel, and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers becoming malnourished, and in some instances hospitalised, due to poor quality food. In August 2023, the hotel was closed at short notice and we responded rapidly and dynamically to support residents. **We assessed and submitted over 40 comprehensive representations to the Home Office to ensure residents were not dispersed to unsuitable locations or accommodation.** We prioritised supporting single people with complex needs who were at risk of being dispersed to ex-MOD sites like RHS Wethersfield, the Portland Barge, and maximised hotels which were unsuitable due to their high needs (e.g. people with physical and mental health needs, trafficking survivors, and survivors of torture). We delivered casework to those with complex needs who had strong grounds to remain in London/Lewisham under Home Office policy, or to be dispersed to self contained dispersal accommodation. Due to the

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success of our response to this closure, we were later asked by Greenwich Council to support residents through the closure of two asylum hotels in their borough, and the GLA distributed our guides as best practice. We have developed expertise in this area, recognised across the sector, and continue to expand this work in response to need - now with a full time Senior Asylum Support Caseworker funded by Lewisham Council who supports Lewisham's asylum seeking residents with complex casework and safeguarding support in asylum hotels and in the community, including at family hubs for accessibility..

We delivered regular outreach sessions both at local asylum hotels and other community hubs to encourage wide access to our support. In the year, this included outreach sessions with child care options to support single parents to overcome this barrier. Clients approach us at these sessions and are taken on for ongoing casework with appointments at our office or online/via phone. Through outreach advice, we supported more deaf, LGBTQ+, and asylum seekers who experienced trafficking and modern slavery. We find increases are quick with people recommending us by word-of-mouth in these communities. We also provided a significant amount of casework support to people with complex disabilities living in unsuitable asylum support accommodation. These cases are often the most complex as ableist systems prevent those with disabilities from accessing the support they are entitled to. **We supported 100% of clients not receiving all or any of their asylum support payments to obtain the income they were entitled to, and had an 89% success rate in securing safe accommodation for clients living in unsuitable asylum support accommodation.** This is a significant achievement given that asylum support is officially allocated on a 'no choice basis'. We supported clients who were at risk of being moved to inhumane asylum support accommodation, such as ex-RAF sites and the Bibby Stockholm, and prevented 100% of these dispersals.

We saw an increase in both individuals and families experiencing or at imminent risk of street homelessness. In December 2023, the government changed the cessation period from 28 days to 7 days, meaning people had to leave asylum support accommodation within 7 days of receiving refugee status. 28 days was already not enough time for recently granted refugees to find accommodation and employment and apply for any welfare benefits, so many became homeless. We support people intensively in this 'move on' period to apply for welfare benefits and make supported referrals for employability support. The shorter cessation period, that was later reversed, particularly affected single men as they were rarely considered 'priority need' by the local authority. In response, we established a project with Lewisham Council for bed spaces for single homeless men, sourcing housing grants to support with deposits, and developed relationships with local authority supported housing teams, Refugees at Home, and private providers. In addition to this, we saw an increase in asylum seekers and migrants with no recourse to public funds living in the community becoming homeless as the rising cost of living meant that the informal networks that they relied on for food and accommodation, for example friends and church members, could no longer afford to support them. Our caseworkers work tirelessly to secure safe accommodation for people as soon as possible, with a very high success rate: **94% of homelessness cases were resolved, and 77% were resolved on the same day, rising to 100% when children were involved.**

In May 2023 we launched our Pre-Action Protocol (PAP+) project with Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors (DPG), supported by the GLA, with a 99% success rate. As part of this project, we trained and coached 18 other small charities and community groups to use this legal tool to secure better outcomes for their clients. We continue to write PAP letters, and are working with DPG to develop the PAP+ model further. PAPs enable us to challenge unlawful decisions made by public bodies when informal advocacy has not worked. This is most often in cases of local authority gatekeeping when homeless families with children, or individuals with complex needs, are not being assessed or provided with the emergency relief that they are entitled to, or when people are allocated asylum hotel accommodation which is unsafe or unsuitable.

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“They helped me greatly and I was getting the best understanding of what I am entitled to and how to tackle the problems with [their] help and support.” - Casework and Advocacy client, 2024

Immigration Project

Through our Immigration Project in partnership with Southwark Law Centre, an experienced immigration solicitor provides free immigration advice and representation to AFRIL clients with insecure immigration status and little to no income. Some have complex asylum claims, and others have a human rights based claim that falls outside the scope of legal aid, and they are not able to afford the expensive legal fees to regularise their status. In our annual survey **87% reported that it was difficult to find a free immigration solicitor outside of AFRIL.**

Last year, the solicitor provided representations in **33 cases plus 10 instances of one-off detailed immigration advice to 33 clients with 51 dependents (84 individuals)**. 5 of these clients have had successful asylum claims, 10 clients have received a successful grant of leave to remain, 1 client received settled status, and 3 undocumented children secured/were registered as British Citizens. Only 1 client has had a refusal - we are currently representing this client at appeal stage on the strong grounds that it is unsafe for them to return to Darfur. The majority of the remaining clients are waiting for decisions from the Home Office. The high costs of LLR applications are a barrier for many of our clients in regularising their status and we have a **100% success rate in fee waiver applications.**

As a result of accessing our Immigration Project, **60% of clients reported that their housing or income had improved**, as these two things are inextricably linked. In addition, **93% of annual survey respondents said that the Immigration Project had helped them to understand the immigration system in the UK more generally**, and all but one respondent said that they would recommend the service to a friend.

UK Immigration Law continued to change significantly over the year, most notably with the Nationality and Borders Act being superseded by the Illegal Immigration Act, and the threat of removal to Rwanda which, thankfully, has been scrapped by the new government. This means significant time keeping up to date with changes, and puts pressure on other small community organisations who may not have an experienced Immigration Solicitor on their team to support them through these changes. We shared our knowledge and expertise through delivering training and capacity building to other organisations and community groups. In November 2023, **we delivered two training sessions to 14 external organisations**. These were ‘Immigration Law - An Overview’, and ‘Recent and proposed changes to immigration law: An Overview’. The sessions were well received, with **82% reporting in the follow-up survey that their knowledge and confidence of UK Immigration Law and Policy had improved as a result of the training.**

We expect further immigration changes following the change in government in July 2024. It is too early to say what the impact of this will be in the long term, however so far we have seen some potential positive changes. The time it takes for fee waivers decisions and straightforward renewal decisions on the 10 year route to be made, seem to have significantly reduced. An anticipated challenge as a consequence of these quicker decisions is a larger appeal backlog in tribunals. Around 48% of asylum refusals are overturned at appeal.

“They let me know that I can be protected.” Immigration client 2024

Policy Work

This year we have significantly expanded our policy and influencing work, in a large part due to our growing casework team providing a solid evidence base. We combined our expertise gained from frontline services with our clients' lived experience and voice, to advocate together for positive social change. We worked with local authorities to track service quality and outcomes for our clients, encouraging improved practice.

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We are steering group members of the Lewisham Migration Forum, through which we work with local partners and the Council to ensure that the Borough is a place of sanctuary for asylum seekers and migrants. We are a permanent member of the Lewisham Refugee and Asylum Safeguarding Partnership.

As a small frontline organisation we **see trends as they emerge**, and can develop timely policy positions to the most pressing current issues. Our strong working relationships and high levels of trust with clients, means that our **policy work is rooted in lived experience**, and we regularly facilitate our clients speaking directly to decision makers. Our policy priorities are shaped by the needs and priorities of our clients. We are increasingly consulted for our input on asylum related policy issues by local authorities and regional bodies such as the Greater London Authority (GLA).

This year, we were one of the charities **leading the challenge against one of the worst aspects of the asylum hotels policy: maximisation** (forced room sharing without suitability assessments). We worked with partners, Deighton Pierce Glynn solicitors, Southwark Law Centre and West London Welcome, and with our Members Forum who have shared their lived experience of these “hotels”. We produced translated guidance which was distributed nationally to asylum seekers living in asylum support hotels to provide them with information to advocate for themselves, which improved the capacity of organisations to prioritise the most vulnerable community members who were less able to advocate for themselves. In December, we chaired a Local Authority roundtable on the issue which was well attended and received excellent feedback. We understand that several local authorities took action on conditions in hotels in their area as a result of this meeting. We secured a **direct audience with the Home Office Director of Asylum Support** to raise our concerns and suggestions for hotel closures practice. This preparatory legal work provided the basis for ongoing litigation to improve asylum support accommodation.

We formally advised the GLA in three areas; experiences of deaf asylum seekers, asylum support safeguarding, and asylum support hotel closures. From February 2024, we provided advice and contributed towards a piece of formal research on the experiences of deaf asylum seekers. In April 2024, we were appointed to the GLA working group on asylum support hotel closures where we provided the GLA, Home Office, and other organisations with an insight into what was happening on the ground during closures, particularly regarding policy breaches. In May 2024, we joined the GLA advisory panel on asylum support safeguarding, and were commended for our contribution to research in this area.

In our home Borough of Lewisham, we have supported the **Council to track performance and secured improved practice** in several areas. A group of AFRIL clients formally advised Lewisham Council on their priorities for sanctuary seekers this year, and we supported our members with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) to speak to the conference that produced the **Lewisham Food Justice Action Plan**, ensuring that NRPF and culturally appropriate food issues were central. AFRIL clients from our Food Bank inputted into the **Lewisham 2030 strategy**.

Our policy work has continued to develop since the end of this financial year. Most notably, in July 2024, we were **appointed a member of the London Housing Panel** where we bring the voice of migrant Londoners and our frontline experience in housing and homelessness casework to work collaboratively with the panel and the Mayor of London to improve housing for all.

Other Activities

We started the year with our annual celebration of Refugee Week, hosting a community meal at our Allotment of Refuge. In June 2023, the theme was Compassion - the whole AFRIL community was appreciative of this opportunity to focus on the compassion that we see, share and experience every day, and to spend time in a safe space away from the hostilities of UK immigration policies. Our volunteers, staff, supporters, funders and the people we support came together to share

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food, listen to live music, and create art at our beautiful Allotment. Each year, we celebrate this event and centre it around the people we support. It is an important space of reflection, community, and togetherness.

This year, we relaunched our Parents Forum as a Members Forum. The group initially developed as Rainbow Club parents wanted a space to meet other parents, share experiences, and learn from each other. Transitioning this space into a Members Forum means that clients from across our services can benefit from this project. Topics are driven by our members, which included workshops on health and wellbeing; employability, volunteering and education; and housing rights. Our Members Forum is an important co-production space and feedback loop on AFRIL services. A special Members Forum on a large local hotel closure, co-produced AFRIL's strategy and direction in this area.

"The parent meeting helped my wellbeing and I got to meet other parents which helped me alot". - Members Forum member, 2024

In December 2024, we featured in an Evening Standard article focused on the impact of the rising cost of living on the people we support. This opportunity to provide a story which contrasted with the dominant media narrative followed us experiencing a 93% increase in demand since the start of the cost of living crisis. Our members are best placed to talk about the impact of the cost of living crisis and AFRIL on their lives, so we worked closely with a journalist and two of our members to support them to safely share their experiences. The full article can be found [here](#).

Vicarious trauma and burnout are common in frontline delivery in our sector, and the rise in far right violence in the UK exacerbates this risk. We have increased clinical supervision for staff, and provided training to staff and volunteers on managing and preventing vicarious trauma. This improves staff and volunteer wellbeing and motivation - feedback included "the extra wellbeing support really helped me to process and move on from a stressful situation at work, and it being offered to me in the first place made me feel valued." In addition to clinical supervision, staff and volunteers have access to our Employee Assistance Programme, and good HR support and policies.

Future plans

In 2024/25 we plan to consolidate our growing services, supporting 350 asylum seeking, refugee and vulnerable migrant families to access safe housing, sufficient income, regularise their immigration status, improve their wellbeing, support their children to thrive, and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community.

Our Food Bank will meet the crisis needs of over 50 of the most destitute households, whilst working intensively with AFRIL's other services to improve peoples' entitlements and options so they can move from dependence to independence. Our Casework and Advocacy Service will grow in line with the needs of our client group, maintaining our outstanding success rates and continuing to have a client first approach that prioritises supporting people to co-design their own casework plans and build independence. We will be dynamic in our outreach locations, responding to changing client groups and emerging issues. We will work in partnership with mainstream organisations to co-develop services, provide training, and therefore improve support for our client group. Maintaining our excellent legal partnerships, we will continue to be outspoken in the face of injustice and support strategic legal challenge when it aligns with our values and mission. Our Immigration Project will secure status for more and more people, enabling them to really rebuild their lives. We will provide training in line with policy changes, and strengthen our partnership with Southwark Law Centre to ensure high quality representation for our clients. We plan to become registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner in our own right to provide regulated immigration advice, which will enable us to increase our offer to clients in this under-resourced field. Our Allotment of Refuge will undertake volunteer outreach to recruit more sanctuary seeking members who are harder to reach and can be reluctant to put down roots when they live in such uncertainty. We

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will continue to improve accessibility of the site, with plans to rebuild our beds to be easier to reach. We want to build more wicking beds to control the growing environment and increase our crop yield for the food bank, and to continue to try to grow new crops recommended by our members to ensure our harvest is culturally appropriate. We will continue our resilience measures in the face of climate change, for example creating flood defences such as swales and a rain garden area. Rainbow Club will grow from strength to strength, further developing our Youth Council, and our special literacy work to encourage children to read and write for pleasure, and develop their confidence in sharing their opinions and voice, thereby unlocking success. We will develop a strategic advocacy plan for our 24/25 policy work with client voice at the centre. We will maintain the flexibility to respond to emerging urgent issues, as is our specialism, and aim to properly resource this work. We will continue to focus broadly on asylum support issues, safeguarding, and housing rights as it impacts our client group.

We are in the final year of our current strategic plan and will launch a bottom up strategic planning process with a focus on increasing lived experience in our governance decisions. In order to maintain a sustainable and effective organisation, we will build on the work that has been done this year to diversify our funding streams, and we will resource our central support functions to provide strong governance and organisational support in proportion to our growing front line services. Our 23/24 internal priority has been to invest in monitoring and impact measurement. Our case management system, customised in-house, will capture outcomes across all our projects and continue to provide the robust evidence base we need to make both the case for support and to advocate for positive policy changes. At the same time, we will continue to invest in wellbeing support for our outstanding staff and volunteer team so we can continue to deliver positive outcomes with and for asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and refugees across South East London.

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Our funders, supporters, partners and volunteers

Thank you to our funders, supporters and partners. We would not have been able to provide the services and support detailed in this report without you. We are enormously grateful for your support, and for the solidarity and compassion that you show towards refugees, asylum seekers and migrants seeking sanctuary in our community.

Thank you also to our wonderful team of volunteers for donating your precious time to AFRIL. We would not be able to deliver the quality of services that we do without your time, commitment, and dedication.

Trusts and Foundations

- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- AB Charitable Trust
- Angus Lawson Memorial Trust
- Barnett and Sylvia Shine Charitable Trust
- BBC Children in Need
- Delamere Dairy Foundation
- Fund for Human Need
- Heinz, Anna and Carol Kroch Foundation
- The Lee Education Charity of William Hatcliffe
- Lewisham Local
- London Catalyst
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- London Communities Foundation
- Robbins Family Charitable Trust
- Feed UK
- The Caring Foundation
- The Childhood Trust (Big Give)
- The Henry Smith Charity

- The Hillcote Charitable Trust
- The Indigo Trust
- The Julia Rausing Trust
- The Northwick Trust
- The Strategic Legal Fund
- The Worshipful Company of Gardeners
- The Worshipful Company of Launderers
- Topinambour Trust
- Trust for London

Community groups and organisations

- Acorn Book Club
- Beckenham South Scouts
- Blackheath Quakers
- Dulwich College
- Forest Hill Quakers
- Gerald Moore Gallery, Eltham College
- Goldluxel Services
- Good Things Foundation
- Give A Car
- Greenwich Ecology Centre
- Kindred Yoga
- Lewisham 14th Scouts

- Lewisham Free Cakes For Kids
- Lewisham Lottery
- Michael O'Mara Books
- NEPOMAK
- Sabina Motasem Bridal
- Salvation Army
- Schools include: St Winifred's School, Deptford Green School, Bullers Wood School for Girls, Forest Hill School, Bexley Grammar School
- South East London Humanist Group
- Sharegift
- Staff at IBM
- St. Augustine's with St. Luke's Churches
- Tesco Community Grants
- The Unconnected
- Vodafone
- Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association
- Women's Institute
- WrapUp London
- Youth Against Crime Not Crime Against Youth

Thank you to our **statutory funders**: the Greater London Authority, Greenwich Council, and Lewisham Council, London's first Borough of Sanctuary, who have supported our work with contracts, grants and policy engagement.

Thank you to our **project delivery partners**: Fairbeats, Creating Ground, the Church of the Good Shepherd and St Peter (Lee), The One Tree Hill Allotment Society, Southwark Law Centre, Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, Citizens Advice Lewisham, West London Welcome, and the museums and organisations that support our Rainbow Club trips and activities - the National Maritime Museum, the Horniman Museum, National Gallery, Museum of London Docklands, Discovery Story Centre, Lewisham Youth Theatre and The Flying Seagull Project.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

Thank you to all our supporters who wish to remain anonymous, and those who regularly donated via direct debit, made one-off donations, or donated to one of our fundraising campaigns.

Organisational Structure, Governance and Management

AFRIL has a strong and effective Board of Trustees that brings a diverse range of experience and expertise, including lived experience of forced migration and professional backgrounds in finance, law, policy, charity management, education, fundraising, and HR. The trustees, who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

G J Redmond-King (Chair)	L S Barron
K A B Commons (Vice-Chair)	N D Walker
M R Gravelle (Secretary)	K R Wildgoose
D Burnett	K Richards
R Tran (Resigned 10 July 2023)	H Khalifah (Appointed 13 November 2023)

Trustee recruitment is led by the Chair of the Board and the recruitment process is delivered by at least 2 trustees along with the Executive Director. We recruit trustees to meet a gap in board skills and experience identified via regular skills audit against needs, prioritising lived experience of forced migration. We advertise on Charity Job and publicise widely. Trustees are inducted by the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director in line with the charity's Induction Policy, which includes an introduction and visit to the charity's operations and activities. They are asked to read all relevant policies, the Charity Guidance 'The Essential Trustee', to declare any conflicts of interest, undergo a DBS check and sign fit and proper and confidentiality declarations. Trustees are provided with training where required to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively.

The Charity is a Company limited by guarantee. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Organisational Structure

Since the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year our staff team has expanded in response to increased demand for our services. We have also recruited new staff since the end of the financial year who are included below.

Executive Director: Sophie Wickham

Food Bank

Food Bank Manager: Helen Mason (until Jun 2024)
 Food Bank Administrator: Louise Vangheluwe (until Jun 2024)
 Food Bank Coordinator: Louise Vangheluwe (since June 2024)

Rainbow Club

Rainbow Club Manager: Kieran Tang-Wright
 Passion Fruit Class Teacher: Ruth Michaels
 Starfruit Class Teacher: Vita Baliaj
 Mango Class Teacher: Ndaiziyei Murimba
 Art Teachers: Sadegh Aleahmad (until Dec 2023),
 Lucie MacGregor, Hannah Conway (since Oct 2024)
 Sport Teacher: Daniel Espinosa (until Sept 2024)

Allotment

Allotment of Refuge Project Lead: Rose Cowling
 Allotment of Refuge Project Lead (Maternity Cover):
 Rue Refson-Dye (since Jan 2024)

Casework and Advocacy Service

Casework and Advocacy Manager: Chloe White
 Advice and Advocacy Officers: Emma Loffler (until Oct 2023)
 Senior Caseworkers: Bevlyn Annokye; Jess Fogarty (since Dec 2023)
 Caseworker: Awaatif Muktar (since Aug 2023)

Office

Senior Monitoring and Operations Officer: Jess Hughes

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2024

Immigration Project

Southwark Law Centre Immigration Advice Partnership

Solicitor: Ed O'Driscoll

Risk Management

The trustees have given consideration to the risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems and processes are established in order to identify, manage and mitigate those risks. The charity has established and maintains a risk register which is reviewed by Trustees every 8 weeks, alongside emerging risks and plans for mitigation as presented by the Director to the Board. In addition to this, the charity maintains and regularly reviews a wide range of organisational policies and procedures that address mitigating risk. Risk is a standing item at the 2 monthly board meetings.

Financial Review

The charity's income and expenditure have both increased by a reasonable proportion since the last financial year, in a managed and sustainable way. The increase in expenditure was greater due to increased operating costs and expansion of services, leading to a deficit of £41,384 after a surplus of £21,026 and £7,764 in the previous two years. This was a calculated risk to use our unrestricted funding, as we anticipated a number of funding sources to materialise in the first quarter of 24/25 which they subsequently did. Our fundraising strategy has resulted in an increase in multi-year grant commitments, and income from services provided to our client group under contract from Local Authorities.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's core operating expenditure. This calculation excludes the partner costs that we only incur should we secure funding for multi-agency projects for which AFRIL is the lead partner. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue and adapt the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

The trustees' report has been approved by the Board of Trustees.



G J Redmond-King

Trustee

Date: 18/02/25

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Action for Refugees in Lewisham (the charity) for the year ended 31 May 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

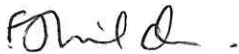
Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA

Warner Wilde
4 Marigold Drive
Bisley
Surrey
GU24 9SF

Dated: 20 February 2025

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
	Notes						
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	121,528	3,869	125,397	27,153	20,967	48,120
Charitable activities	4	84,155	259,972	344,127	-	246,311	246,311
Investments	5	1,259	-	1,259	369	-	369
Other income	6	179	12,157	12,336	-	10,189	10,189
Total income		<u>207,121</u>	<u>275,998</u>	<u>483,119</u>	<u>27,522</u>	<u>277,467</u>	<u>304,989</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	7	90	147	237	216	-	216
Charitable activities	8	224,476	299,497	523,973	3,127	280,620	283,747
Total expenditure		<u>224,566</u>	<u>299,644</u>	<u>524,210</u>	<u>3,343</u>	<u>280,620</u>	<u>283,963</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		(17,445)	(23,646)	(41,091)	24,179	(3,153)	21,026
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 June 2023		136,381	32,701	169,082	112,202	35,854	148,056
Fund balances at 31 May 2024		<u>118,936</u>	<u>9,055</u>	<u>127,991</u>	<u>136,381</u>	<u>32,701</u>	<u>169,082</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MAY 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14		39		1,501
Current assets					
Debtors	15	2,000		922	
Cash at bank and in hand		136,264		206,319	
		<u>138,264</u>		<u>207,241</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	<u>(10,312)</u>		<u>(39,660)</u>	
Net current assets			127,952		167,581
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>127,991</u>		<u>169,082</u>
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	19		9,055		32,701
Unrestricted funds	20		118,936		136,381
			<u>127,991</u>		<u>169,082</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 May 2024.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 18/02/25


G. Redmond-King
Trustee

Company registration number 05819537 (England and Wales)

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Action for Refugees in Lewisham is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is F3, Leamore Central Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 5ES.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	20% straight line
------------------	-------------------

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and gifts	54,018	3,869	57,887	21,303	20,967	42,270
Grants	46,500	-	46,500	5,100	-	5,100
Donated goods and services	21,010	-	21,010	750	-	750
	<u>121,528</u>	<u>3,869</u>	<u>125,397</u>	<u>27,153</u>	<u>20,967</u>	<u>48,120</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

3 Income from donations and legacies (Continued)

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Grants						
AB Charitable Trust	16,500	-	16,500	-	-	-
Indigo Trust	20,000	-	20,000	-	-	-
The Northwick Trust	10,000	-	10,000	5,000	-	5,000
Other	-	-	-	100	-	100
	<u>46,500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,500</u>	<u>5,100</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,100</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Charitable activities						
Services provided under contract	84,155	-	84,155	-	-	-
Performance related grants	-	259,972	259,972	-	246,311	246,311
	<u>84,155</u>	<u>259,972</u>	<u>344,127</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>246,311</u>	<u>246,311</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

4 Income from charitable activities

(Continued)

Performance related grants analysis

	Charitable activities 2024 £	Charitable activities 2023 £
BBC Children in Need	-	51,810
Angus Lawson Memorial Trust	2,700	18,386
Henry Smith Charity	32,050	63,600
National Lottery Communities Fund	-	10,456
Trust for London	50,700	16,250
GLA Grow Back Greener Fund	8,751	10,803
29th May 1961 Charity	-	5,000
London Communities Foundation	31,250	10,000
AB Charitable Trust	-	18,500
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	-	3,325
London Catalyst Samaritans Grant	1,500	2,000
London Churches Refugee Fund	2,650	850
Lewisham Local Essentials Grant	8,350	5,000
Robbins Family Trust	4,000	4,000
Hillcote Charitable Trust	5,000	5,000
Advice Lewisham Partnership	-	10,000
GLA Migrant Advice and Support Fund	39,441	5,575
Other	73,580	5,756
	<u>259,972</u>	<u>246,311</u>

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	1,259	369
	<u>1,259</u>	<u>369</u>

6 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Other income	179	12,157	12,336	-	10,189	10,189
	<u>179</u>	<u>12,157</u>	<u>12,336</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,189</u>	<u>10,189</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

7 Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Fundraising and publicity						
Advertising	-	14	14	-	-	-
Other fundraising costs	90	133	223	216	-	216
	<u>90</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>237</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>216</u>

8 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Charitable activities 2024 £	Charitable activities 2023 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	293,580	185,524
Depreciation and impairment	1,463	1,463
Advice and Advocacy project	7,329	4,674
Foodbank project	21,970	17,109
Immigration project	61,231	16,232
Rainbow Club project	35,222	21,186
Wellbeing projects	17,204	3,017
Destitution fund	2,963	4,473
Interpreting	14,524	3,333
Other volunteer and other staff costs	1,965	2,531
Travel and training	2,427	2,330
External partner costs	33,750	-
	<u>493,628</u>	<u>261,872</u>
Share of support and governance costs (see note 9)		
Support	25,522	20,290
Governance	4,823	1,585
	<u>523,973</u>	<u>283,747</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	224,476	3,127
Restricted funds	299,497	280,620
	<u>523,973</u>	<u>283,747</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

9 Support costs allocated to activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Office and core costs	24,956	19,729
Insurance	566	561
Governance costs	4,823	1,585
	<u>30,345</u>	<u>21,875</u>
Analysed between:		
Charitable activities	<u>30,345</u>	<u>21,875</u>

10 Net movement in funds

	2024	2023
	£	£
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	<u>1,463</u>	<u>1,463</u>

11 Trustees

One of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received £20 (2023: none) for travel expenses from the charity during the year.

12 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>

Employment costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	266,396	172,007
Social security costs	15,252	6,338
Other pension costs	11,932	7,179
	<u>293,580</u>	<u>185,524</u>

The Trustees consider that they, together with the Executive Director, are the key management of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis.

The total remuneration of key management personnel during the year was £56,491 (2023: £40,820) and total employer's national insurance contributions in respect of these individuals amounted to £5453 (2023: £1,843), before allocation of the employer's national insurance allowance.

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

12 Employees

(Continued)

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Aggregate compensation	56,491	42,664

13 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

14 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 June 2023	4,522
At 31 May 2024	4,522
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 June 2023	3,020
Depreciation charged in the year	1,463
At 31 May 2024	4,483
Carrying amount	
At 31 May 2024	39
At 31 May 2023	1,501

15 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other debtors	2,000	-
Prepayments and accrued income	-	922
	2,000	922

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

16 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Other taxation and social security		3,987	-
Deferred income	17	-	38,086
Other creditors		954	-
Accruals		5,371	1,574
		<u>10,312</u>	<u>39,660</u>

17 Deferred income

	2024 £	2023 £
Other deferred income	-	38,086
	<u>-</u>	<u>38,086</u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	-	38,086
	<u>-</u>	<u>38,086</u>
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 June 2023	38,086	-
Resources deferred in the year	(38,086)	38,086
	<u>-</u>	<u>38,086</u>
Deferred income at 31 May 2024	-	38,086
	<u>-</u>	<u>38,086</u>

18 Retirement benefit schemes

	2024 £	2023 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	11,932	7,179
	<u>11,932</u>	<u>7,179</u>

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

19 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 June 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 May 2024 £
Advice and Advocacy Service	153	87,120	(87,273)	-	-
Client Grants	912	7,710	(6,076)	-	2,546
Core Costs	15,438	76,541	(91,979)	-	-
Destitution Fund	-	7,123	(4,843)	-	2,280
Foodbank and Allotment of Refuge	3,661	25,975	(29,636)	-	-
Rainbow Club	12,031	19,929	(28,346)	-	3,614
Immigration Project with SLC	18	50,700	(50,103)	-	615
Summer Projects: Summer school and refugee week	488	900	(1,388)	-	-
	<u>32,701</u>	<u>275,998</u>	<u>(299,644)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,055</u>
Previous year:					
	At 1 June 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	At 31 May 2023 £
Advice Service	-	39,737	(39,584)	-	153
Client Grants	-	3,250	(2,338)	-	912
Core Costs	35,854	113,017	(105,571)	(27,862)	15,438
Destitution Fund	-	5,128	(5,900)	772	-
Foodbank	-	24,451	(47,880)	27,090	3,661
Rainbow Club	-	73,153	(61,122)	-	12,031
Immigration Project with SLC	-	16,250	(16,232)	-	18
Summer Projects	-	2,481	(1,993)	-	488
	<u>35,854</u>	<u>277,467</u>	<u>280,620</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,701</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

19 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Client Grants: grants secured from Trusts or specific donations for the purpose of specific items for individual clients.

Advice and Advocacy Service: costs related to provision of Advice, Advocacy and Casework.

Covid 19 response: funding provided for services in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Destitution Fund: destitution payments for food or emergency accomodation.

Foodbank and Allotment of Refuge: costs relating to the delivery of Food Bank, Art@home group and Allotment of Refuge.

Rainbow Club: Costs relating to the delivery of Rainbow Club Supplementary School.

Summer projects: Summer school educational activities.

Immigration Project: costs relating to the solicitor employed by Southwark Law Centre and related costs.

Office equipment: purchases of furniture and large equipment for the AFRIL office.

Monitoring and Evaluation: costs related to monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Core costs: general running costs of the organisation, including central staff, rent and rates, and general running costs of projects that are not covered by project specific funding.

20 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 June 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 May 2024 £
General funds	136,381	207,121	(224,566)	118,936
Previous year:	At 1 June 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 May 2023 £
General funds	112,202	27,522	(3,343)	136,381

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2024

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 May 2024:			
Tangible assets	39	-	39
Current assets/(liabilities)	118,897	9,055	127,952
	<u>118,936</u>	<u>9,055</u>	<u>127,991</u>
	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
At 31 May 2023:			
Tangible assets	585	916	1,501
Current assets/(liabilities)	135,796	31,785	167,581
	<u>136,381</u>	<u>32,701</u>	<u>169,082</u>

22 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2023 - none).

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1116344

Accounts



**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2023
Registered Charity Number: 1116344
Company Number: 05819537**

Action for Refugees in Lewisham
F3 Leemore Centre
Bonfield Road
Lewisham
SE13 5ES

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	M R Gravelle D Burnett G J Redmond-King L S Barron K A B Commons N D Walker K R Wildgoose K Richards H Khalifah	(Appointed 12 September 2022) (Appointed 13 November 2023)
Secretary	M R Gravelle	
Charity number	1116344	
Company number	05819537	
Principal address	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES	
Registered office	F3 Leemore Central Community Hub Bonfield Road Lewisham London SE13 5ES	
Independent Examiner	F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA Warner Wilde 4 Marigold Drive Bisley Surrey GU24 9SF	



Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 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 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

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Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

About AFRIL

Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) is a growing, dynamic local charity established in 2006. We support asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and refugees to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide both crisis support to meet immediate need, and longer-term, flexible programmes to tackle the underlying problems that lead families to be in crisis.

We are a team of 14 majority part-time paid staff (4.7 FTE) and around 70 volunteers. Our office is based in the Leemore Centre in central Lewisham and we deliver services across the borough, including the Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter, Lee, St Saviours primary school and outreach at local asylum hotels. Our clients travel from across South East London to access our services.

Our core services

Helping Hands Food Bank Programme: We address food insecurity through distributing food parcels, food vouchers, toiletries, clothes and essential items to destitute and low income asylum seeking and refugee families and individuals, and to vulnerable migrant families and individuals with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). We provide wellbeing activities including our Allotment of Refuge and art@home group.

Rainbow Club Supplementary School: We provide supplementary Saturday education and wellbeing activities to children from 4-11 years old from asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families which improves educational attainment and social development (NRCSE Quality Mark).

Advice and Advocacy Service: We provide AQS accredited advice and casework in complex welfare rights, community care, housing, and related matters for asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants, as well as referral and signposting in immigration matters.

Immigration Advice Service: In partnership with Southwark Law Centre, an experienced immigration solicitor provides free, in-depth immigration advice and legal representation to enable clients who cannot access sufficient legal aid to resolve the underlying immigration issues that lead to poverty and crisis.

Our values and approach

At AFRIL we:

- Work with our members to develop services and support that meet their real and not perceived needs.
- Work with our members to enable them to build their knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Work collaboratively with local and national organisations to ensure that services are relevant, appropriate and effective.

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

Our strategic priorities, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2023-25 are to:

- Support people to transition from dependence to independence
- Meet crisis needs
- Advocate with and for our clients
- Maintain a sustainable and effective organisation

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Activities, achievements and performance for the year

The people we support

The people we support are from a range of backgrounds and a range of countries. They are people whose immigration status is a prominent feature in their lives, but who should not be solely defined by that immigration status; they are mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, community members, volunteers, employees and friends. Their immigration status does, however, have an adverse impact on their lives, particularly by affecting their ability to access housing and income, and to integrate into the community.

Our members fall into three categories: recognised refugees, people with active asylum claims, and vulnerable migrants. Many of the latter have outstanding protection issues, including issues around gender based violence or trafficking, but have been unable to successfully claim asylum due to complexity and the culture of disbelief in the system, and are now on a longer human rights based route to settlement due to having children in the UK.

This year, 36% of the people we supported were asylum seekers, 15% were recognised refugees, and 49% were vulnerable migrants who fell outside of these two categories. Upon joining AFRIL, 78% were living in insecure housing arrangements, including 14 families who were street homeless. In addition to this, 47% had no formal income whatsoever and 52% had very low income - 76% of those with low income were in receipt of asylum support payments which was just £9.58 per week and food that is often inedible, for those living in asylum “hotels”, a figure that is about to reduce even further.

Our impact

Last year we supported a total of 501 individuals from 189 families, including 264 children, with most accessing more than one of our services. This is more people that we have ever supported before and reflects the impact of the rising cost of living combined with increasingly hostile immigration policies on the people we support. Increasingly over the last year, families and individuals arrive at AFRIL when they are experiencing destitution and/or street homelessness. They show high levels of independence and resourcefulness and have often tried to resolve situations themselves but have reached a crisis point due to being failed by the systems that should be there to support them.

We continued to provide long-term, holistic support - offering emergency relief during crises alongside support to resolve the underlying issues at the root cause of crises. This year our food bank provided food parcels, food vouchers, and other essential items to 148 individuals from 51 families, including 86 children; Rainbow Club provided early intervention to support 107 children from 71 families to improve their educational attainment, confidence and wellbeing; our Casework and Advocacy Service supported 91 clients with 149 dependents (240 individuals) - 88 families were provided complex casework and 3 clients received one-off detailed advice; our Immigration Project with Southwark Law Centre supported 34 clients with 46 dependents (80 individuals) - 32 of these clients received full legal representation and 4 were provided written advice as a one-off following assessment or on a separate issue to their representation.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Immigration, housing, income

This year, 35% of the people we supported improved their immigration status and a further 58% were supported to maintain a more secure immigration status or remain in the asylum system whilst they awaited a decision on their asylum claim. For our members, maintaining an immigration status often means progressing on the 10 year humanitarian route to resettlement, which is not an easy feat when you have to pay £2593 for every adult in your family and £2208 for every child in your family every 2.5 years for 10 years, but at first at least, do not have the right to work and usually have no recourse to public funds. In addition to this, we supported clients to remain in the asylum system, for example ensuring they had access to asylum support so that they could afford to travel to present at the Home Office when requested, and supporting people to access immigration solicitors to support with complications. An improvement of immigration status is most commonly our clients seeking asylum receiving a grant of refugee status and people who were previously undocumented receiving limited leave to remain through the 10 year route.

We support clients to access the income and housing that they are entitled to, when access is difficult due to the government's hostile environment. This involved us establishing and utilising escalation routes, and Pre-Action Protocol (PAP) letters to overturn unlawful decisions made by Local Authorities or the Home Office. 33% percent reported that their access to income had improved since joining AFRIL, and a further 58% were supported to maintain regular access to their income entitlements. In addition to this, 40% percent reported that their housing arrangements had become more secure since joining AFRIL, and a further 58% were supported to maintain access to their housing entitlements, for example by resolving repair issues or addressing safeguarding issues in asylum support accommodation. 100% of our PAPs have been successful.

Despite AFRIL working hard to maximise the income that families are able to access, 89% of clients reported that they do not have access to enough money to support themselves and their family without help from charities. The major factor being the government's hostile environment policies resulting in many people without the right to work and/or being entitled to little or no support from the state. Where there is statutory support, the levels are often insufficient to live on, given the cost of living crisis. For example most asylum seekers do not have the right to work to support their family, and are only entitled to a very small weekly allowance which people tell us does not enable them to meet their essential living needs.

Wellbeing, confidence and community

Experience prior to, during, and after forced migration impacts upon the wellbeing, confidence and a sense of community belonging, of the people we support. Usually the people we work with have fled highly unsafe situations. Moving to the UK to seek sanctuary, they are instead faced with the harsh reality of the UK's hostile environment, and more recently, the rising cost of living. Few of the people we support speak English as a first language and therefore have to navigate the immigration, education and healthcare systems in an unfamiliar language, all whilst adapting to life in the UK and caring for their children.

In our annual survey, we asked our members about AFRIL's impact on their wellbeing, confidence, feelings of isolation and community. 93% said coming to AFRIL had improved their wellbeing, 98% said coming to AFRIL improved their confidence, 91% said AFRIL has helped them to feel less isolated, and 96% said AFRIL has helped them to feel a part of a community. The people we support have often been let down by structures, systems, and organisations that should support them which impacts how much they trust. We build strong working relationships with our members and prioritise building trust - 99% of our members said they trust AFRIL a lot or mostly, compared to 55% saying they trust other organisations a lot or mostly.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Food Bank Programme

AFRIL's Food Bank Programme consists of the Helping Hands Food Bank, our Allotment of Refuge and well-being activities including our regular art@home group. We are one of the few food banks dedicated to supporting vulnerable asylum seekers, migrants and refugees with no recourse to public funds, to access culturally appropriate food.

Helping Hands Food Bank: The Helping Hands food bank runs fortnightly on Saturdays in conjunction with the volunteer team from Good Shepherd St Peter's Church, Lee. All the families registered with the food bank have sought sanctuary in the UK. Priority is given to residents from Lewisham and Greenwich, but we also support people living in Southwark, Bromley and Bexley.

The food bank aims to increase food security for individuals and families experiencing destitution as a result of their immigration status. In the last year we distributed 1877 food parcels consisting of supermarket vouchers and fresh produce to 51 families with 97 dependents, including 86 children. In our annual survey, 92% reported that knowing they will have a regular supermarket voucher with fresh food, or food parcel helps them to feel more secure. In September 2022, we transitioned from distributing food parcels, to distributing supermarket vouchers alongside fresh fruit and vegetables and donated essential items due to the rising cost of living resulting in increasingly unreliable food supplies from supermarkets. Food bank members reported that they prefer the hybrid voucher model as it increases choice, dignity and their ability to budget so it has now become our established model.

In addition to increasing food security, we acknowledge that people experiencing destitution often face challenges meeting other essential needs too. This year we distributed sanitary towels and toiletries to our members, as well as nappies and baby wipes to mothers experiencing destitution. We made 66 referrals to baby banks, 16 referrals to clothing banks, and 19 referrals for fuel vouchers/grants. Our wrap-around support for clients included distributing winter coats from Wrap Up London, crocheted blankets from a local church, 72 sim cards with free calls and data from Unconnected.org and grants for essential household items from Lewisham Local Essentials fund. We helped 19 families to claim the Lewisham household support fund, piloted reusable nappies for 9 of our mums with babies, and referred 19 of our members to Catbytes so that they could receive a laptop to help them to complete online forms, access education and keep in touch with friends and family.

Often our food bank members are supported for over a year whilst our Advice and Advocacy Service and Immigration Solicitor at Southwark Law Centre work to resolve the underlying immigration issues, and the resulting housing and access to income issues, that are the cause of their extreme food poverty. The food bank therefore has a strong sense of community; in addition to supporting people to meet their essential needs, it provides a warm, safe space for people to have a hot drink and snack, access information and meet other people who may or may not have similar experiences.

In February 2023, as part of our plans to respond to the changing social, economic and political environment and better support clients both in crisis and those in more stable yet still challenging circumstances, we began a research study into a potential sister project to the food bank. This research is focused on supporting clients whose circumstances have become more secure but still they are on a low income, to sustainably move on from the food bank, for example through establishing a social supermarket.

"It is encouraging. It is a room to meet people, maybe you're feeling down or bad about life and they encourage you. You get tea, can open up about things, and get information. It is helpful for my health."

- Food Bank member, 2023

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Allotment of Refuge: AFRIL's Allotment of Refuge is part of the One Tree Hill Allotment Society (OTHAS) allotment site at Honor Oak Park. We acquired the plot in 2017 and thanks in a large part to grants from the Mayor of London, have developed it into a space of sanctuary where AFRIL members and people in the local community come together to learn about food growing, climate resilience, meet new people, and work together to improve this safe, green space.

This year, children and their families attended weekly gardening workshops where they learnt about sustainable food growing, climate resilience and contributed to the maintenance of this beautiful, natural space. This supported their wellbeing and resilience - something which is so important when navigating the hostile and complicated UK immigration system. In our annual survey, 100% of allotment members reported that the Allotment of Refuge improved their wellbeing and helped them to feel part of a community. The fresh and healthy crops were harvested and distributed at our food bank. We continued to co-produce our allotment work with our members, including skill sharing and trialling growing crops that they miss from their home country in UK garden conditions. The harvested crops are then distributed at our fortnightly food bank, meaning destitute families have access to fresh, healthy and culturally appropriate fruit, vegetables, and herbs.

This year, a total of 25 regular volunteers supported the project - 60% were AFRIL members and 40% were other residents in the local community. We developed our regular weekly programme of Tuesday and Sunday gardening sessions and Friday harvests for the food bank and launched the project of developing our allotment into an eco-community hub. We have introduced climate friendly practices through agro-ecological frameworks and have introduced a Code of Care for how we look after the land and people. In our annual survey, 63% said that they had learnt about protecting the environment or climate friendly ways to grow food at the Allotment of Refuge. We also started the process of forming a member Advisory Board to create more opportunities for refugee and migrant Londoners to lead on the development of this community green space and towards the end of the year, established a team of community ambassadors to further engage harder to reach groups.

"Peace and good company. Somewhere to forget about the situation." - Allotment of Refuge member, 2023

Art@home: Our art@home wellbeing group provides a space of sanctuary and creativity for families to connect and use art to enhance their wellbeing and self-esteem. It takes place via zoom and was established in 2020 in response to food bank members asking for a way to stay connected to other families during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Around 5 families attend each session, parents and children together, and members of the group have developed strong and supportive friendships with one another. It offers mothers and their children a chance to have quality time together away from the stresses of navigating the rising costs of living and the UK's hostile immigration system. In February 2023, our members were proud to host our first public exhibition at the Gerald Moore Gallery in Eltham College.

Rainbow Club supplementary school

The Rainbow Club Saturday Supplementary school supports children from asylum seeking, refugee, and vulnerable migrant families. The school runs every Saturday morning during term time, where children receive English, Maths, Music, Art and Sport lessons, and termly school trips. The school is split into 3 classes: Passion Fruit class (ages 4-6), Starfruit class (ages 6-8), and Mango class (ages 8-11).

The children at Rainbow Club often experience challenges at home; the local authority and Home Office regularly move families on a no choice basis, and many experience poverty and destitution as a result of hostile immigration policies. Rainbow Club has continued to provide a consistent, supportive and fun environment which supports children to better access mainstream education and more easily navigate the school system as they get older.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

In the last academic year, 107 children from 71 families attended Rainbow Club and each received 50 hours of English and Maths lessons, in addition to creative music, instrument lessons, art, and sports activities. The results of our formal assessments showed that 86% of students experienced progress in Maths and English. Those who did not experience progress were mainly children who were moved part way through the year so did not complete the formal assessments. In addition to this, in our 2023 annual survey, 94% of parents said that their child had improved at their mainstream school since joining Rainbow Club.

In addition to improvements in academic attainment, Rainbow Club supports social development. The project is shown to improve the confidence and self-esteem of students through creative activities and opportunities. Students enjoy art and sport lessons from our specialist teachers, and instrument lessons and group music lessons from our music partners, Fairbeats. We provide students with the knowledge and experience to form and subsequently fulfil their aspirations. We regularly organise trips and extracurricular activities and projects for the students to get involved in. This year school trips and activities have included an art workshop at the National Gallery, the Horniman Museum, boat building at the National Maritime museum and children being consulted on the new playground, Lewisham Youth Theatre workshops, soft play for the youngest class, climate resilience and food growing workshops at AFRIL's Allotment of Refuge, and a drumming and dance workshop at the Southbank Royal Festival Hall with our partners, Fairbeats. These trips are particularly important for the children we support as, on registration, 79% of families rarely/never made use of local libraries and 85% had rarely/never visited a museum or art gallery. This year, 97% of parents said their child's confidence had improved since joining Rainbow Club, and 94% of children said their confidence and social skills had improved. We support parents to develop a support network and navigate the education system with their children through our monthly Parents Forum. Facilitated by our partners at Creating Ground, topics and activities are co-produced with the parents, and this forum serves as an important communication and feedback tool for continuous improvement of the project.

Outside of the classroom, we applied to become a School of Sanctuary through the City of Sanctuary award scheme, and worked with other schools in the area to encourage them to do the same. In the coming year, we plan to develop our work in this area.

Casework and Advocacy Service

Our Casework and Advocacy service provides Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accredited advice and casework support in complex welfare rights, asylum support, community care, housing and homelessness, and related matters to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. In March 2023, we were awarded AQS Casework Level for Housing, and Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and Advice Level for Welfare Benefits.

This year our Casework and Advocacy service supported 240 individuals from 91 families, including 114 children, with 106 cases. This increase of 57% from last financial year was due to our Casework and Advocacy team expanding from 1 part time caseworker (0.7 FTE) to a team of 3 (1.8 FTE) caseworkers throughout the year, all of whom have legal backgrounds. This increased capacity meant that we could recruit, train and supervise casework and interpreter volunteers. We recruited and trained 15 volunteers, extending our reach and bringing in valuable skills and enthusiasm.

Demand significantly and continually increased over the year, with client needs changing alongside changes to UK immigration policy. We continued to be dynamic and flexible in our approach to ensure the development of our service continued to meet the real and not perceived needs of our clients, and to identify and meet gaps in local service provision. This year, the key areas of our work including outreach in local asylum "hotels", community casework with local asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants, the development of our Pre-Action Protocol (PAP) Plus Project with Legal Aid Law Firm of the Year, Deighton Pierce Glynn solicitors, and using our knowledge and expertise from the ground to undertake local policy and influencing work to improve conditions and access to services for our client group.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

A significant area of expansion was our outreach advice and casework in local asylum “hotels”. This expansion followed the government policy during the covid-19 lockdowns to house asylum seekers in hotels which has since continued. Two of our caseworkers and some trained casework volunteers delivered fortnightly outreach advice sessions in the largest local asylum hotel. Initially, these were planned to be centred around local orientation and one-off advice, however it quickly became apparent that people had already been living in the hotel for 1-2 years and the Home Office had no plans to disperse them. Therefore the casework needs were more complex due to unhygienic and overcrowded conditions and ample safeguarding concerns, including toddlers sleeping on and falling out of top bunks and families forced to co-sleep, children and adults with complex health needs and disabilities being housed unsuitably in the hotel, and young children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers becoming malnourished, and sometimes hospitalised, due to poor quality food. Between January and May 2023, we supported 37 families in these hotels. Work frequently included advocacy to ensure people could access the asylum support they were entitled to but had been unable to navigate, and making strong representations for families to be moved to more suitable accommodation, with follow up legal action when necessary. Our work in this area has continued to expand into the 2023/24 financial year. We are the only local organisation providing asylum support casework and, despite being a small charity, are considered experts in our area, and are frequently consulted for second-tier advice by other local and national organisations, and statutory services.

In addition to this, we have continued to provide casework to vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants living in the community. We are one of the few organisations in our local area that provide crisis casework, and often vulnerable individuals and families with young children arrive at AFRIL facing street homelessness. Between January 2023 and May 2023, we provided on the day crisis casework to 14 families experiencing or an imminent risk of street homelessness. We carried out casework and advocacy to support them to access the housing they were entitled to and worked tirelessly to ensure that they all had a safe space to sleep that night. We were invited to become members of the Advice Lewisham Partnership and have increased our joint working with mainstream agencies including Citizens Advice Lewisham.

Due to the increased capacity in the Casework and Advocacy Team, and AFRIL’s Executive Director being made full-time for the first time, we have been able to use our knowledge and expertise from working on the ground to undertake local policy and influencing work. We have built strong working relationships with the local Borough of Sanctuary Manager and Local Authority department leads who we work in partnership with to improve and promote best practice in the local area. Our Casework and Advocacy Manager has been able to attend and contribute to more local forums and meetings, such as the Lewisham Homelessness Forum, which meant we could spread awareness of what we were seeing in the ground, collaborate to devise solutions and promote best practice. In addition to this, we established escalation routes with three local councils to overcome barriers to resolving cases, and address problematic decision making.

In May 2023 we began our Pre-Action Protocol (PAP) Plus Project with Deighton Pierce Glynn, Legal Aid Firm of the Year 2023. This enables us to submit PAP letters to overturn unlawful decisions made by the Home Office and Local Authorities and, to date, we have a 100% success rate.

Immigration Project

Through our Immigration Project with Southwark Law Centre, an experienced immigration solicitor provides free immigration advice and representation to people with insecure immigration status and little to no income, most of whom fall outside the scope of legal aid, meaning they are not able to afford the expensive legal fees to regularise their status. In our annual survey 87% reported that it was difficult to find a free immigration solicitor outside of AFRIL.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Last year, our solicitor provided representations for 32 clients plus 4 instances of one-off detailed immigration advice to 34 clients with 46 dependents (80 individuals). 17 of these clients were provided with immigration advice and representations regarding an application for Limited Leave to Remain. Nine were represented with their asylum applications as cases that were complex and would be difficult to resolve within the time restrictions of legal aid. Six clients have received a successful grant of leave to remain and one client is being represented to appeal their asylum refusal, on the strong grounds that it is unsafe for them to return to Darfur. Due to substantial and increasing delays at the Home Office during the course of the 22/23 year, most clients were still awaiting a decision on their submitted applications at the end of the year. The high costs of LLR applications are a barrier for many of our clients in regularising their status and we have a 100% success rate in fee waiver applications.

As a result of accessing our Immigration Project, 60% of clients reported that their housing or income had improved, and all clients with applications submitted to the Home Office were able to maintain or improve their accommodation entitlement as a result. As well as helping to resolve the underlying cause of insecurity and poverty for our clients, the immigration project supports them to feel empowered through understanding immigration law in the UK and their rights. This helps the people we support to identify if they are receiving poor quality advice and advocate for themselves. All immigration clients confirmed following the advice provided to them that they understood their own immigration status and the restrictions that this entails. 93% of annual survey respondents said that the Immigration Project had helped them to understand the immigration system in the UK more generally. In addition to this, 93% said that they would recommend the service to a friend.

Another objective of the Immigration Project is to develop and deliver second tier advice and capacity building for the wider sector and AFRIL staff and clients. We have a strong working relationship with Southwark Law Centre, who conduct AFRIL casework file reviews. Our Advice and Advocacy Manager and Immigration solicitor work closely to support clients, and our Immigration solicitor regularly provides assessment and one-off advice letters confirming a clients' status and prospects of success which has been essential in enabling our caseworkers to take steps to secure statutory housing or broker access to third sector housing projects. This coworking increases our advice service capacity and has a significant positive impact for clients.

This year we delivered immigration training and capacity building to 47 organisations and groups, better equipping them to support this client group. London wide but with a high concentration of Lewisham based groups including grassroots community groups, mainstream agencies, migrant organisations, teachers, NHS professionals and community organisers. We delivered immigration advice surgeries where advisors could 'drop in' virtually to get advice and support on cases. The solicitor delivered a Q&A to AFRIL's parents and members' forum, and acted as a second tier resource to lower level accredited OISC organisations needing advice on complex cases. We delivered 3 formal training sessions to 76 advisors: an introductory session on Immigration Law/OISC boundaries aimed at non-accredited providers, and a training on the implications of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. In the post-session survey, respondents reported that their knowledge and confidence had increased. We delivered bespoke training to Citizens Advice Lewisham. Due to the changes in immigration law, the Nationality and Borders Act has been superseded and we will be delivering updated training to the sector in Autumn 2023. The series of legislation and practices that make up the government's hostile environment, directly impacts on the lives of our members and their children, and highlights the ever-growing need for high quality and free immigration advice and representation.

Other Activities

As part of our Together We Thrive women led network, this year we delivered 4 co-produced workshops with our members. In recognition of the capability and strength of the women of AFRIL, many of whom are single mothers raising children in very difficult circumstances, Together We Thrive (TWT) provides an opportunity to gain new skills, receive and give peer support and in turn increase confidence and feelings of connectedness

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

to a community. The workshops aim to increase understanding of how UK systems work to enable families to thrive in their new and challenging environment. The pilot consisted of four workshops and activities included using creative mediums for women to identify and celebrate their strengths, sharing tips on saving money and things to do with children on low incomes, discussing and acting on aspirations for the future, and learning/role plays on how to effectively communicate with public bodies, such as the Council. An independent evaluation of the workshops pilot found that 85% of women felt that TWT workshop participation had helped them to build their understanding and skills for living in the UK, 62% of women felt that their confidence improved through participating in a TWT workshop, 77% of women felt that TWT workshop participation had helped them to feel better connected with other women and their community, and 69% felt that TWT workshop participation had helped them improve their English.

"I'm so happy. The group is a discovery group, I can explore what I want to do, and I can achieve what I want to do, and never forget that I can do it." - Together We Thrive participant

Through our Together We Thrive empowerment work, we support our members to make their voices heard and contribute changing policy and narratives. This year, it has included our food bank member speaking to the conference that produced the Lewisham Food Justice Strategy, and Allotment members sharing their stories and views through [Saga magazine](#). Rainbow Club students created poetry based on nature that was shared at a tree planting ceremony as part of Lewisham's Borough of Culture celebrations.

We launched our allotment ambassadors programme, where existing members go out and speak to others in their community about the project and climate resilience. Art@home members shared their stories and reflections on the benefits of the art@home project in our [Art Without Borders: The Film](#) which was played at the public exhibition. Our artists and staff hosted a well attended private viewing.

In August 2023, in partnership with the Refugee Council we ran a Summer School for children from Ukraine who had recently arrived in the UK to seek sanctuary. Our Rainbow Club English teachers led English lessons for children and their families, our art teacher ran engaging art activities, and children enjoyed a body percussion session. A number of the children who attended were getting ready to start school in the UK in September, and the workshops helped to ease this transition. They were well received by families and children, with 100% of children saying that they had fun and learnt some new English words or phrases.

AFRIL's Director and Casework and Advocacy Manager have engaged in local policy and influencing work to make our client's voices heard and share the injustices that we are seeing on the ground in order to affect change. Our Director was invited to present to Lewisham Council's Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the Borough's Sanctuary work and the issues we were seeing in asylum hotels. As a result of this, the Council invested more time and resources into supporting asylum seekers in the Borough. We are a steering group member of the Lewisham Migration Forum, a permanent member of the Lewisham Refugee and Asylum Safeguarding Partnership and are active in sector policy and coordination meetings including the GLA's London Strategic Migration Partnership. We have built our partnerships and joint working this year, adding our names to calls on government, and sharing our front line experience with national charities to inform their advocacy work.

Finally, we celebrated Refugee Week. The theme in June 2022 was 'Healing' and our peaceful, community-focused Allotment of Refuge was the perfect venue for this theme. Project leads shared updates about our work, we ran art activities and face painting for children, and enjoyed food from around the world that was cooked by the people we support, volunteers and staff. We host this event annually and it is a wonderful reflection point in the calendar with a celebration of resilience, resourcefulness, and kindness. It is centred around the people we support, and provides a safe space away from the hostilities of UK immigration policies and the dominant media narrative.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Future plans

Over the coming year, we plan to support an increased 250 families across our services. We will continue to support 50 of the most destitute families with fresh food, vouchers and essential baby items through our Food Bank, deliver outstanding face to face supplementary schooling to 110 children, provide advice and complex casework to families placed in local hotels requisitioned by the Home Office as initial asylum support accommodation, and provide advice and advocacy to refugee and vulnerable migrant members of the Lewisham community who are experiencing extreme poverty due to their immigration status. We will develop our advocacy work and legal partnerships to ensure that resources go further and we maximise our impact. Our plans for each service are below.

Advice and Advocacy Service: In light of the increased demand for our casework services, we hope to fund an expansion of this work to meet the ever increasing need. We find that our members are able to access one-off advice, but there is almost no complex casework provision for those people who, due to various factors, are unable to sustainably resolve their housing/income and immigration issues without more support.

Rainbow Club: We aim to maintain the excellent attainment outcomes that we have seen in the last year. We plan to grow and develop our Youth Volunteering Programme at Rainbow Club and launch a Youth Council so children can have even more voice and ownership in school matters. We are in the Schools of Sanctuary awards process and are supporting mainstream schools in the area to deepen their understanding and commitment to welcoming refugee and migrant children. We will continue to provide increasing support on safeguarding matters relating to Rainbow Club children to local authorities and mainstream schools.

Food Bank Programme: A positive recent development is that some longer term food bank members are moving on due to being granted refugee status through our Immigration Project, enabling them to access mainstream support and employment. This will free up places and we are refining our criteria so that we can balance the needs of longer term NRPF families with those in a temporary crisis owing to statutory administrative errors in asylum support, babies being born, or sudden loss of housing and income in the move on period following a grant of refugee status. We are exploring social supermarket options to support people to move on, in the context of the rise of in-work poverty. Art@home is moving into our next phase - being fully co-produced and led by more experienced group members. Our allotment of refuge is broadening its reach and involvement of the local community through our member ambassadors going into their communities as leaders and encouraging people who are isolated to join this community to grow and share food in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. We will develop this work through tailored outreach leadership training and establishing our Allotment Advisory Panel.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Our funders, supporters, partners and volunteers

Thank you to our funders, supporters, and partners without whom we would not have been able to provide the services and support detailed in this report. We are endlessly grateful for your support, and it brings us hope to see solidarity and compassion towards refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants during these hostile times.

We would not be able to deliver the breadth or quality of services that we do without our wonderful team of volunteers. Thank you to everyone who donates their precious time to AFRIL.

Trusts and Foundations

- BBC Children in Need
- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- AB Charitable Trust
- Angus Lawson Memorial Trust
- Fund for Human Need
- Greater London Authority
- Heinz, Anna and Carol Kroch Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity
- Hillcote Charitable Trust
- Julia and Hans Rausing Trust
- Lewisham Local
- London Catalyst
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- London Communities Foundation

- National Lottery Communities Fund
- Neighbourly
- Northwick Charitable Trust
- Robbins Family Charitable Trust
- The Childhood Trust
- Topinambour Trust
- Trust for London

Community groups and organisations

- Acorn Book Club
- Beckenham South Scouts
- Blackheath Quakers
- Dulwich College
- Gerald Moore Gallery, Eltham College
- Goldluxel Services
- Good Things Foundation
- Give A Car

- Kindred Yoga
- Lewisham 14th Scouts
- Lewisham Free Cakes For Kids
- Lewisham Lottery
- Sabina Motasem Bridal
- Salvation Army
- Schools: St Winifred's School, Deptford Green School, Bullers Wood School for Girls, Hurstmere School
- Sharegift
- Staff at IBM
- St. Augustine's with St. Luke's Churches
- Tesco Community Grants
- The Unconnected
- Vodafone
- Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association
- WrapUp London
- Youth Against Crime

Thank you to Lewisham Council, London's first Borough of Sanctuary, who have supported our work with grants and policy engagement.

Thank you to our project delivery partners: Fairbeats, Creating Ground, Church of the Good Shepherd and St Peter (Lee), the One Tree Hill Allotment Society, Southwark Law Centre, Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors, and the museums and organisations that support our Rainbow Club trips and activities - the Migration Museum, the National Maritime Museum, the Horniman Museum, Lewisham Youth Theatre and The Flying Seagull Project.

Thank you to all those who wish to remain anonymous, and those who regularly donated via direct debit, made one-off donations, or donated to one of our fundraising campaigns.

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Organisational Structure, Governance and Management

For the duration of the 2022/23 financial year, AFRIL's board consisted of 9 Trustees. Our Trustees oversee AFRIL's activities and bring a diverse range of experience and expertise, including lived experience of forced migration and professional backgrounds in finance, law, fundraising, and HR.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

G J Redmond-King (Chair)	L S Barron
K A B Commons (Vice-Chair)	N D Walker
M R Gravelle (Secretary)	K R Wildgoose
D Burnett	C A Tindale (Resigned 6 June 2022)
R Tran (Resigned 10 July 2023)	K Richards (Appointed 12 September 2022)
	H Khalifah (Appointed 13 November 2023)

Trustee recruitment is led by the Chair of the Board and the recruitment process is delivered by at least 2 trustees along with the Executive Director. We recruit trustees to meet a gap in Board skills and experience identified via regular skills audit against needs, prioritising lived experience of forced migration. We advertise on Charity Job and publicise widely. Trustees are inducted by the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director in line with the charity's Induction Policy, which includes an introduction and visit to the charity's operations and activities. They are asked to read all relevant policies, the Charity Guidance 'The Essential Trustee', to declare any conflicts of interest, undergo a DBS check and sign fit and proper and confidentiality declarations. Trustees are provided with training where required to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively.

The Charity is a Company limited by guarantee. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Organisational Structure

Since the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year our staff team has expanded in response to increased demand for our services. We have also welcomed new staff members since the end of the financial year who are also included below.

Executive Director: Sophie Wickham

Food Bank Team

Food Bank Programme Manager: Helen Mason
Food Bank Administrator: Louise Vangheluwe
Allotment of Refuge Project Lead: Rose Cowling

Rainbow Club Team

Rainbow Club Manager: Kieran Tang-Wright
Passion Fruit Class Teacher: Ruth Michaels
Starfruit Class Teacher: Vita Baliaj
Mango Class Teacher: Ndaiziyei Murimba
Art Teachers: Sadegh Aleahmad, and Lucie MacGregor (since 04/02/2023)
Sports Teacher: Daniel Espinosa

Advice and Advocacy Service Team

Casework and Advocacy Manager: Chloe White (since 12/2022)
Advice and Advocacy Officers: Shahrazad Magrabi (until 08/2022); Emma Loffler (02/2023-10/2023)
Senior Caseworkers: Bevlyn Annokye (since 12/2022); Jessica Fogarty (since 12/2023)
Caseworker: Awaatif Muktar (since 08/2023)

Immigration Project Team

Southwark Law Centre Immigration Advice
Partnership Solicitor: Ed O'Driscoll

Office Team

Monitoring and Operations Officer: Jessica Hughes

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st May 2023

Risk Management

The trustees have given consideration to the risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems and processes are established in order to identify, manage and mitigate those risks. The charity has established and maintains a risk register which is reviewed by Trustees every 8 weeks, alongside emerging risks and plans for mitigation as presented by the Director to the Board. In addition to this, the charity maintains and regularly reviews a wide range of organisational policies and procedures that address mitigating risk. Risk is a standing item at 2 monthly board meetings.

Financial Review

The charity's income and expenditure have both increased since the last financial year in a steady and sustainable way. The increase in income was greater due to more grants from Trusts and Foundations secured for our work, leading to a surplus of £21,026 compared to £7,764 in 2022. This funding is earmarked for continued services in the 23/24 financial year.

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's core operating expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue and adapt the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves, covering 3-6 months core operating costs has been maintained throughout the year.

The trustees' report has been approved by the Board of Trustees.



.....
GJ Redmond King
Trustee, Chair

Date: 20th December 2023

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Action for Refugees in Lewisham (the charity) for the year ended 31 May 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

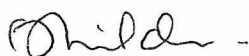
Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of , which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA

Warner Wilde
4 Marigold Drive
Bisley
Surrey
GU24 9SF

Dated: 29 January 2024

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

		Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes						
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>							
Donations and legacies	3	27,153	267,278	294,431	85,780	149,827	235,607
Investments	4	369	-	369	11	-	11
Other income	5	-	10,189	10,189	2,201	1,935	4,136
Total income		<u>27,522</u>	<u>277,467</u>	<u>304,989</u>	<u>87,992</u>	<u>151,762</u>	<u>239,754</u>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>							
Raising funds	6	216	-	216	223	-	223
Charitable activities	7	3,127	280,620	283,747	69,901	161,866	231,767
Total expenditure		<u>3,343</u>	<u>280,620</u>	<u>283,963</u>	<u>70,124</u>	<u>161,866</u>	<u>231,990</u>
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds							
		24,179	(3,153)	21,026	17,868	(10,104)	7,764
Fund balances at 1 June 2022		<u>112,202</u>	<u>35,854</u>	<u>148,056</u>	<u>94,334</u>	<u>45,958</u>	<u>140,292</u>
Fund balances at 31 May 2023		<u><u>136,381</u></u>	<u><u>32,701</u></u>	<u><u>169,082</u></u>	<u><u>112,202</u></u>	<u><u>35,854</u></u>	<u><u>148,056</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MAY 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		1,501		1,169
Current assets					
Debtors	12	922		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		206,319		150,587	
		<u>207,241</u>		<u>150,587</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(39,660)</u>		<u>(3,700)</u>	
Net current assets			167,581		146,887
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>169,082</u>		<u>148,056</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	15		32,701		35,854
Unrestricted funds			136,381		112,202
			<u>169,082</u>		<u>148,056</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 May 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 27/01/2024



.....
G J Redmond-King
Trustee

Company registration number 05819537

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Action for Refugees in Lewisham is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is F3, Leemore Central Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 5ES.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	20% straight line
------------------	-------------------

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £
Donations and gifts	21,303	20,967	42,270	53,780	5,119	58,899
Grants	5,100	246,311	251,411	32,000	144,708	176,708
Donated goods and services	750	-	750	-	-	-
	<u>27,153</u>	<u>267,278</u>	<u>294,431</u>	<u>85,780</u>	<u>149,827</u>	<u>235,607</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

3 Donations and legacies

(Continued)

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted 2022 £	Restricted 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable for core activities						
BBC Children in Need	-	51,810	51,810	-	40,845	40,845
Angus Lawson Memorial Trust	-	18,386	18,386	-	-	-
Henry Smith Charity	-	63,600	63,600	-	40,000	40,000
National Lottery Communities Fund	-	10,456	10,456	-	9,656	9,656
Trust for London	-	16,250	16,250	-	32,500	32,500
GLA Grow Back Greener Fund (Groundwork UK)	-	10,803	10,803	-	2,052	2,052
29th May 1961 Charity	-	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
London Communities Foundation	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	-
AB Charitable Trust	-	18,500	18,500	15,000	-	15,000
The Northwick Trust	5,000	-	5,000	10,000	-	10,000
Julia and Hans Rausing Trust	-	3,325	3,325	-	-	-
Topinambour Trust	-	1,040	1,040	-	-	-
London Catalyst Samaritans Grant	-	2,000	2,000	-	1,000	1,000
London Churches Refugee Fund	-	850	850	-	1,500	1,500
Lewisham Local Essentials Grant	-	5,000	5,000	-	1,000	1,000
Robbins Family Trust	-	4,000	4,000	-	-	-
The Hillcote Trust	-	5,000	5,000	5,000	-	5,000
Advice Lewisham Partnership	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	-
Leathersellers Charitable Trust	-	-	-	-	4,970	4,970
Greater London Authority MASF	-	5,575	5,575	-	-	-
Tesco Community Grants	-	1,125	1,125	-	-	-
Lewisham Council	-	2,481	2,481	-	1,000	1,000
Other	100	1,110	1,210	2,000	5,185	7,185
	<u>5,100</u>	<u>246,311</u>	<u>251,411</u>	<u>32,000</u>	<u>144,708</u>	<u>176,708</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest receivable	369	11
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

5 Other income

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2023	2022	2022	2022
	£	£	£	£
Other income	10,189	2,201	1,935	4,136
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

6 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Other fundraising costs	216	223
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

7 Charitable activities

	Charitable Expenditure 2023 £	Charitable Expenditure 2022 £
Staff costs	185,524	131,673
Depreciation and impairment	1,463	586
Advice project	4,674	2,317
Foodbank project	17,109	8,326
Immigration project	16,232	32,463
Rainbow Club project	21,186	26,598
Wellbeing projects	3,017	2,529
Destitution fund	4,473	4,876
Interpreting	3,333	1,241
Volunteer and other staff costs	2,531	1,112
Travel and Training	2,330	1,190
	<u>261,872</u>	<u>212,911</u>
Share of support costs (see note 8)	20,290	16,731
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	1,585	2,125
	<u>283,747</u>	<u>231,767</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	3,127	69,901
Restricted funds	280,620	161,866
	<u>283,747</u>	<u>231,767</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

8 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2023	Support costs	Governance costs	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Office and core costs	19,729	-	19,729	15,996	-	15,996
Insurance	561	-	561	735	-	735
Independent Examiner	-	1,572	1,572	-	2,125	2,125
Bank charges	-	13	13	-	-	-
	<u>20,290</u>	<u>1,585</u>	<u>21,875</u>	<u>16,731</u>	<u>2,125</u>	<u>18,856</u>
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	<u>20,290</u>	<u>1,585</u>	<u>21,875</u>	<u>16,731</u>	<u>2,125</u>	<u>18,856</u>

Governance costs includes payment to the Independent Examiner of £1,572 including VAT for accounts preparation and independent examination (2022- £1,500).

9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2023	2022
	Number	Number
	5	3
	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
Employment costs	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	172,007	125,965
Social security costs	6,338	-
Other pension costs	7,179	5,708
	<u>185,524</u>	<u>131,673</u>

The Trustees consider that they, together with the General Manager, are the key management of the charity in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis.

The total remuneration of key management personnel during the year was £40,820 (2022: £26,112) and total employer's national insurance contributions in respect of these individuals amounted to £1,843 (2022: £2,189), before allocation of the employer's national insurance allowance.

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 June 2022	2,728
Additions	1,794
At 31 May 2023	<u>4,522</u>
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 June 2022	1,558
Depreciation charged in the year	1,463
At 31 May 2023	<u>3,021</u>
Carrying amount	
At 31 May 2023	<u>1,501</u>
At 31 May 2022	<u>1,169</u>

12 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments and accrued income	922	-
	<u>922</u>	<u>-</u>

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income	14	38,086	-
Accruals and deferred income		1,574	3,700
		<u>39,660</u>	<u>3,700</u>

14 Deferred income

	2023 £	2022 £
Other deferred income	38,086	-
	<u>38,086</u>	<u>-</u>

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

14 Deferred income	(Continued)	
	2023	2022
	£	£
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	38,086	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 June 2022	-	-
Resources deferred in the year	38,086	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Deferred income at 31 May 2023	<u>38,086</u>	<u> </u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds				
	Balance at 1 June 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 1 June 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 May 2023 £
Advice Service	-	-	-	-	39,737	(39,584)	-	153
Client Grants	150	500	(650)	-	3,250	(2,338)	-	912
Community Education in Lewisham	7,756	-	(7,756)	-	-	-	-	-
Core Costs	25,686	54,655	(44,487)	35,854	113,017	(105,571)	(27,862)	15,438
Destitution Fund	600	2,500	(3,100)	-	5,128	(5,900)	772	-
Foodbank	(8,837)	13,856	(5,019)	-	24,451	(47,880)	27,090	3,661
Heritage Lottery - Rainbow Club	6,150	-	(6,150)	-	-	-	-	-
Rainbow Club	10,037	47,751	(57,788)	-	73,153	(61,122)	-	12,031
Monitoring / Evaluation	3,850	-	(3,850)	-	-	-	-	-
Office Equipment	566	-	(566)	-	-	-	-	-
Immigration Project with SLC	-	32,500	(32,500)	-	16,250	(16,232)	-	18
Summer Projects	-	-	-	-	2,481	(1,993)	-	488
	<u>45,958</u>	<u>151,762</u>	<u>(161,866)</u>	<u>35,854</u>	<u>277,467</u>	<u>(280,620)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,701</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

15 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Client Grants: grants secured from Trusts or specific donations for the purpose of specific items for individual clients.

Advice Service: costs related to provision of Advice, Advocacy and Casework.

Covid 19 response: funding provided for services in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Destitution Fund: destitution payments for food or emergency accomodation.

Foodbank: costs relating to the delivery of Food Bank, Art@home group and Allotment of Refuge.

Rainbow Club: Costs relating to the delivery of Rainbow Club Supplementary School.

Summer projects: Summer school educational activities.

Immigration Project: costs relating to the solicitor employed by Southwark Law Centre and related costs.

Office equipment: purchases of furniture and large equipment for the AFRIL office.

Monitoring and Evaluation: costs related to monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Core costs: general running costs of the organisation, including central staff, rent and rates, and general running costs of projects that are not covered by project specific funding.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2023

16 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Fund balances at 31 May 2023 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	585	916	1,501	1,169	-	1,169
Current assets/ (liabilities)	135,796	31,785	167,581	111,033	35,854	146,887
	<u>136,381</u>	<u>32,701</u>	<u>169,082</u>	<u>112,202</u>	<u>35,854</u>	<u>148,056</u>

17 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2022 - none).

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1116344

Accounts



**Annual Report and Financial Accounts
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2022
Registered Charity Number: 1116344
Company Number: 05819537**

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 May 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 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 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

The Charity is a Company limited by guarantee. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

The trustees have a process to identify risks through a regular risk register review process and have taken steps to mitigate them.

Reserves policy: The trustees consider that the charity needs to retain between three and six months core project operating costs as unrestricted reserves in order to provide sufficient financial security to allow for the continuation or adaptation of service provision and to meet the charities commitments in the event in a loss of income or gap between receipt of grant funding.

Trustee recruitment is led by the Chair of the Board and the recruitment process is delivered by at least 2 trustees along with the Director. We recruit trustees to meet a gap in Board skills and experience identified via regular skills audit against needs, including lived experience of forced migration. Trustees are inducted by the Chair of the Board and the Director in line with the charity's Induction Policy, which includes an introduction and visit to the charity's operations and activities by the Chair and Director. They are asked to read all relevant policies, the Charity Guidance 'The Essential Trustee', to declare any conflicts of interest, undergo a DBS check and sign fit and proper and confidentiality declarations. Trustees are provided with training where required to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively.

About AFRIL

Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) is a small, local charity. Founded in 2006, we support refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in south east London to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide both crisis support to meet immediate needs, and long-term, flexible programmes to tackle the underlying problems that lead families to be in crisis, empowering them to move from dependence to independence.

Over time our client group has changed according to the demographic of our borough and we have transitioned from mainly supporting refugees to working with a more diverse group of families who have complex needs relating to insecure immigration status. We work with other local and national organisations to ensure that we can maximise resources locally.

We are a team of 12 majority part-time paid staff (3.5 full time equivalents) and around 80 active volunteers. Our office is based in the Leemore Centre in central Lewisham and we deliver services across the borough, including the Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter, Lee and St Saviours primary school. Our clients travel from across South East London to access our services.

Our four core services

Helping Hands Food Bank Programme: food, toiletries and clothes to destitute and low income asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families and individuals; as well as a range of wellbeing activities including our Allotment of Refuge.

Rainbow Club Supplementary School: supplementary Saturday education and wellbeing activities to children from 4-11 years old from asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families.

Advice and Advocacy Service: AQS accredited advice and casework support in housing, income, and integration for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, as well as referral and signposting in immigration matters.

Immigration Advice Service: in partnership with Southwark Law Centre, an experienced immigration solicitor works closely with AFRIL projects to provide in-depth quality immigration advice and representation to support clients to resolve the underlying immigration issues that lead to poverty and crisis.

Our Values and Approach

At AFRIL we:

- Work with our members to develop services and support that meet their real and not perceived needs.
- Work with our members to enable them to build their knowledge, confidence and skills.
- Work collaboratively with local and national organisations to ensure that services are relevant, appropriate and effective.

Our work is grounded in our [values of professionalism, inclusivity, and solidarity](#). We strive to be [community led and community based](#).

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Letter from AFRIL's Chair

Welcome to AFRIL and thank you for reading our annual report. I know this organisation well, and have been involved for more than six years now. Yet it still gives me enormous pleasure and pride in the organisation to read the story we tell you each year in this document. It is a story of a phenomenal and committed group of people - staff, volunteers, funders and wider group of supporters - offering their time, passion and skills to support and empower a growing number of people whose circumstances place them amongst the most vulnerable in our society.

At a time of multiple interconnected global crises, and worsening knock-on effects in the UK on the cost of living and strained public services, nothing has got any easier over the last year. People fleeing persecution, war and other life-threatening situations, as well as those emigrating to be with family or to seek new opportunities, are confronted by those pressures more starkly than most. On top of which, the UK political and media discourse around migration can make for a more poisonous, unwelcoming and even dangerous situation for those people.

But here in Lewisham, a growing group of phenomenal and committed people - called Action for Refugees in Lewisham - is working hard, and ever more creatively, to welcome, support and empower refugees and vulnerable migrants in our community. AFRIL is a core part of making real Lewisham's commitment to be a borough of sanctuary.

I could not be prouder of the work that this team does. Thank you to every single one of them. Thank you to those leading the core services - our Foodbank and allotment, the Rainbow Club, and our advice and advocacy service - as well as the brilliant and committed team of staff and volunteers delivering them, and to those in the centre of the organisation not just running but improving how we do it all. Thank you to those who fund all of this - the trusts, foundations, businesses, individuals, and everyone else who has made a contribution. Thank you to the brilliant team of trustees who work hard to support the governance and support the staff and volunteer team so well. And thank you to our superb director, Sophie, who is taking AFRIL from strength to strength.

Read on for the full story of AFRIL's year - of what we've done, why and how we do it - to give a clear sense too of what we will carry on doing to maintain and grow that support and empowerment to refugees and vulnerable migrants. And thank you in advance for your support for that work over the coming year too.



Gareth Redmond-King
Chair, Board of Trustees

Letter from AFRIL's Director

This time last year I was writing to you about the year that changed our world. Reflecting now on the year that followed, the volume of change seems more suited to several years. It started with schools having only just reopened, and strict limitations on meeting people still in place. Like much of the sector in 2021, AFRIL was adapting and firefighting. We remodelled, expanded provision, and kept our clients safe. Transitioning back to face to face provision, juggling changing health restrictions, responding to significant migration patterns with new global conflicts with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the Taliban taking control of Afghanistan. Both very close to home in different ways, the UK government launched particular safe routes for a limited number of people fleeing these conflicts. The public response was overwhelming and we would like to thank our supporters and funders old and new who felt compelled to help. AFRIL welcomes safe legal routes for migration, however the current options are incredibly limited and as a result most people are still forced into dangerous journeys. We added our voice to calls on government to extend these safe routes to refugees fleeing other conflicts and persecution. Instead, the British government passed the Nationality and Borders Act. Creating a two tier system for people seeking sanctuary, significantly eroding peoples' rights and safe routes, and making possible the horrendous policy of outsourcing our refugee protection obligations to Rwanda. AFRIL opposes these developments and will continue to support people affected by them. Finally we closed the year with rising inflation. It has been quite the journey, but thanks to the incredible dedication of staff, volunteers, supporters, funders and partners, AFRIL has both managed it and thrived.

Rainbow Club managed a smooth transition back to face to face schooling. As expected, children were below their expected national curriculum attainment level and those living in particularly challenging circumstances had regressed. Our outstanding teachers worked hard with children to catch them up and the joy at the return to face to face Saturday school was palpable. With lockdowns easing, we saw a concerning increase in safeguarding issues, families being made street homeless, and those in temporary accommodation being moved several miles at short notice. Securing support from local authorities with hybrid or remote working models was particularly challenging. Our Advice and Advocacy Service delivered even more crisis casework than the previous year to support these families, most notably in housing and homelessness. AFRIL's Foodbank supported more people than ever before with regular culturally appropriate food. Our immigration project in partnership with Southwark Law Centre has continued to be a game changer, enabling more people to resolve the underlying immigration issues at the root cause of their extreme hardship. As a result of working with AFRIL this year 39% of clients improved their income with an additional 35% supported to maintain a regular income; 30% improved their housing status with an additional 33% actively supported to maintain their housing; and despite Home Office delays, 23% have improved their immigration status and 54% maintained their status e.g. through applications for extending Limited Leave to Remain. We launched Together We Thrive, our women led empowerment network, and look forward to developing this work over the coming year. Overall in 2021-22 we provided holistic support to 90% more people than the previous year and as the year closed secured funding to increase our small staff team to continue to meet this challenge. I would like to personally thank each and every member of staff and volunteer for your dedication, care and commitment to making this happen. I would like to thank AFRIL's Trustees for maintaining our good governance and in particular Gareth Redmond-King for highly effective leadership and support as Chair. Finally, and most importantly I would like to thank the families that we work with for allowing us the honour of walking alongside you during this difficult time.



Sophie Wickham
Director

The people we support

The people we support are multifaceted. They are people whose migration status is a prominent feature in their lives, but who should not be solely defined by their migration status. They are mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, friends, community members, volunteers and employees.

Their migration status does however have an adverse impact on their lives, particularly in affecting their ability to access housing and income, and to integrate into the community. The three broad categories of migration statuses held by the people we support are recognised refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants who fall outside of these categories. Many of the latter have outstanding protection issues, including issues around gender based violence and trafficking, but were unable to successfully claim asylum due to complexity and the culture of disbelief in the system, and are now on a longer human rights based route to settlement due to having children in the UK.

Immigration, housing and income status

A person's migration status affects their rights. Many people with insecure migration statuses have no right to work, no right to rent, and have either no recourse to public funds (NRFP), or receive a very small amount of money from the government. This results in many becoming destitute, and even homeless.

75.6% of the people we supported this year had an insecure migration status when they joined AFRIL. This primarily included those who have complex immigration problems, human rights issues or outstanding protection needs but have had their asylum claim refused (17.3%), those seeking asylum (16.7%), and people with Limited Leave to Remain that expires after 2.5 years unless renewed in time at a high cost (28.6%).

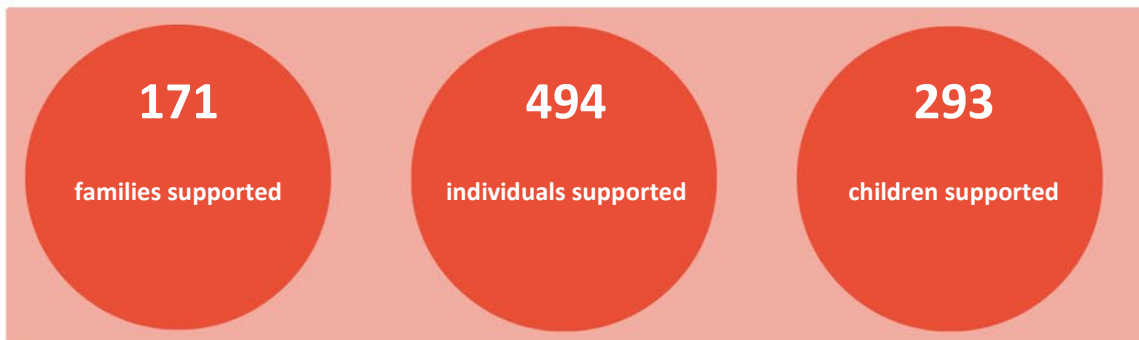
UK immigration policy has been becoming increasingly hostile as migrants, particularly refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants, are often the scapegoat for wider societal issues. This year saw the introduction of the Nationality and Borders Act which includes policies that further complicate the UK immigration system, increase the risk of refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants becoming destitute, and heighten fears of detention and deportation.

This year, **66% of people were without settled housing when they approached AFRIL: 41.3% were living in insecure or temporary housing and 24.6% were homeless**, including those who were street homeless, and those who were staying temporarily/sofa surfing with friends or acquaintances. **8.7% were living in asylum support accommodation**, most in a local hostel set up as initial accommodation. Currently, people seeking asylum in our area are having to stay in this type of accommodation for over a year whilst they wait for a decision on their case from the Home Office. As has been highlighted by the media, new arrivals to the UK are often experiencing dreadful conditions with a small amount of space and privacy and little to no income from the government. Those who have been provided with full-board accommodation, who have evidenced that they cannot afford to meet their essential living needs, should receive a weekly allowance of £8.24 to cover all other expenses e.g. toiletries and travel.

On joining AFRIL, **70% of our members were on an extremely low income.** A further **27.9% had no income** and were often reliant on family and friends. These figures are likely to increase due to the rising cost of living because refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants are some of the groups of people most affected by the crisis. Many were destitute before the crisis began and, despite the admirable resilience of many of our members, the coming months are likely to be extremely challenging.

Our impact in numbers

People we supported



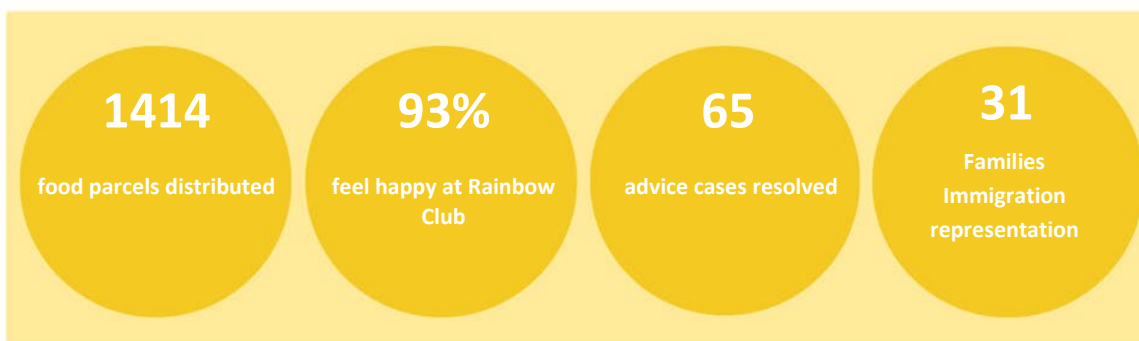
Confidence, wellbeing, and community



Immigration, income and housing



Services delivered



Our impact

The number of families we supported this year significantly increased by 91% compared to 2020/21.

This year, we supported 494 people, including 293 children, from 171 families compared to 259 people last year from 119 families. This increase shows the very real impact that increasingly hostile immigration policies, the legacy of the Covid-19 restrictions, and the current cost of living crisis are having on refugees, asylum seekers and people with other insecure migration statuses. This has resulted in our services being in extremely high demand, with the need for them only increasing. The Immigration Advice service increased by 200% partially due to increased demand, and partially because 2021/22 was the first full year of this service.

Rainbow Club	+11.9%
Foodbank	+6.5%
Advice & Advocacy	+45%
Immigration Advice	+200%

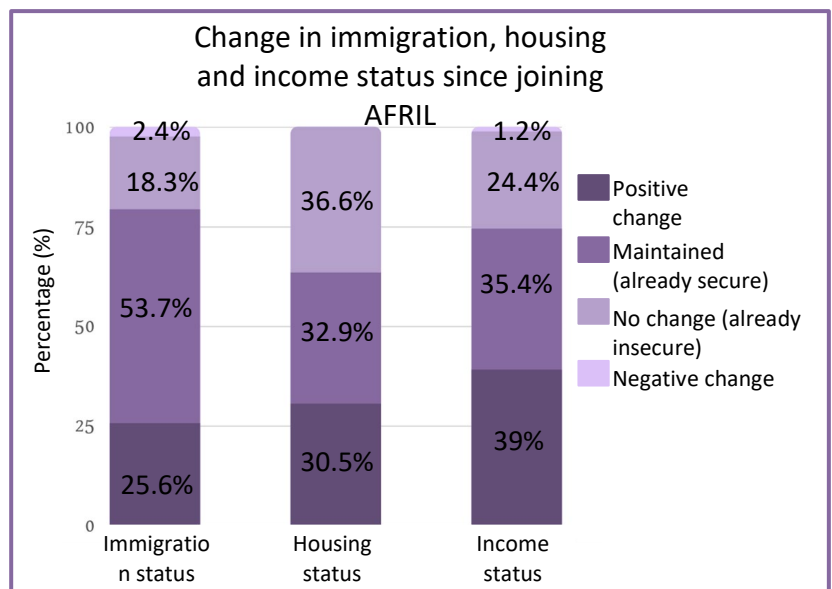
We support people holistically which means many of the families we support access more than one of our services. A common example of this is that families who are supported by the food bank to meet their crisis needs are often referred to the Advice and Advocacy service and our Immigration service to understand and resolve the underlying issues that caused them to be in crisis. This year, our foodbank supported 207 individuals, including 128 children, from 66 families, our Rainbow Club supplementary school supported 111 children from 66 families, our Advice and Advocacy service supported 153 individuals, including 90 children, from 58 families. Our Immigration Advice service supported 77 individuals, including 47 children, from 30 families.

Immigration, housing and income status

Our Advice and Advocacy Service and Immigration Project work with our members to improve the security of their immigration, housing and income.

Changes to immigration status often take a long time due to delays at the home office. Since joining AFRIL, 25.6% have seen an improvement in their immigration status. Most often, this is a change from no status to Limited Leave to Remain or, in some cases, Refugee Status or Indefinite Leave to Remain.

After working with AFRIL this year, 30.5% of families are living in more secure accommodation and 39% have more secure income. These improvements are



most commonly a change from living hand to mouth, relying on friends and family for housing and income, to securing local authority housing, often through social services, and receiving welfare benefits or other statutory payments.

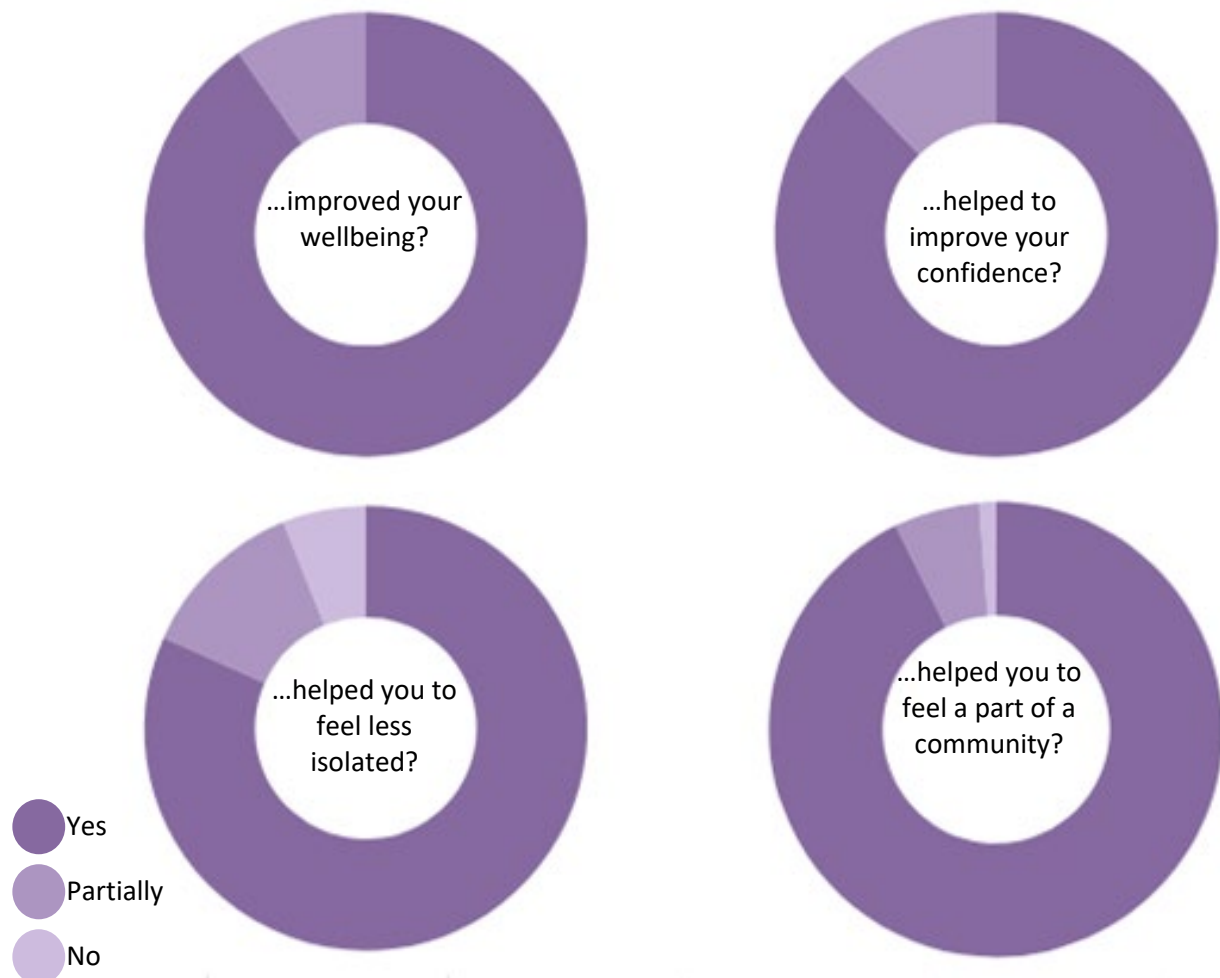
Wellbeing, confidence and community

Moving to a new country involves leaving behind family, friends, community and careers. The people we support are often also fleeing unsafe situations and have moved to the UK to seek sanctuary and safety. Unfortunately, once they arrive in the UK they are faced with the harsh reality of the UK's hostile immigration policies which frequently result in those seeking sanctuary becoming marginalised and at risk of destitution. Often, the people we support do not speak English as a first language, so have to navigate the immigration, education and healthcare system in an unfamiliar language, all whilst adapting to life in the UK and continuing to care for their children.

These experiences often negatively impact the wellbeing and confidence of the people we support, and leave them feeling isolated. AFRIL provides services to support them with improving their wellbeing and confidence, reduce feelings of isolation, and help them to feel part of a community. This is a priority throughout all of our core services, and is enhanced through our two foodbank wellbeing projects: the Allotment of Refuge and the Art@Home group.

In our annual survey, we asked about AFRIL's impact on their wellbeing, confidence, feelings of isolation, and feeling a part of a community. We found that **100% said coming to AFRIL had improved their wellbeing and confidence, 93.9% said AFRIL has helped them to feel less isolated, and 98.8% said AFRIL has helped them to feel a part of a community.**

Has coming to AFRIL...



What our members say...

**“He [my son] is happy,
making friends. It's helping
with studying.”**

*Rainbow Club
parent*

**“I'm happy, I'm relaxed,
I'm not scared. Everything
is good.”**

Immigration Advice Service client

**“Best advice ever help
me getting a new home
for my family.”**

Advice & Advocacy client

“It is holding me”

Foodbank member

**“Thank you to AFRIL
because they've been a
very big support to me.
Without them I don't think
I'd have been able to get to
where I am. I feel at home
when I go to AFRIL.”**

AFRIL member



The Food Bank Programme

AFRIL's Food Bank Programme consists of the Helping Hands food bank, the Allotment of Refuge and a range of well-being activities including our regular art@home group.

Over the last year, the programme has supported some of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised members of our local community. We are one of the few food banks dedicated to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants with no recourse to public funds. The majority of families we support reside in Lewisham, Bromley, Greenwich and Southwark. All the families registered with the food bank have experienced forced migration and sought sanctuary in the UK.



Fresh food donated to the food bank

The Helping Hands Food Bank

The Helping Hands food bank runs on Saturdays in conjunction with the volunteer team from Good Shepherd St Peter's church, Lee.

Foodbank support begins with weekly food parcels including fresh fruit and vegetables and toiletries. Donations come from FELIX Fareshare, Lee Greens, Church donations and individuals, supplemented by core food purchases by AFRIL and St Peter's. AFRIL's Allotment of Refuge also provides a small fresh yield that goes into our food parcels.



One of our volunteers delivering fresh food parcels

This year we distributed 1,414 food parcels to 207 individuals from 66 families, including 128 children. We believe that the food is essential, but that it is just the beginning; the welcome, consistent concern, and wrap-around service is what clients take away alongside a parcel of healthy food.

"The friendliness, welcoming and making someone to know, you have family and friends somewhere. They are awesome, loving and caring for everyone, well appreciated."

Food bank member

At the beginning of this year, we were still in lockdown, the church building was still closed as the food bank venue, and our wonderful team of volunteer cyclists and drivers were still making doorstep deliveries to over 35 families every week.

It has been a long stop-start journey to reopening our food bank. In September 2021, as other food banks began to reopen their doors, we also began inviting our members back to making personal collections at the food bank, whilst following COVID safe protocols, such as families staying in the carpark. This allowed the food bank family of staff, clients and volunteers to re-connect in person after 15 months. Several families were unable to collect food themselves due to circumstances associated with their health or disability, so we retained a smaller team of volunteer cyclists and drivers to guarantee a delivery to them.

By November 2021 clients were able to come inside in the warmth of the church hall, to sit (still socially distancing), to wait for their food parcels. [In October 2022 we reopened our drop-in and

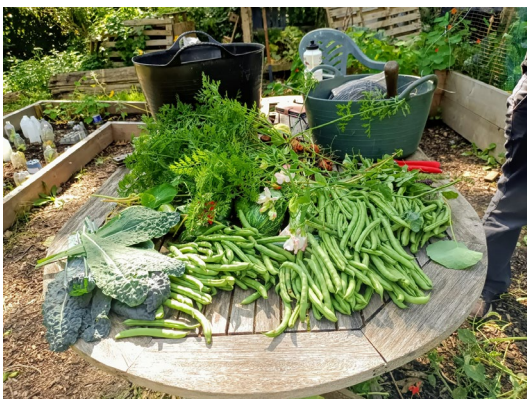
cafe; such important elements of the food bank concept and wellbeing welcome.]

“AFRIL gives you something to stand on. You are not standing by yourself.”

Food bank member

The return to collections in September 2021 coincided with a review of each family’s circumstances and conversations about those whose immigration, housing and financial statuses were more secure than before or during the first lockdown and were ready to transition to other community food banks in a managed way.

As part of our response to destitution and financial hardship, the food bank team has continued to partner with GRACE AID charity to provide a dignified referral and appointment service for food bank clients needing clothing and shoes. We also received a variety of ‘little extras’ as donations from individuals and organisations supportive of AFRIL’s work. These have included toiletries, face masks, cot blankets, sim cards, or books. We are very grateful for all these donations as they give that little bit of help to make what money people have go further and the practicalities of life slightly less stressful.



Allotment harvest for the foodbank

Prior to the cost of living crisis, many of the food bank members were already experiencing marginalisation and poverty, often living on informal networks, casual work and ad hoc meals whilst awaiting Home Office decisions. The rising prices have exacerbated these existing inequalities and increased demand significantly.

This unprecedented increase in demand has resulted in an increased number of enquiries from new families experiencing extreme food poverty, existing families staying for longer, and there being fewer community resources to refer existing families onto. By the end of the year we were at capacity with a waiting list, and were operating at 200% of pre-pandemic levels.

“[The food bank] has been helpful to me and my child, we get lots of food variety and whenever we need support. They are friendly in their manner and make me feel safe.”

Food bank member

Despite these challenges the food bank team remains hopeful and positive. The food bank staff and volunteers are resilient, innovative, and passionate and the team is well-networked locally through the Lewisham Food Group Network and nationally as a member of the Independent Food Agency Network (IFAN) and FELIX.

The art@home group

AFRIL art@home is our fortnightly art group, developed as our first online well-being activity at the request of clients, to connect families with families during Covid-19 lockdowns. We have an **average of 10 participants per session, including 6 children**. This class enables parents and children to spend some quality time together. This is important as, for the rest of the week, the parents often have to focus on practical head of household work.

This year, **we held 25 sessions including 3 trips to art galleries**. We have observed that mutual peer support has developed and during discussions about art, children and parents have had opportunities to share more about their lives and experiences and tools for resilience in a mutually supportive environment. This year we have developed our programme to include 1 trip per term to a local gallery. So far we have visited Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Geoffrey Moore Gallery and have plans to visit the Horniman Museum. We are excited that we have been invited to hold a public exhibition of the group's artwork at the Geoffrey Moore Gallery in February 2023.

Many thanks to Elaine, our Art Group leader who has led this group since February 2020. She holds a special place in the hearts of the parents and children because of her care and kindness. Through this group, members have shared joy, concern, and sadness. We have laughed and learned, together, surprised ourselves and shared tools of resilience, and personal belief.



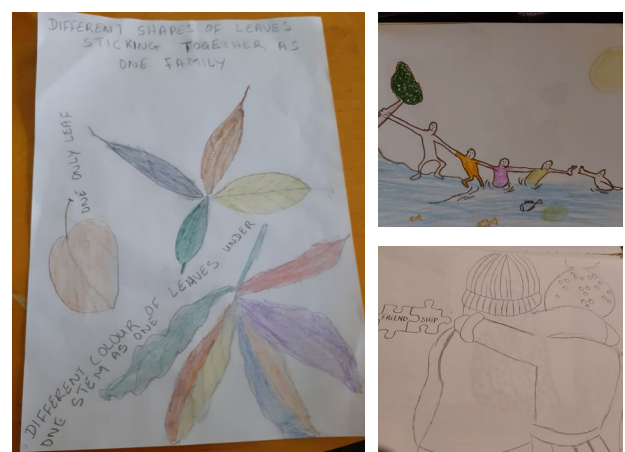
“Art takes you off from things going on in your life.”

Art@home member



“My Friday art group is my time. My children know it, ... great family time for me and my children. It helped us during the covid-19 and up till date.”

Art@home member



“We are able to make anything and feel part of a big group, valued. Any time there is support, even those who don't know how to draw.”

Art@home member

Allotment of Refuge

Our Allotment of Refuge at One Tree Hill, Honor Oak Park is an established project. In 2020, we turned a derelict plot into a re-loved, established and integrated community of gardening, calm, and welcome for refugee and migrant families, local people, volunteers, plot holders and their families.

Rose joined our staff team in March 2022 as our Allotment Gardener. Her knowledge of growing crops and experience of working with people has helped her establish our Tuesday gardening group and Friday harvest sessions. She has grown the allotment volunteer team and worked with them to increase the yield from our plot. Following a survey with food bank members about their favourite fruit and vegetables, the team have grown culturally appropriate foods chosen by our members. The allotment currently provides a regular harvest and contribution of salad, vegetables and herbs to our AFRIL food bank.

In May 2022 we began a conversation with a journalist which led to a feature about the wellbeing aspects of the allotment and the impact of regular gardening on the lives of some of AFRIL's food bank clients in the October 22 edition of the magazine. You can read the article here: [Growing together: the AFRIL allotment - Saga](#)

The allotment is also a great outdoor classroom and workshop space; **we held 14 art, nature and food growing workshops for 127** and in addition hosted our AFRIL summer party at the allotment.

A huge thanks to the plot holders and members of One Tree Hill Allotment Society for making AFRIL part of their family, widening their gates, and continuing to welcome AFRIL families and children to their events, and supporting all our plans.

Thank you very much to our thoughtful, friendly and resourceful volunteers in the food bank and allotment teams for another year of care, kindness, innovation, and resilience. We could not do what we do without you.

“Close feel to nature, destressing helps my situation. I feel a part of a community.”

Allotment member



“My children experience and know how the food we eat are grown and how to prepare some of them.”

Allotment member



“New environment for my children to enjoy time with their friends.”

Allotment member



Rainbow Club

The Rainbow Club Saturday Supplementary school supports children from asylum seeking, refugee, and vulnerable migrant families. The school runs every Saturday morning during term time, where children receive English, Maths, Music, Art and Sport lessons. The school is split into 3 classes, spanning multiple year groups: Passion Fruit class (ages 4-6), Starfruit class (ages 6-8), and Mango class (ages 8-11).



Rainbow Club

Over the 2021-22 academic year, Rainbow Club was attended by 111 children from 66 families, and from 17 different countries. Our class teachers were supported by 29 volunteer teaching assistants in addition to 9 youth alumni volunteers. This year we were delighted to welcome our new art teacher, Sadegh, and sport teach, Daniel, to our teaching term, both bringing great enthusiasm and creativity, making the sessions both fun and educational in equal measure.

This year was our first full year of in-person teaching since the Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020. Covid-19 restrictions impacted child education and development and it was noticeable that many Rainbow Club students had regressed academically. Returning to regular and consistent learning has helped to return children to their expected academic levels. This year, we provided **150 hours of English and Maths lessons, 60 hours of music lessons, 30 hours of art lessons, and 20 hours of sport lessons.**

at AFRIL's allotment, an entertaining performance by the Flying Seagull Project, a drama workshop with Lewisham Youth Theatre, and a 3-day song-writing workshop with Fairbeats. During the song-writing workshops, the children wrote and performed a song called 'Hold Your Head Up High' which you can listen to [here](#).

Differences in English language abilities can create



Drama workshop with Lewisham Youth Theatre



Sports day at Rainbow Club

In addition to lessons, extra-curricular activities form an important part of our provision, especially as 87% of our students this year had never or rarely visited museums before coming to Rainbow Club. Further lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions allowed us to run school trips to the National Maritime Museum and Horniman Museum. The children were also able to attend several holiday workshops

challenges for children at school, both socially and academically. For example, this year 52% of the parents spoke little/no English, making supporting their children with schoolwork a challenge. Rainbow Club provides a space for these children to receive this support. In addition to this, 39% of children spoke English as an additional language (EAL), and so received more one-to-one and small group support from teaching assistants and focused on English acquisition.

We saw an increase in pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs), both statemented and those awaiting assessments. Additional SEN training was provided for our teachers and teaching assistants by Drumbeat Outreach and Autism Education Trust, to improve awareness and understanding of how best to support each pupil.

Rainbow Club continues to be an enriching place for children to grow, not only academically, but also socially. In our end of year pupil questionnaires, 93% of children said they felt happy at Rainbow Club, 80% felt their confidence had improved, and 90% felt their social skills had improved and they had made new friends. Furthermore, in our annual survey, 100% of Rainbow Club parents said that their child benefited from and enjoyed Rainbow Club.

“the best thing in my life”

Rainbow Club student

Our parent forums, run by Creating Ground, returned to in-person meetings in September. The forums are held once per month, and provide a space for us to further engage with parents. This year, they included workshops on wellbeing, creative activities, and child behaviour. The forums are a space for parents to meet other parents, safely discuss the issues they are currently facing and give feedback on Rainbow Club and AFRIL.

In June 2021, our parent project, Discovery Stories’, came to an end. This project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and explored themes of culture, childhood, identity and tradition. It resulted in the parents working with Creative Ground to publish a book titled ‘Remember the Child of Whom You Are’, a reference to an old Yoruba proverb. The book includes stories, reflections, recipes, games, songs, poems, and traditions from the parents’ childhoods that they would like to pass on to their children. It was printed and shared out to partner organisations, museums, libraries, and AFRIL families. The book is available to read [here](#).

“Helping them with reading and writing, that was the most worrying for me and now I'm so happy that I joined Rainbow Club. Even their behaviour was absolutely changed.”

Rainbow Club parent

A huge thank you to all our partners and collaborators who we've worked with over the past year at Rainbow Club...

*St Saviours R.C. Primary School,
Fairbeats Music,
Creating Ground,
National Maritime Museum,
Horniman Museum,
Flying Seagull Project,
Lewisham Youth Theatre &
Dulwich College*



Summer workshop at the allotment

Elizabeth's story

Elizabeth (not her real name for confidentiality reasons) and her mother arrived at AFRIL in an extremely difficult living situation. They were staying in a spare room owned by an acquaintance but were not allowed to stay in the house unsupervised.

As a first step, we helped them to secure more stable housing, started supporting them through our Helped Hands Foodbank, and began helping them to regularise their immigration status through AFRIL's Immigration Advice Project at Southwark Law Centre.

Elizabeth then joined Rainbow Club. She was in Year 2 and was performing significantly below the level expected for her year group, both academically and socially. It was clear she had experienced significant disruption to her education and development. She was therefore kept in the younger class, where we were able to focus on helping her to improve her phonics and reading ability. She received additional one-to-one support from our teachers and teaching assistants and she worked hard every single week.

Over the past year, Elizabeth has had one of the best attendance records in the school, thanks to her mother's commitment and dedication. By the end of the year she was reading at a secure level for her year group and has now been moved up to the next class.

The family have recently been granted leave to remain, and are now able to access mainstream benefits. They are being transitioned from our foodbank and their living situation has vastly improved. Elizabeth continues to attend Rainbow Club and is a joy to teach.



Child pictured is not "Elizabeth".

Advice and Advocacy Service

Our clients face a range of practical difficulties arising from immigration status which need to be resolved through holistic support. Our Advice and Advocacy officer conducts confidential in depth assessments and work plans in partnership with clients to resolve complex issues.



The key issues for our clients are access to appropriate income and accommodation. All of our clients, except resettled refugees, have no recourse to public funds so cannot access mainstream government support. Some women remain in abusive relationships as this is their only source of housing and food. Our advice service advocates to Social Services to conduct child in need assessments and provide emergency accommodation, provide destitution payments and grant applications for food and essential items, makes referrals for Immigration Advice, and supports clients to request the NRPF condition to be removed from grants of temporary leave. This is alongside registering children in school, negotiating discretionary free school meals, and supporting clients to understand the entitlements and limitations on their access to healthcare. For clients granted refugee status, we assist them to get National Insurance numbers, apply for welfare benefits, access employment and training opportunities, make budgeting plans and access specialised debt and legal advice.

This year, our Advice Service supported **153 individuals from 58 families, including 90 children**. We resolved **65 cases**, including homeless families securing safe housing; families accessing a regular income; resolving debt issues due to rising utility costs and making budgeting plans; negotiating free school meals for destitute families and supporting struggling families to get lifted their no recourse to public funds restriction. 100% of Advice Service clients have made their own decisions, supported by AFRIL, to resolve the practical problems in their own lives. In addition, 9 clients were provided with detailed information to resolve issues themselves.

“It help me to know my right and what to do.”

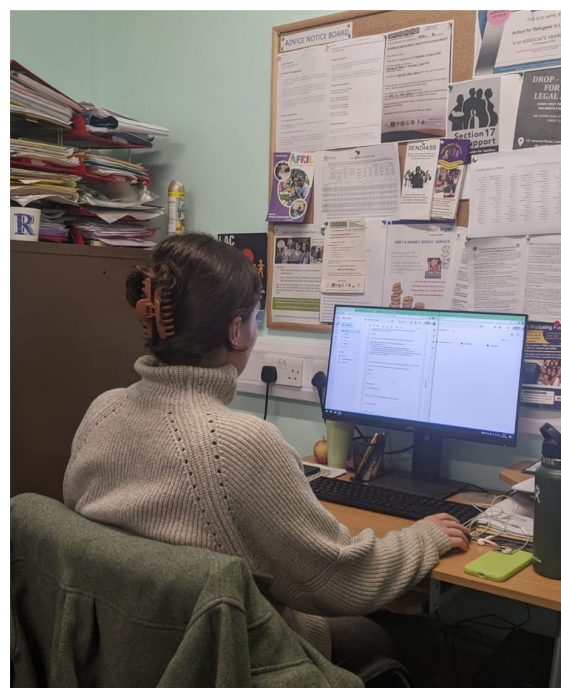
Advice service client

We take an empowerment approach to advice and advocacy, respecting our clients’ agency and capabilities. We will spend longer with a client and coach them through completing an online benefits application, rather than default to doing it for them. This means that we support our clients from dependence to independence. Our annual survey results show the impact of this approach; **76.7% of advice service clients said that the advice service had helped them to understand UK systems and their entitlements**, with a further

16.3% saying it had helped partially; **74.4% felt more confident to deal with problems** after using the advice service, and 14% felt a little more confident; and **69.8% said the advice service had helped them to plan more for the future**, with an additional 18.6% saying it had partially helped.

“Best advice ever help me getting a new [safe] home for my family”

-Advice service client



A member of our Advice & Advocacy Team

We launched a busy fortnightly outreach advice surgery in our local initial asylum accommodation, which has been well received by both clients and the accommodation provider. After working in the hotel we discovered that there had been no new arrivals for some time [this has since changed in 2022-2023] and the average time that families were in the hotel was 1 year. However, since the accommodation is not suitable or set up for long term habitation, residents were experiencing a plethora of other, more time intensive issues. We therefore did casework with residents to move their cases on, raising requests to move on grounds of overcrowding and have developed links with legal representatives. Furthermore, many residents were still not receiving the small payment for full board asylum seekers and so were not able to access services that were more than a walk away. We supported people to make applications for these payments and shared relevant local resources.

“Feel more motivated, confidence and not alone when talking to advice service team.”

Advice service client

In April we launched a pilot project called Together We Thrive, thanks to the support of the National Lottery Communities Fund. The project is a recognition of the capability and strength of the women who are members of AFRIL, many of whom are single mothers raising families in very difficult circumstances. It provides an opportunity for our members to gain new skills, receive and give peer support, and in turn increase their confidence and feelings of connectedness to a community. The interactive workshops are co-produced with our members with the aim of increasing understanding of how UK systems work to enable families to thrive in their new and challenging environment. Sessions included how families can make small budgets go further; understanding the UK immigration system; employment, training and volunteering in the UK; and how to communicate successfully with public bodies.

Mia's story

Mia (not her real name) and her four children had been in the UK for many years and were living with a friend in Lewisham. Mia had limited leave to remain but two of her children did not.

When her young child developed cancer, Mia was forced to stop working as they required constant care and hospital appointments. We supported her to be able to lift the NRPF restriction so that she could access universal credit.

Then, Mia and her family were made homeless. We made an application to the local authority and advocated for emergency accommodation. The Council erroneously closed her case twice before providing accommodation one night at a time. Each morning the family were told to leave the accommodation and waited outside until they were eventually told at 8pm that they could return. The children became tired and upset.

We sought legal advice and were told that a legal challenge would only be possible after a month or if the Council formally refused to house the family. We kept up daily advocacy, supplemented the family's income with food bank donations, and secured a grant to pay for hospital travel and food. After one month, a housing solicitor took the case and the Council provided temporary accommodation.

Our immigration solicitor is now providing free representation to regularise the family's status as a whole. Mia has asked to volunteer in AFRIL's advice service to help others get the same support.

Immigration Project

Our immigration project is a partnership with Southwark Law Centre (SLC) and enables AFRIL clients to access free, high quality immigration advice and representation. SLC provides specialist legal advice in Southwark and Lewisham for people who cannot afford to pay. It specialises in discrimination, employment, housing, planning, welfare rights, and immigration/asylum law.

There are four main challenges faced by our clients and other refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in the UK when seeking immigration advice; (1) the provision of immigration advice does not meet currently meet the demand, (2) many of AFRIL's clients are excluded from receiving legal aid and do not have the income to pay for the advice they need, (3) sometimes individuals exploit asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants seeking immigration advice by charging them high prices for poor advice, and (4) often, our clients find it hard to trust organisations and disclose their immigration status because they fear detention, deportation and family breakup.

These issues are UK-wide and require reform and regulation in order to be resolved. Our immigration project aims to counter them on a local scale by enabling AFRIL clients to access free, high quality immigration advice and representation from an experienced, trusted, and qualified immigration solicitor. This enables the people we support to understand and resolve the complex issues that they and their families face relating to their immigration status that are at the root of poverty.

This financial year was the first full year of the project following its launch in January 2021. [The project provided legal representation from an experienced solicitor to 31 clients and their 47 dependents and one-off advice and assistance to more than 10 additional clients.](#)

We support clients to submit leave to remain applications to the Home Office. Delays in the Home Office mean that the majority of our clients are still waiting to find out the outcome of their application. So far, [3 grants of leave to remain have been made and no clients have been refused.](#)

“They helped with my immigration and housing problem when I needed them”

Immigration Project client

The high cost of application fees are a barrier for our clients when regularising their status. Many of our clients and their dependents have Limited Leave to Remain on the human rights based 10-year route to settlement. This means that each family

member on this route must apply to extend their leave every 2.5 years for 10 years. If not granted a fee waiver, the cost for each adult application is currently £2,627.20 and for each child application £2,242.20. We have [represented 6 clients to make a fee waiver application to the Home Office alongside the application for extension of leave. To date, 100% of fee waiver applications have been successful.](#)

In our annual survey, [55.2% of respondents said that their housing or income had improved since using the immigration service and all clients with applications submitted to the Home Office were able to maintain their accommodation entitlement as a result.](#) As well as helping to resolve our client's cases, the immigration project supports them to feel empowered through understanding immigration law in the UK and their rights. This helps the people we support to identify if they are receiving poor quality advice from other services and advocate for themselves. All immigration clients confirmed following the advice provided to them that they understood their own immigration status and the

restrictions that this entails. 82.8% of annual survey respondents said that the immigration advice service had helped them to understand the immigration system in the UK more generally, and 17.2% said it had helped a little. Furthermore, 100% said they would recommend the service to a friend.

Another objective in the second half of the project is to develop and deliver second tier advice and capacity building for the wider sector and AFRIL staff and clients. This has resulted in stronger links between AFRIL and SLC who now conduct AFRIL casework file reviews, significant benefits to clients who are now able to resolve underlying issues that lead to poverty and marginalisation, and increased knowledge on immigration law and policy for AFRIL staff, meaning they are better equipped to identify immigration issues amongst their clients and make appropriate referrals. We have identified mainstream and specialist organisations who are in need of and keen to access capacity building in this area. In the 2022/23 financial year, we are organising online training sessions to voluntary

organisations and AFRIL staff by the Immigration Solicitor. The two topics identified so far are an Introductory overview of Immigration Law for non OISC practitioners and the potential implications of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.

“He made me understand the UK system, rules and regulation”

Immigration Project client

This year was turbulent in terms of changes to immigration law, the most prominent change being the Nationality and Borders Act. The bill was introduced to the House of Commons in July 2021 meaning that, although it did not become law until June 2022, it dominated the headlines regarding immigration law for the majority of this financial year. We are yet to see the full ramifications of this act, but expect that the policies will further erode the ability of people seeking sanctuary to regularise their immigration status and improve their lives sustainably. There is more need than ever for good quality free immigration advice to support people in need.

The AFRIL Team 2021/22

Since the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year our team has expanded in response to increased demand on our services. We have also welcomed new staff members since the end of the financial year who have been involved in preparing this report, with particular thanks to Jessica Hughes.

Director: Sophie Wickham (since 09/2021); Katie Commons (02/2020-09/2021)

Food bank Team

Food bank Director: Helen Mason
Food bank Administrator: Louise Vangheluwe
Allotment Gardener: Rose Cowling (since 03/2021)

Rainbow Club Team

Education Coordinator - Kieran Tang-Wright
Passion Fruit Class Teacher - Ruth Michaels
Starfruit Class Teacher - Vita Baliaj
Mango Class Teacher - Ndaiziyei Murimba
Art Leader - Sadegh Aleahmad (since 09/2021);
Melanie Hering (until 07/2021)
Sport Teacher - Daniel Espinosa (since 11/2021);
Olu Mason (until 07/2021)

Advice and Advocacy Service Team

Advice and Advocacy Officer: Shahrazad Magrabi (until 08/2021); Chloe White (since 12/2022); Bevlyn Annokye (since 12/2022)

Immigration Advice Service Team

Southwark Law Centre Immigration Advice Partnership Solicitor - Ed O'Driscoll

Office Team:

Administration and Monitoring Officer: Jess Hughes (since April 2021)

Trustees:

Gareth Redmond-King (Chair)
Margaret Ruth Gravelle
Div Vaughn Burnett
Ron Tran
Kathleen Commons (appointed 01/10/2021)
Lorna Barron (appointed 09/05/2022)
Neil Walker (appointed 09/05/2022)
Kirsty Wildgoose (appointed 09/05/2022)
Karleen Richards (appointed 12/09/2022)

Volunteers

We would not be able to deliver the breadth or quality of services that we do without our **wonderful team of volunteers**. Thank you to everyone who donates their time to AFRIL.

Our supporters...

Thank you to all the individuals, community groups, corporates, and trusts and foundations that have supported AFRIL during 2021-2022. Your grants and donations have played an enormous part in enabling us to support over 260 families this year. Thank you to all those listed below, and those who wish to stay anonymous...

AB Charitable Trust

BBC Children in Need

Blackheath Quakers

The Henry Smith Charity

Dulwich College

Lewisham Local

National Lottery Communities Fund

One Tree Hill Allotment Society

Robbins Family Charitable Fund

South East London Humanists

St Peter's & The Good Shepherd Church, Lee.

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

The Childhood Trust

The Hillcote Trust

The Leathersellers Foundation

The Northwick Trust

The Topinambour Trust

Trust For Londo

The Trustee' Report was approved
by the Board of Trustees.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

G J Redmond-King
Chair of Board of Trustees

24th January, 2023.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Action for Refugees Lewisham (the charity) for the year ended 31 May 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



F J Wilde FCCA MBA DChA

Warner Wilde
4 Marigold Drive
Bisley
Surrey
GU24 9SF

Dated: 24/01/2023

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

		Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
	Notes						
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>							
Donations and legacies	3	85,780	149,827	235,607	52,327	143,354	195,681
Investments	4	11	-	11	411	-	411
Other income	5	2,201	1,935	4,136	832	-	832
Total income		<u>87,992</u>	<u>151,762</u>	<u>239,754</u>	<u>53,570</u>	<u>143,354</u>	<u>196,924</u>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>							
Raising funds	6	223	-	223	216	-	216
Charitable activities	7	69,901	161,866	231,767	24,318	173,493	197,811
Total expenditure		<u>70,124</u>	<u>161,866</u>	<u>231,990</u>	<u>24,534</u>	<u>173,493</u>	<u>198,027</u>
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	(8,875)	8,875	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		17,868	(10,104)	7,764	20,161	(21,264)	(1,103)
Fund balances at 1 June 2021		<u>94,334</u>	<u>45,958</u>	<u>140,292</u>	<u>74,173</u>	<u>67,222</u>	<u>141,395</u>
Fund balances at 31 May 2022		<u><u>112,202</u></u>	<u><u>35,854</u></u>	<u><u>148,056</u></u>	<u><u>94,334</u></u>	<u><u>45,958</u></u>	<u><u>140,292</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MAY 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		1,169		1,456
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		150,587		138,836	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(3,700)		-	
Net current assets			146,887		138,836
Total assets less current liabilities			148,056		140,292
Income funds					
Restricted funds	13		35,854		45,958
Unrestricted funds			112,202		94,334
			148,056		140,292

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 May 2022.

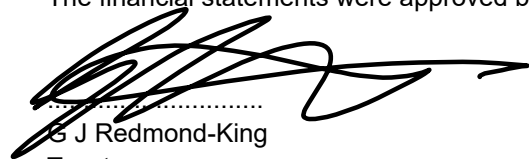
The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on

24th January, 2023


G J Redmond-King
Trustee

Company registration number

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Action for Refugees Lewisham is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is F3, Leemore Central Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 5ES.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	20% straight line
------------------	-------------------

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.9 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.10 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2022	2022	2022	2021	2021	2021
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	53,780	5,119	58,899	-	-	-
Grants	32,000	144,708	176,708	52,327	143,354	195,681
	<u>85,780</u>	<u>149,827</u>	<u>235,607</u>	<u>52,327</u>	<u>143,354</u>	<u>195,681</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

3 Donations and legacies

(Continued)

Grants receivable for core activities

BBC Children in Need	-	40,845	40,845	-	40,819	40,819
Big Give	-	5,119	5,119	16,135	-	16,135
Henry Smith	-	40,000	40,000	-	20,000	20,000
National Lottery	-	9,656	9,656	-	33,028	33,028
Trust for London	-	32,500	32,500	-	16,250	16,250
Respond and Adapt	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
29th May 1961	-	5,000	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Leathersellers	-	4,970	4,970	-	4,970	4,970
AB Charitable Trust	15,000	-	15,000	-	-	-
Northwick Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-	-	-
Other	7,000	6,618	13,618	36,192	13,287	49,479
	<u>32,000</u>	<u>144,708</u>	<u>176,708</u>	<u>52,327</u>	<u>143,354</u>	<u>195,681</u>

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest receivable	11	411
	<u>11</u>	<u>411</u>

5 Other income

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2022	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£
Other income	2,201	1,935	4,136	832
	<u>2,201</u>	<u>1,935</u>	<u>4,136</u>	<u>832</u>

6 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2021
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Other fundraising costs	223	216
	<u>223</u>	<u>216</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

6	Raising funds	(Continued)	
		223	216
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
7	Charitable activities		
		Charitable	Charitable
		Expenditure	Expenditure
		2022	2021
		£	£
	Staff costs	131,673	123,716
	Depreciation and impairment	586	486
	Advice project	2,317	4,330
	Foodbank project	8,326	9,978
	Immigration project	32,463	16,232
	Rainbow Club project	26,598	7,212
	Wellbeing projects	2,529	1,686
	Destitution fund	4,876	21,540
	Interpreting	1,241	836
	Volunteer and other staff costs	1,112	-
	Training	1,190	1,689
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		212,911	187,705
	Share of support costs (see note 8)	16,731	9,581
	Share of governance costs (see note 8)	2,125	525
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		231,767	197,811
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Analysis by fund		
	Unrestricted funds	69,901	24,318
	Restricted funds	161,866	173,493
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		231,767	197,811
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

8 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2022 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2021 £
Office and core costs	15,996	-	15,996	8,949	-	8,949
Insurance	735	-	735	632	-	632
Independent Examiner	-	2,125	2,125	-	525	525
	<u>16,731</u>	<u>2,125</u>	<u>18,856</u>	<u>9,581</u>	<u>525</u>	<u>10,106</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>16,731</u>	<u>2,125</u>	<u>18,856</u>	<u>9,581</u>	<u>525</u>	<u>10,106</u>

Governance costs includes payment to the Independent Examiner of £1,500 for accounts preparation and independent examination (2021- £625 for independent examination only).

9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Employment costs	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	125,965	123,716
Other pension costs	5,708	-
	<u>131,673</u>	<u>123,716</u>

The Trustees consider that they, together with the General Manager of the charity, are the key management of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis.

The total remuneration of key management personnel during the year was £26,112 (2021 - £23,575) and total employer's national insurance contributions in respect to these individuals amounted to £2,189 (2021 - £3,945).

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 June 2021	6,665
Additions	299
Disposals	(4,236)
	<u> </u>
At 31 May 2022	2,728
	<u> </u>
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 June 2021	5,209
Depreciation charged in the year	586
Eliminated in respect of disposals	(4,236)
	<u> </u>
At 31 May 2022	1,559
	<u> </u>
Carrying amount	
At 31 May 2022	1,169
	<u> </u>
At 31 May 2021	1,456
	<u> </u>

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals and deferred income	3,700	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

13 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds				Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 June 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 1 June 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 May 2022 £
Advice Service	7,500	-	(7,500)	-	-	-	-	-
Client Grants	150	-	-	-	150	500	(650)	-
Community Education in Lewisham	7,756	-	-	-	7,756	-	(7,756)	-
Core Costs	16,036	61,361	(51,711)	-	25,686	54,655	(44,487)	35,854
Covid-19 Response	12,863	16,250	(29,113)	-	-	-	-	-
Destitution Fund	1,633	1,750	(2,783)	-	600	2,500	(3,100)	-
Foodbank	2,668	4,704	(25,084)	8,875	(8,837)	13,856	(5,019)	-
Heritage Lottery - Rainbow Club	9,230	-	(3,080)	-	6,150	-	(6,150)	-
Rainbow Club	4,970	43,039	(37,972)	-	10,037	47,751	(57,788)	-
Monitoring and Evaluation	3,850	-	-	-	3,850	-	(3,850)	-
Office Equipment	566	-	-	-	566	-	(566)	-
Immigration Project with SLC	-	16,250	(16,250)	-	-	32,500	(32,500)	-
	<u>67,222</u>	<u>143,354</u>	<u>(173,493)</u>	<u>8,875</u>	<u>45,958</u>	<u>151,762</u>	<u>(161,866)</u>	<u>35,854</u>

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

13 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Client Grants: individual grants that we apply for, for particular clients. They are restricted to the client and the purpose specified.

Advice Service: expenses relating to the part time Advice Worker.

Covid 19 response: particular funding provided for services in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Destitution Fund: general destitution grants for food payments and hardship payments for individuals.

Foodbank: expenses relating to the Foodbank Programme - Foodbank, Allotment and Art Group.

Rainbow Club: expenses relating to the Rainbow Club including funding from BBC Children in Need and Leathersellers.

Immigration Project with Southwark Law Centre: Trust for London funding to cover immigration solicitor salary and a small contribution to Director costs.

Office equipment: purchases of equipment for the office from the Clothworkers Foundation grant.

Monitoring and Evaluation: this refers to costs related to monitoring and evaluating projects.

Core costs: this has been used historically for core cost grants that cover all charitable projects/services with a few minor exclusions. The expenditure against some restricted funds, such as Rainbow Club and Destitution fund, exceeds the income and the difference is made up from core costs.

ACTION FOR REFUGEES LEWISHAM

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2022

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Fund balances at 31 May 2022 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	1,169	-	1,169	1,456	-	1,456
Current assets/ (liabilities)	111,033	35,854	146,887	92,878	45,958	138,836
	<u>112,202</u>	<u>35,854</u>	<u>148,056</u>	<u>94,334</u>	<u>45,958</u>	<u>140,292</u>

15 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2021 - none).

ACTION FOR REFUGEES IN LEWISHAM

England & Wales - Charity number 1116344

Accounts



Action For Refugees In Lewisham

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
2020/2021**

**Registered Charity Number: 1116344
Company Number: 05819537**

ABOUT AFRIL

Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL) is a small, local charity. Founded in 2006, we support refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in south east London to lift themselves out of poverty and rebuild their lives in the heart of our community. We provide both crisis support to meet immediate needs, and long-term, flexible programmes to tackle the underlying problems that lead families to be in crisis, empowering them to move from dependence to independence.

Over time our client group has changed according to the demographic of our borough and we have transitioned from mainly supporting refugees to working with a more diverse group of families who have complex needs relating to insecure immigration status. We work with other local and national organisations to ensure that we can maximise resources locally.

We are a team of 10 part time paid staff (3.2 full time equivalents) and around active 80 volunteers.

Our office is based in the Leemore Centre in central Lewisham and we deliver services across the borough, including the Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter, Lee and St Saviours primary school. Our clients travel from across South East London to access our services.

WHAT WE DO

We deliver 3 core services:

- **Helping Hands Foodbank Programme:** providing food, toiletries and clothes to destitute and low income asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families and individuals; as well as a range of wellbeing activities including our Allotment of Refuge;
- **Rainbow Club Supplementary School:** providing supplementary Saturday education and wellbeing activities to children from early years to 11 years old from asylum seeking, refugee, and migrant families;
- **Advice and Advocacy Service:** providing AQS accredited advice and support in housing, income, and integration for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, as well as referral and signposting in immigration matters.

In addition, since 2021 we have added an **Immigration Advice Service** in partnership with Southwark Law Centre and funded by Trust for London. An experienced immigration solicitor works closely with AFRIL projects and other partners to provide in-depth quality immigration advice and representation to support clients to resolve the underlying immigration issues that lead to poverty and crisis.

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3. The people we support - and their needs
4. Our Impact in Numbers
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6. Food Bank Programme
7. Rainbow Club
8. Advice and Advocacy
9. Immigration Advice
10. Funders, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers
11. Financial Statement

OUR VALUES AND APPROACH

At AFRIL, we:

- Work with service users to develop services and support that meet their real, and not perceived needs.
- Work collaboratively with local and national organisations to ensure that services are relevant, appropriate and effective.
- Work with service users to enable them to build their knowledge, confidence and skills

Our work is grounded in our values of professionalism, inclusivity and solidarity. We strive to be community led and community based.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

At AFRIL's last annual general meeting, I thanked a long list of people and organisations - staff, volunteers, partners, funders - for helping ensure not just that AFRIL managed to survive and maintain support for our clients through an exceptional year, but also that AFRIL thrived and expanded what we were able to offer to those most in need of our help. Here we are, a year on, and we have another 'exceptional' year under our belts, having spent 2021 making remarkable and previously unimaginable adjustments to how we live and work. And once again, the formidable community that is AFRIL has risen to the challenge and provided support, help, advocacy and allyship to some of the most vulnerable people in and around our community here in south London.

I am immensely proud of the work of every single person who forms part of what AFRIL does, and hugely grateful to everyone whose generosity of time, money and spirit makes that work possible. The egregious term 'hostile environment' hardly does justice to the barriers, difficulties and prejudices heaped in the way of those who seek the protection of the UK today. The commitment, expertise, effort and work of every one of AFRIL's staff, volunteers and supporters contributes an important piece to the dismantling and undermining of that hostility, supporting people who have a right to live and thrive here in one of the wealthiest nations on our planet.

I am not the person to tell the story of the last year of AFRIL's work; that is laid out here in our annual report, told by the people who made the story possible. But before you read that story, I will take the opportunity to put on record my very specific thanks to each and every one of my fellow trustees who have given their time, commitment and expertise over the last year to support AFRIL's work and its development - including those who have stepped down from the board during the course of this year. I will also add my thanks for the phenomenal work done by our outgoing Director Katie Commons, who brings her knowledge and experience to bear now to the board table, as she takes up a role as a trustee. And I will very warmly welcome Sophie Wickham into the role of Director, and thank her for the very considerable impact she is already having on the next phase of AFRIL's development and its work.

Gareth Redmond-King
Chair, Board of Trustees

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I joined AFRIL in September 2021, our remarkable staff and volunteer team were 16 months into delivering services in a global health pandemic. In a short space of time, the world has changed beyond recognition, and we have adapted. I would like to personally thank Katie Commons for steering this ship.

AFRIL's clients are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community, by virtue of their immigration status and the restrictions that entails. However, they are also some of the most resilient and inspiring people I have ever met. No one chooses a dangerous journey or destitution in the UK if what they are leaving behind isn't worse. The deaths of men, women and children in the English channel this year have been a devastating reflection on our society, and AFRIL has added its voice to the calls on government to increase safe routes of migration so that people are not forced into impossible situations. As I write this, the Nationality and Borders Bill is making its way through the House of Lords and worryingly seeks to further erode the protections available to people fleeing persecution. AFRIL will continue to add our voice, and more importantly amplify our clients' voices, to oppose these regressive steps.

At a local level this year, AFRIL's Food Bank pivoted to a delivery service thanks to our volunteer cyclists and drivers, and increased the number of families provided with essential food parcels almost twofold. Disruption to mainstream education has had a disproportionate impact on refugee and migrant children and our Rainbow Club supplementary school has seen an increase in registrations and need. Our Advice and Advocacy service is working with more clients with greater complexity of issues, and coming out of lockdowns has seen a sharp rise in crisis situations such as families with children being made street homeless. Our new Immigration Advice partnership with Southwark Law Centre has been incredibly important in tackling the root cause of our families' poverty and exclusion. We have added an array of online wellbeing activities at the request of our clients, and the Allotment of Refuge has come into its own as a safe, green, welcoming space to build community and connections during this challenging time.

Looking back on this past year, we have been sprinting a marathon. AFRIL's staff and volunteer teams have been working tirelessly to meet the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants in south east London and beyond. Demand for services has increased substantially and we have not only responded to restrictions by dynamically adapting our service models, but we have supported more people than ever before. As a fresh pair of eyes, I am incredibly impressed with the resilience, commitment and passion of AFRIL staff and volunteers, who have kept our families afloat during this time. However, I am equally concerned about the human impact this has on individuals on the front line, at AFRIL and across the sector. This is a time for reflection, adjusting to the 'new normal' and ensuring that the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers is placed side by side with the wellbeing of our clients, so that we can continue to deliver the support to the people we serve and change lives for the better.

Looking forward, there are naturally challenges on the horizon. Although AFRIL secured some covid funding to meet the additional costs of services this year, we know that we need to work incredibly hard to secure the funds to ensure AFRIL can both continue to meet this increased need and is sustainable in the long term. However there is much to look forward to. This experience has brought us closer to our clients - we know them better and they trust us more. We have built a real community and we work together to ensure services are what our clients want and need. We have built strong, lasting partnerships in our locality and beyond and have confidence in our ability to adapt and thrive in adversity. I am so grateful to all our supporters and volunteers for making this possible and I hope you enjoy reading this report and reflecting on the successes of the past year, against the odds.

Sophie Wickham, Director

THE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT - AND THEIR NEEDS

The people we support are **first and foremost members of our community** - they are **mothers and fathers, daughters, sons, aunts and uncles**. However, their immigration status has come to be a defining factor in their lives. In this respect, the people we support fall into three categories: those **seeking asylum, recognised refugees and vulnerable migrants** who fall outside these categories. Many of the latter have outstanding protection issues, including issues around **gender based violence and trafficking**, but were unable to successfully claim asylum due to complexity and the culture of disbelief in the system, and who are now on a longer route to settlement due to having children in the UK.

This year we worked predominantly with **families headed by single mothers**, the common thread being that their **immigration status negatively impacts upon their lives**, in particular their ability to access housing and income and to integrate into the community. Part of our work is to support the wider community to understand the problems that our service users face, and provide opportunities for integration and joint community activities in order to develop a local movement of solidarity and ensure that the people we support can not only access the support that they need, but feel like they belong.

Immigration status

On first approaching AFRIL **75% of families had insecure immigration status** - most with complex immigration problems, human rights issues or outstanding protection needs yet had an asylum claim refused. 26% of them had Limited Leave to Remain for up to 2.5 years with a No Recourse to Public Funds condition; but arrived at AFRIL with time running out and no income to be able to pay the Home Office fees to apply to extend it. **10% were resettled refugees from Syria**. Of those with insecure immigration status when they first accessed our services, **51% had no legal representation** due to the huge cuts to the free legal advice sector since 2012.

The UK Immigration system is complex and difficult to navigate, and it is almost impossible to secure leave to remain without legal representation. The majority of our clients fear detention and removal, including being separated from their children if they disclose their immigration status.

Income and Housing

Families come to AFRIL with a multitude of issues:

For those with insecure immigration and housing, their primary concerns are to be able to provide a safe place for their children to sleep and food on the table.

On first accessing AFRIL services **77% of families were on an extremely low income; 39% had no income whatsoever**, reliant fully on borrowing from friends or acquaintances.

63% were without settled housing:

- **11%** of clients were living in asylum support accommodation, most on a full board basis in a local hotel requisitioned by the Home Office for asylum seekers. These clients were temporarily housed there under section 98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and did not know if or when they would be moved on a no choice basis to a different part of the country.
- **54% of families were in insecure or unsafe housing situations**, living with friends or acquaintances, illegally renting or in temporary accommodation. Several were 'sofa surfing' and living hand to mouth. **6% were street homeless**.

Those with refugee status have an uphill struggle to adjust to life in an unfamiliar environment, often being forced to transition from a successful profession or trade in Syria to unemployment in London. Those families granted refugee status after years in limbo, after the initial euphoria, have a harsh reality to contend with. They usually have 28 days to leave their accommodation but need to wait six weeks for Universal Credit;

often, this is not explained to them, so we pick up families who have become destitute and in debt despite securing status.

On top of this, many parents tell us they are concerned about being able to support their children in Education when they do not speak English well or understand the UK education system.

We asked our clients: Is there anything worrying you?

"Been in UK for over 10 years. Children need to be free to access employment and facilities like other children. They are affected mentally by the situation."

"My son, he has special needs. I am happy he is allowed to stay at Rainbow Club. He is having difficulties in his school, they send him in detention [sic]. I am not happy about it and it worries me."

"We moved too much. cramped conditions, no where for the children to play, in one room."

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

119

TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED

259

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE HELPED

1,638

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD PARCELS DISTRIBUTED

99

CHILDREN AT RAINBOW CLUB

94%

OF CHILDREN SAY THEIR MATHS HAS IMPROVED AT RAINBOW CLUB

40

HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED WITH IN DEPTH ADVICE AND ADVOCACY

22

IMMIGRATION ADVICE/ REPRESENTATION CASES

43%

OF CLIENTS REPORTED INCREASED CONFIDENCE SINCE COMING TO AFRIL

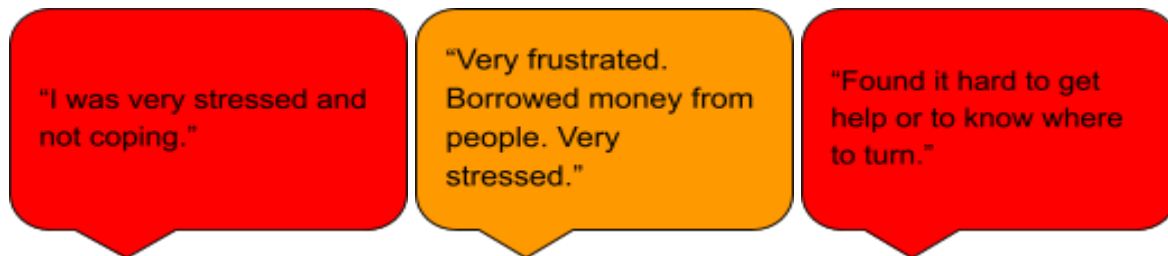
OUR IMPACT - WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

Overview: In 2020-2021, AFRIL supported 259 individuals from 119 families. 127 of these were children and many clients were accessing multiple services. We have seen the need in our community increase this year, both in terms of number of people and complexity.

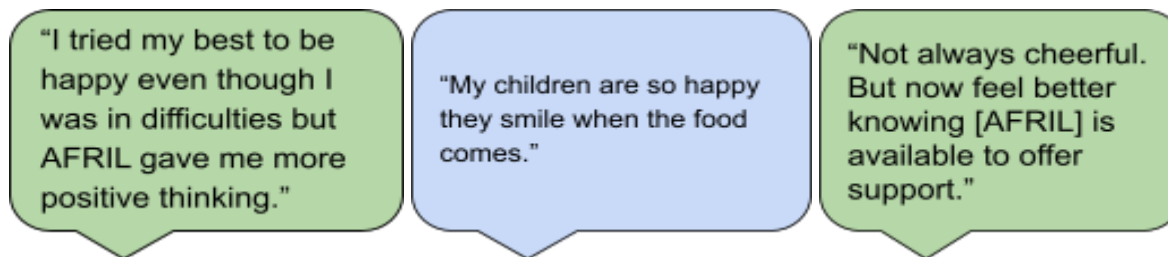
Our Rainbow Club supplementary school provided specialist supplementary education to 99 children from 59 families from early years to 11 years old. This represents a 24% increase on the previous year. Our Helping Hands Foodbank supported 163 adults and children from 62 families. This represents a 48% increase from the end of last year. Our Advice and Advocacy Service has supported 40 families with complex practical issues: each family has on average 4 interlinked matters that need to be resolved. This represents a 53% increase on the previous year. Between January and May 2021, our new Immigration Advice Service provided specialist advice and representation to 10 clients with 16 dependents, and provided an in-depth assessment and detailed one off advice to an additional 12 clients and their families.

Our clients talk about the impact of coming to AFRIL

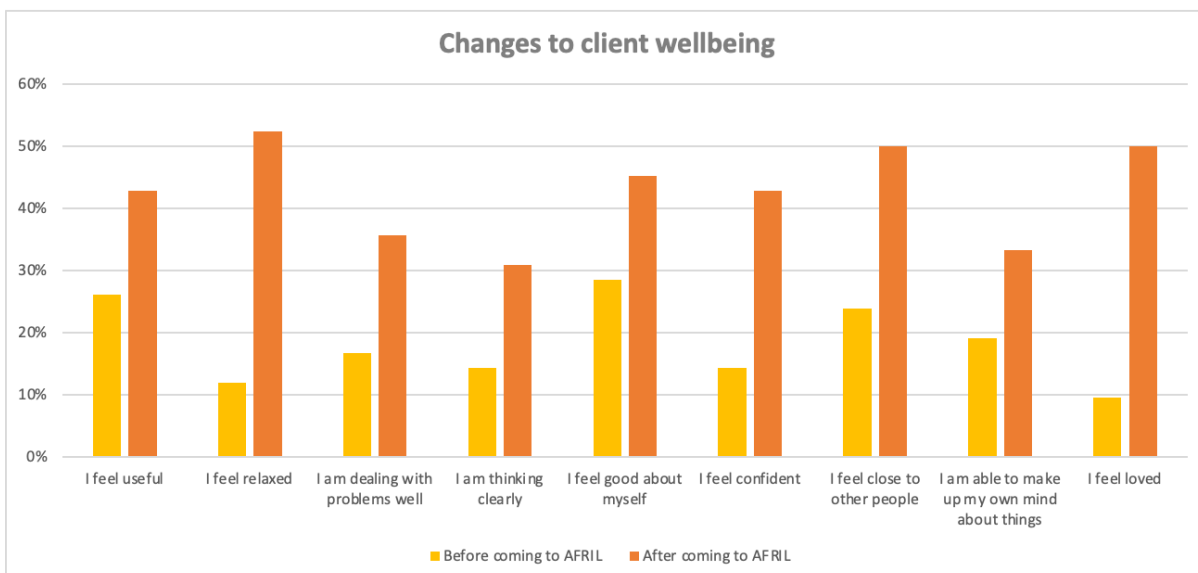
Before coming to AFRIL:



Now that I am with AFRIL:



As well as resolving the acute practical issues our clients face, AFRIL works to improve their emotional wellbeing and resilience. Our annual evaluation project asked AFRIL clients to describe their feelings of wellbeing before and after accessing AFRIL services.



FOOD BANK PROGRAMME



AFRIL's weekly Saturday Helping Hands Foodbank is run in partnership with Good Shepherd St Peter's church, Lee.

"It's not the food, although that is important of course, it's the welcome, knowing you care."

This, in part, answers the question of why we don't just provide a food voucher to every refugee family in need. **The food is the beginning** but the welcome, consistent concern and wrap-around service is what makes the food bank more than just a parcel of healthy food.

"You are friendly, your concern, I see it in your face."

Over the last year during the pandemic AFRIL's food bank programme has **supported some of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised members of our local community**. As one of the few food banks dedicated to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants with no recourse to public funds, our reach is much wider than Lewisham borough. This year we have supported **75 adults** and **88 children**. Most of our families live in Lewisham, Greenwich and Bromley but some travel from other London boroughs. Our Food bank members are asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants or refugees experiencing food poverty. All the families registered with the food bank have fled persecution at home and have sought sanctuary in the UK. Foodbank support begins with **weekly food parcels including fresh fruit and vegetables and toiletries, nappies, baby wipes and sanitary towels**, but also includes well-being activities for adults and children, letters in support of immigration applications and signposting to partner services.

2020-2021 in numbers:

62 HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED **163** TOTAL PEOPLE HELPED

1,638 FOOD PARCELS DELIVERED BY **52** VOLUNTEERS

We began the year still in Lockdown with the doors of the foodbank at St Peter's church sadly still firmly closed. Our foodbank team **worked in partnership** with colleagues from Lewisham COVID food group Network and out of borough mainstream food banks to ensure all our Foodbank clients received a weekly food parcel delivery or a welfare payment so they could shop locally. As lockdown continued, weekly check-in calls with each family became a crucial time to support their mental health, provide advice, signpost to online support and services and share the ups and downs of lockdown. With schools and drop in services closed, decisions about housing, finance and status being put on hold or severely delayed, many clients voiced a sense of **disconnect and isolation** and a feeling of being abandoned. Several mums with pre-school children told us that AFRIL was the one service that was still taking care and **often the only person they spoke to all week**.

“When I was lost and I was introduced to AFRIL God keep blessing you. You kept bringing, organising, ringing. I really appreciate.”

In August 2020 we reopened the ‘new look’ food bank as a **doorstep delivery offer**. The Good Shepherd church volunteer team began packing food parcels again, we became experts at juggling online shopping, and local people, happy to get out and away from their screens and feel purposeful, joined the foodbank team as **volunteer cyclists and drivers** to help deliver food parcels and covid safety essentials to families.

In addition to our core service, from November 2020 to April 2021 the foodbank participated in the **UNICEF frozen food project**. Our food bank volunteers helped deliver **216 additional frozen meals** to families. This provided a pre-prepared ‘take away’ meal for families in need and helped with stretched budgets.

One of the unintended consequences of lockdown is that our Food bank team has got to know our clients better and developed a greater insight into their wider challenges beyond food poverty. As a result we have developed a **more holistic offer and sophisticated range of services**, whilst keeping to our core objectives. During this year we developed the wider **Food Bank Programme**, to include the established weekly food bank, a range of online wellbeing activities and the AFRIL Allotment of Refuge.



In response to client requests, we **partnered with GRACE AID charity** to provide a better pipeline for donated clothing and a **more dignified referral and appointment service** for food bank clients needing clothing and shoes. Perhaps the most immediate consequence of the pandemic was that most services went online. Lockdown gave us insight into the challenges many destitute face in having no WIFI and little funds to buy data and stay connected. The team partnered with HUBBUB phones and Catbytes device library to increase digital inclusion for clients through access to laptops, phones and free data.

The **art@home group** was our first experiment with online activities in June 2020 - a fortnightly art group developed as our first well-being activity to connect families together during Lockdown. We have an average of **10 participants** each time including 6 children, and delivered **24 sessions** in this period. This class has enabled a different relationship to develop between parents and children since the rest of week our (predominantly) single mothers have to focus on practical head of household work. We have observed the mutual peer support that has developed and during discussions about art, children and parents have had opportunities to share more about their lives and experiences and tools for resilience in a mutually supportive environment.

“You are always around for everyone. No matter your age, religion, your background.”

Learning from the art group helped us realise that almost any activity is possible to deliver online. Throughout the year foodbank staff, volunteers and partners have joined families in regular online art, **shared poetry reading, sewing crafts, cookery, and gardening groups**. Through these groups, we have shared **joy, concern, sadness, laughed, learned, surprised ourselves and shared tools of resilience**, and personal belief. Our volunteer cyclists and drivers joined in excitedly adding activity packs containing art, play, cookery or gardening materials and worksheets alongside food parcels and fruit and vegetables.

We ran **55 wellbeing sessions** in this year (in addition to the allotment gardening group):

- **30** individuals attended the **art** group this year
- **13** individuals participated in shared **poetry** reading sessions
- **11** individuals participated in an online **cooking** class
- **7** individuals took part in an online **sewing** craft

Our **Allotment of Refuge** project to ‘relove’ our allotment began in December and has had an **incredible impact** on our families. As a welcoming green space, One Tree Hill allotment provides a place of calm for volunteers, staff and families. Together we remodelled the plot, created new raised beds, built a flexible-purpose shelter and most importantly shared our learning and knowledge about growing food.

Together we celebrated our first harvest. Whilst we were redesigning the site during lockdown, We ran **7 online ‘sofa gardening’** workshops for Foodbank and Rainbow Club children to bring the allotment to their homes and encourage them to think about where food came from and start food growing projects at home. Once building work was done and COVID easing allowed, families began revisiting the plot. We delivered **11 gardening and nature workshops** for children and their families, enabling **62** children and their parents to learn about food growing and preserving nature. This would not have been possible without our **57** allotment volunteers and the plot holders and members of One Tree Hill Allotment Society who welcomed our families have actively supported our plans.



Our Tuesday and Saturday gardening teams are **integrated teams of AFRIL members, plot holders and local people.** Together they continue to add elements to the site (such as the gossip patch) and experiment with new planting (such as Yams and corn in our polytunnel).

This project has achieved true integration as demonstrated by the Allotment society now as a matter of course extending an invitation to AFRIL families to join in their calendar of events such as the annual open day, apple pressing day and Bonfire Night and annual wassailing blessing of the orchard. Our families take up these opportunities with enthusiasm because they feel welcome, safe and respected.

“Thank you for helping me fit in at AFRIL and for all the experiences I have gained here. I have had the best experience at AFRIL and I think that it is an amazing place! Congratulations on what you have achieved at the foodbank in recent years! I’m sure you will continue to help so many families for a long time to come.” Beth, Foodbank Programme volunteer

RAINBOW CLUB



Rainbow Club

The Rainbow Club Supplementary School welcomes **primary age children** from asylum seeking, refugee and vulnerable migrant backgrounds, supporting them to **excel in education and build confidence and wellbeing.**

Many Rainbow Club families are vulnerable and marginalised, and parents worry that they are unable to support their children in school as well as they would like to. A recent report from the Educational Policy Initiative

concluded that refugee and asylum seeking children in England are estimated to be 15.5 months behind non-migrant children in English and Maths GCSEs, and 17.3 months behind across all GCSE subjects.

(Hutchinson and Reader, 2021). **44% of Rainbow Club parents felt that they did not have a place they could ask for help if they were in difficulty.** 65% were not confident in helping children with homework with 48%



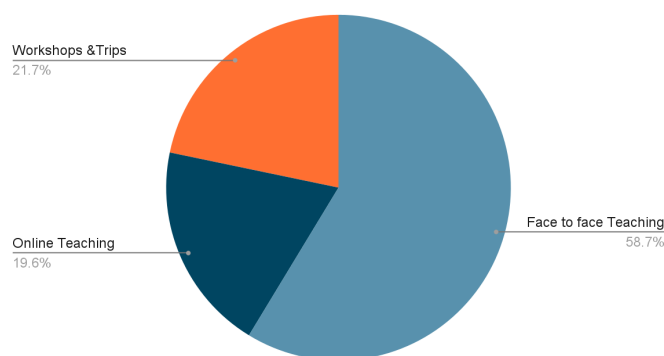
having little/no ability to read and write in English. **22% of children had a low level of English language capability on registration.**

72% of parents identified barriers to integrating into the community including language, poverty, lack of access to services and fear of drawing attention to their immigration status. 18% of families are living in temporary accommodation, 11% are reliant solely on family/friends for support and 41% are in receipt of local authority housing, many under section 17 of the Children's Act. **21% have no recourse to public funds** meaning that they cannot claim benefits or housing assistance. The rest have extremely low incomes. We have seen families living in temporary or social services accommodation be moved significant distances at short notice and we see mothers skipping meals in order to pay the bus fare to keep their children in school.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, Rainbow Club provided specialist supplementary education to **99 children** (59 families) from early years to 11 years old. This represents a **24% increase** on the previous year.

99 CHILDREN **270 LEARNING PACKS POSTED** **60 HOURS ENGLISH/MATHS PER CHILD**

Rainbow Club: Over 46 weeks



What a Saturday school day looks like:

- Breakfast
- Classroom time: 3 classes
- Maths and English tuition
- Sports lessons
- Arts and Crafts
- Musical instrument lessons
- Fun and Friends!

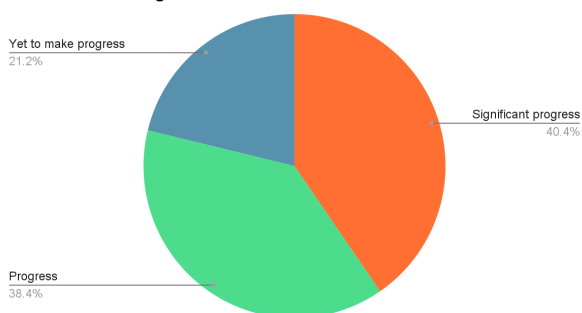
The school year started with face to face provision each Saturday, with our **expert teachers providing English and Maths tuition to all children**, enhancing their progress within the national curriculum. Creative expression is an important feature of education for our children, with additional **weekly art, music and sports** sessions. Older children have the opportunity to take **musical instrument lessons** through our partners Fairbeats. Each term we organise a **fun educational trip**, this year saw outings when covid restrictions allowed to the Migration Museum and the National Maritime Museum, alongside a series of food growing workshops at AFRL's Allotment of Refuge. In addition, Rainbow Club children participated in a drama workshop with Rose Bruford College, a local drama school, and had a fantastic outdoor performance from the Flying Seagulls Circus Project.

Between April and November **we pivoted to remote learning** due to the Covid 19 pandemic and government lockdowns. Home learning packs were regularly sent out to each family with English and Maths worksheets, as well as Art materials. Every Saturday, children joined Zoom sessions with their class teachers to review their work. We focused on small group sessions to retain attention and actively adjusted our model of teaching and assessment based on ongoing learning of what worked best for students. Volunteer teaching assistants provided reading sessions, using **online eBook libraries** that children could then access themselves to continue reading during the week. Our Art teacher **recorded instructional videos** that were uploaded for the children to follow at home. Fairbeats, our music partners, held their music sessions online as well, and **posted out 35 ukuleles and fifes** for the children's instrument lessons. During lockdown we remained in regular contact with parents and were grateful to receive **20 tablets** with 6 months free data from the Good Things Foundation as part of their 'Everyone Connected' initiative, in partnership with

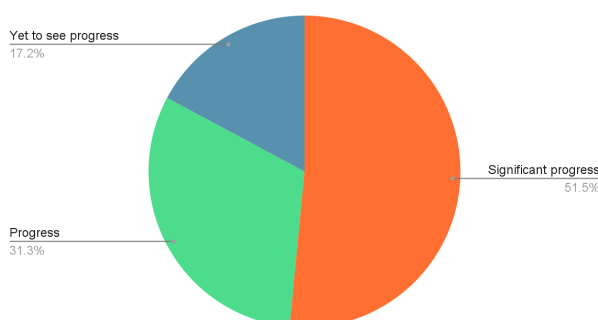
Children in Need and Vodafone, to improve digital access for families. These devices were crucial in helping families to access not only our online Rainbow Club sessions, but also for their mainstream schools where children were regularly having to isolate.

The UK Poverty Report 2020/21 published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that **people already experiencing poverty were disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic**. This has been born out by our experience working with disadvantaged families at AFRIL. Covid-19 restrictions had a significant impact on the progress of our students: **39% found lockdown hard** because they were not able to get help with Maths and English as much as they would have done when the school was open, and **36% missed their teachers**. In addition, when asked what was difficult about home learning, 49% said not seeing their friends, showing the importance of peer support in learning environments, and **15% said not having enough reading books at home**. AFRIL has a collection of donated books that we regularly offer to children to take home after Rainbow Club.

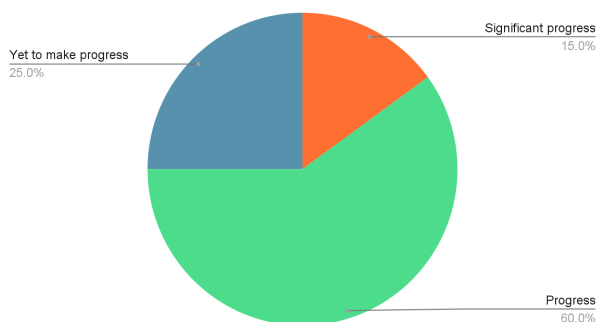
Attainment in English and Maths



Confidence and self esteem



Raising aspirations: forming them and reaching them.



Despite the incredible challenges of the pandemic, we have seen improvements in Maths and English across all classes. The majority of students have made significant progress. For some children, this means that they have advanced beyond expected attainment levels for their age group; for others, starting from a baseline of little or no English language they have still made gains.

Most students made progress during the period of remote learning although some made just a little or in a couple of cases took a step back. This was due to a variety of factors including family pressures of insecure housing or increased poverty. For many, it was difficult to concentrate with the whole family in one room. We worked closely with AFRIL's Food Bank to support families. We adapted our model, alternating and staggering subjects and music lessons, as siblings often shared the same device, and worked in smaller groups. When face-to-face resumed, teachers reassessed pupil attainment levels and worked hard to target resources and support to those children who needed to catch up.

We take applications/referrals for Rainbow Club throughout the year. Those students who were yet to make progress at the end of the year were mostly new students to the school. This year we have more children with Special Educational Needs; some are statemented and others awaiting statementing. Again, their gains may have been less dramatic, but we have seen the majority move forward.

94% of children surveyed felt that their Maths had improved this year

85% felt that their English had improved this year

We have seen positive developments in confidence and self-esteem across all age groups, despite the baseline issues our children face, and the impact of Covid-19 restrictions in the middle part of the year. For children living in poverty and poor quality housing, the impact of parental uncertainty and stress with regards to immigration status, and for whom English may not be a first language, self-esteem and confidence can be significant issues and impact on their educational attainment. We see that improvements in English and Maths attainment improve self esteem. The space outside core subjects where children can work collaboratively and creatively is equally important. Children have weekly sports and arts and crafts activities with a focus on teamwork and problem solving. Children gain recognition for their soft skills and support for others such as a kind act or volunteering to help with a group task. These instances add up to enhance the children's overall confidence and individual development.

There was **100% positive feedback** from the children surveyed about the classroom environment: they felt **learning was fun, fair and that they felt able to ask questions** to their teachers and assistants.



Providing students with the knowledge and experience to form and subsequently fulfill their aspirations is a priority at Rainbow Club. In this outcome, we have noticed a direct correlation between attendance and progress. Trips had to be put on hold during times of lockdown and reconfigured to make them safe once restrictions were lifted. During the period of remote learning, opportunities to interact with our volunteer team were more limited. Our volunteers bring and proactively share their wide range of professional and personal experiences with the students to support the development of aspirations. This said, we worked hard to maintain the fun of Rainbow Club to keep students engaged so that once we could resume our full programme of activities. We are delighted to have had such great collaborations and partnerships this year, despite Covid restrictions, giving Rainbow Club families chances to explore new opportunities and environments.

90% of parents surveyed stated that coming to Rainbow Club had been beneficial for their child. Parents noted that they had improved their capacity to support their children to develop and pursue aspirations, even within the context of lockdown, supported by our work to provide personalised resources for each family and to develop parents' skills, knowledge of the UK education system and social connections through AFRI's Parents' Forum.

CASE STUDY

When Amanda (not her real name) first joined the Rainbow Club during lockdown she was quiet and timid, but over the course of the year she has grown in confidence. She met her teachers and peers online due to covid restrictions. When we resumed face-to-face teaching, Amanda was excited to finally meet them in person and thrived. In our end of year pupil questionnaire she said her favourite thing about Rainbow Club was "*seeing her lovely teachers*". Amanda has to travel quite a distance to attend each week, yet her attendance is impeccable. Her mother has commented on how much they value the service which is why they are so committed to the journey.

ADVICE AND ADVOCACY SERVICE



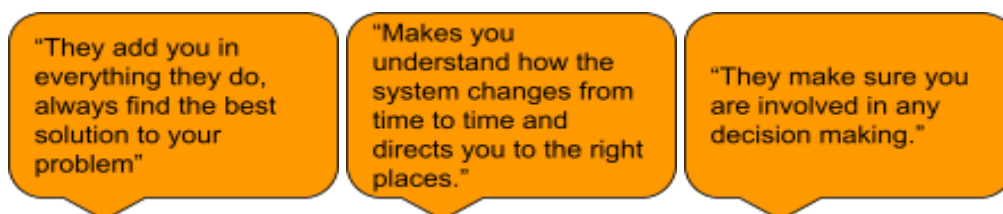
Our clients face a range of practical difficulties arising from immigration status, which need to be resolved through holistic support. Our Advice and Advocacy Officer conducts confidential in depth assessments and work plans in partnership with clients to resolve complex issues.

Last year across our Advice and Advocacy Service we worked with **40 clients with an average of four cases each** to be resolved. This work focussed on individuals who were particularly vulnerable, often due to poor health, trauma or language issues.

The key issues are access to appropriate income and accommodation. All of our clients, except resettled refugees, have no recourse to public funds so cannot access mainstream government support. Some women remain in abusive relationships as this is their only source of housing and food. Our Advice worker **advocates** to Social Service to conduct child in need assessments and provide emergency accommodation where there are children involved, **provides destitution payments** for food and essential items, **makes referrals** for Immigration Advice, and makes requests for the NRPF condition to be removed from grants of temporary leave. This is alongside **registering children in school**, negotiating discretionary **free school meals**, and **supporting clients to understand** the entitlements and limitations on their access to healthcare. For clients granted refugee status, we assist them to get National Insurance numbers, **apply for welfare benefits**, access employment and training opportunities, **make budgeting plans** and access specialised debt and legal advice.

We take an empowerment approach to advice and advocacy, respecting our clients' agency and capabilities. We will spend longer with a client and coach them through completing an online benefits application, rather than default to doing it for them. In this way we support our clients from dependence to independence.

When asked about their experience of our Advice and Advocacy Service, our clients said:



Over the lockdown period, AFRIL transitioned to providing support to our total client group of 150 individuals and families via weekly welfare calls. As part of this, our Advice and Advice and Advocacy Officer acted as a resource to support non-advice members of staff to build their understanding of the issues faced by the client group, and to make appropriate, targeted referrals. This enabled us to increase the reach of our Advice and Advocacy Service at a time when many of our clients were disproportionately affected by the restrictions and we faced increased demand for our services.

CASE STUDY

Grace (not her real name) and her 3 children had been staying with a friend during the pandemic and was struggling to feed her children, having no recourse to public funds or permission to work. When collecting a food parcel she told us the friend had asked them to leave as she could not afford to support them anymore. The family returned to the house to find all their belongings outside. AFRIL's advice and advocacy officer made an urgent referral to the local authority on the basis of children having been made homeless. After many telephone calls and emails, the local authority provided emergency accommodation. We made an emergency food payment from our destitution fund so the family could eat that day and get the bus to the temporary accommodation. We called Grace the next morning to discover the accommodation was without bedding or equipment so the children had to sleep under their coats. We secured linen donations and purchased pillows the same day. Our advice worker spoke to the school and secured discretionary free school meals and made a referral to our Immigration Solicitor to look into options for regularising her immigration status.

IMMIGRATION ADVICE SERVICE

As part of our work to offer the best possible advice and advocacy to this vulnerable group, and to help **resolve the underlying issues** that prevent clients from supporting themselves independently, we have worked to develop and strengthen partnerships locally and across London. This has resulted in an Immigration project funded by Trust for London and **in partnership with Southwark Law Centre** that enables AFRIL clients to access quality, free, asylum and immigration advice and representation.

Launched in January 2020, in its first 5 months **10 clients** and their **16 dependents** were provided with good quality advice and **representation in their immigration cases**, to prepare and submit applications for leave to remain. In addition, **12** clients were provided with an in depth assessment and detailed advice on their immigration situation. All **22** clients expressed that following the service they now **understood their immigration status** and the restrictions that this entails.

Families and individuals accessing the Immigration service are in a range of situations, including

- **Families with long unresolved status in the UK**, or **temporary leave that expired** or was soon to expire, with a NRPF condition. Most of these clients have private and family life grounds to regularise their status - either applying for leave for the first time or an extension of previous leave with an application for a fee waiver for those on very low incomes. Many of these families had been previously operating 'underground' - the only contact with authorities being the child attending a school - for fear of detention and removal, including being separated from their children.
- **Asylum applicants**, many of whom are being housed in Pentland House, the Lewisham hotel requisitioned by the Home Office for new arrivals to the UK. There are currently significant Home Office delays – none of these clients have as yet even had their initial asylum interview.
- **Victims of modern slavery**
- Other **human rights** issues engaging Article 8, Article 3, trafficking and fleeing gang violence in countries without a government framework for protection.

Unrestricted by the legal aid fee system, the Project Solicitor is able to dig deeper into **complex cases** and make applications to the Home Office to regularise immigration status. We apply for application **fee waivers**, a major barrier for destitute clients and is our gateway to quick referrals to housing solicitors, and have a **100% success rate** in this. **To date there have been no decisions on the substantive applications** to regularise status, due to Home Office delays.

We **share our experience and best practice** with other organisations and the second year of the project will see an increase in second tier capacity building work to support the development of immigration advice provision in the borough.

CASE STUDY

Fatima (not her real name) and her 7 year old son were homeless and destitute when they approached AFRIL. With no recourse to public funds she had been relying on informal support from friends and church since her child was born. There was strong circumstantial evidence and trafficking indicators. Fatima had no solicitor. AFRIL's food bank provided a weekly parcel of food, toiletries and covid safety items like facemasks whilst our Immigration solicitor assessed her case. He identified strong human rights grounds and made an application to regularise her status in the UK. The Home Office fee was a barrier so we applied for a fee waiver, which was granted. AFRIL worked in partnership with a specialist agency and secured the client and her child safe housing and income support from the local authority. Fatima is now in a position to join more wellbeing activities and her son is thriving at Rainbow Club.

THE AFRIL TEAM

STAFF AND TRUSTEES 2020-2021

Director: Katie Commons (February 2020 - September 2021), Sophie Wickham (from September 2021)

Food Bank Director: Helen Mason; **Education Coordinator:** Kieran Tang-Wright; **Advice and Advocacy Officer:** Shahazad Magrabi; **Food Bank Administrator:** Kate Charlotte Hashimi; **Rainbow Club Classroom Teachers:** Ruth Michaels; Ndaiziyei Murimba; Vita Baliaj; **Rainbow Club Subject Teachers:** Moses Olu Mason, Melanie Pearl Hering.

Board of Trustees: Gareth Redmond-King (Chair), Sonali Banerjee, Alexandra Braun-Woodbury, Divaughn Burnett, Margaret Ruth Gravelle, Michael Hargadon, Samantha Reyes Ronso, Ronald Tran.

We would not be able to deliver the breadth or quality of services we do without our **amazing team of volunteers**. Thank you to everyone who donates their time to AFRIL.

FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER

Jon Cooley on his experience volunteering with AFRIL

“I’ve been a regular volunteer driver with AFRIL since October 2020. I’d previously been a sponsor of AFRIL as I’d been very impressed by the great work they were undertaking with refugee families within the borough. The impulse to assist as a driver came about because of Covid, where in common with many people I felt a need to be more personally involved in activities benefiting the local community. To be fair I also had significantly more time on my hands, as my activities as a musician had hit a brick wall. So AFRIL became part of a portfolio of volunteering including assisting another local food bank and doing shifts at a vaccination centre. These provided a much needed structure to the week plus a source of social interaction, which for us retired folk ain’t a bad thing.

There have been two main activities. On Fridays I have been collecting food from Ewart Hall Hub in Forest Hill, run by the great team of Laura, Louise, Joy, Everton and others, to take to St Peters in Lee for Angela’s skilled collation. These comprise allocations from Felix Fareshare and Cultural Foods. The Skoda is usually packed to the roof. On Saturdays I have been an occasional delivery driver from St Peters to individual families round Lewisham and neighbouring boroughs. This is a great chance to very briefly meet AFRIL’s clients, improve navigation skills and observe the progress of the seasons.

Looking back over this time two things stand out; firstly how time has flown by – I can’t believe sixteen months have passed. Secondly, what a great bunch of people are involved in AFRIL and Ewart Hall. All totally committed, whatever the weather, and brilliant company.”

Thank you to our funders, supporters, partners and all who have supported our work this year.

Church of the Good Shepherd with St Peter, Lee - our amazing food bank partners

St Saviour’s School - our wonderful Rainbow Club partners

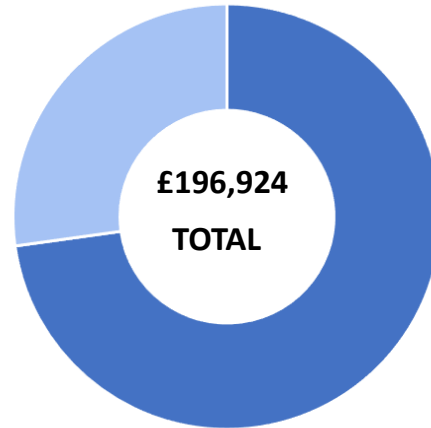
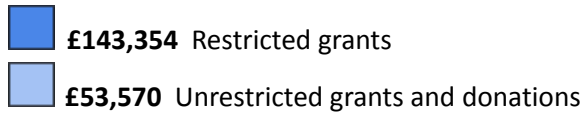
Southwark Law Centre - our fantastic Immigration Advice Service partners.

Over this period we have been **very grateful** for financial support from all our **individual and community fundraisers** including everyone who contributed to our Big Give campaigns, Blackheath Quakers, South-East London Humanists, Dulwich College and Prendergast School.

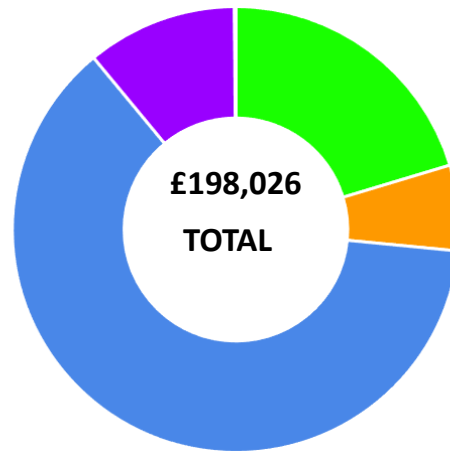
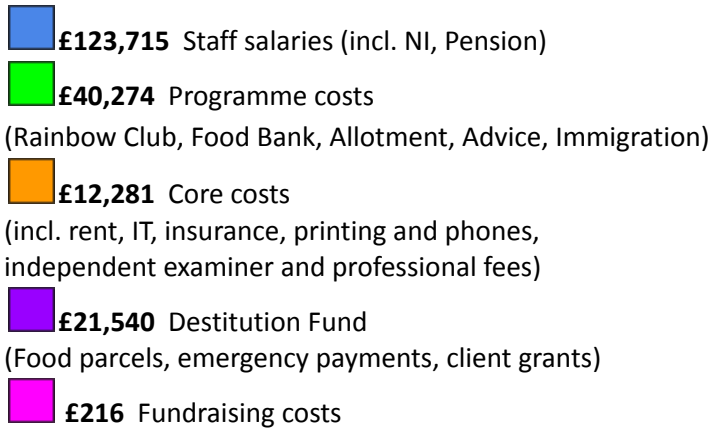
We would like to **thank our Trust Funders:** 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, BBC Children in Need, The Childhood Trust, The Charities Aid Foundation, Centre for Investigative Journalism, Feminist Review Trust, Greater London Authority, Groundwork London - Grow Back Greener, Henry Smith Charity, Leathersellers Charitable Trust, London Churches Refugee Fund, National Lottery Communities Fund, The Respond and Adapt Programme, Trust for London and The Topinambour Trust.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME 2020-2021



EXPENDITURE 2020-2021



NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS: -£1,103

TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD ON 31 MAY 2021: £140,292 (£45,958 restricted)

The financial statements shown are a summarised version of the financial statements for the year ended 31st May 2021, independently examined. The full statutory report can be obtained by contacting AFRIL at:

Action for Refugees in Lewisham F3 Leamore Central Community Hub, Bonfield Road, Lewisham, SE13 5ES
Phone: 0208 297 4111; Email: info@afril.org.uk

Statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2021	2020
Income					
Donations and Grants		52,327	143,354	195,681	214,394
Interest		411	-	411	
Other Income		832		832	8,502
Total Income		<u>53,570</u>	<u>143,354</u>	<u>196,924</u>	<u>222,896</u>
Expenditure					
Cost of fundraising		£216	£0	£216	£490
Charitable activities		£5,561	£170,710	£176,271	£155,852
Grants paid to clients		£18,757	£2,783	£21,540	£8,789
Miscellaneous		£0	£0	£0	£1,107
Total Expenditure		<u>24,534</u>	<u>173,493</u>	<u>198,027</u>	<u>166,237</u>
Net Income (expenditure)		29,036	- 30,139	- 1,103	56,659
Transfer between funds		- 8,875	8,875	-	
Net movement in funds		20,161	- 21,264	- 1,103	56,659
Funds brought forward on 1 June 2020		74,173	67,222	141,395	84,736
Funds carried forward on 31 May 2021		94,334	45,958	140,292	141,395

Balance Sheet	Notes	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible fixed assets		1,456			1,942
Current assets					
Debtors		-			
Cash at bank		138,836		139,453	
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year					
Net current assets			138,836		139,453
Net assets			140,292		141,395
Funds					
Restricted Funds			94,334		67,222
Unrestricted Funds			45,958		74,173
			140,292		141,395

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by trustees on 31st January 2020 and signed on their behalf by



Gareth Redmond-King
Chair

PRINCIPLE ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are laid out below.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared for the year to 31 May 2019. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policies below or the notes to these 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 United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011. The date of transition to Charities SORP FRS 102 was 1 April 2014. The end of the accounting reference date in respect to the charity's last annual financial statements determined in accordance with the previous financial reporting framework was 31 May 2015. The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements are presented in sterling and are rounded to the nearest pound.

Reconciliation with previous Generally Accepted Accounting Practice

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees have considered whether in applying the accounting policies required by FRS 102 and the Charities SORP FRS 102 a restatement of comparative items was needed. Other than presentational adjustments to reanalyse expenditure for the year ended 31 May 2015 to accord with the format prescribed in the Charities SORP FRS 102, no further restatements were required. Specifically, governance costs which were previously reported as a separate line of expenditure within the statement of financial activities are now allocated to expenditure on charitable activities.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Preparation of the financial statements requires the Trustees and management to make significant judgements and estimates. The items in the financial statements where these judgements and estimates have been made include estimating the useful economic life of tangible fixed assets and determining the basis of allocation of support costs.

Assessment of going concern

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in preparing these financial statements. The Trustees have made this assessment in respect to a period of one year from the date of approval of these financial statements.

As at 31 May 2021 the charity had free reserves of £45,958 which is above the limit of the trustees' reserve policy of maintaining at least 3 months of core operating costs. The Trustees of the charity have concluded that there are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The Trustees are of the opinion that the charity will have sufficient resources to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

Income recognition

Income is recognised in the period in which the charity has entitlement to the income and the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Income comprises donations, grants and interest receivable. Donations are included in full in the statement of financial activities in the period in which the charity has entitlement to the income and the amount of income can be measured reliably and it is probable the income will be received. In accordance with the Charities SORP FRS 102 volunteer time is not recognised. Grants are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable, and conditions for receipt have been met. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil certain conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Expenditure recognition

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure comprises direct costs and support costs. All expenses, including support costs, are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings.

The classification between activities is as follows:

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure associated with generating voluntary income for the charity and a percentage of the general manager's cost based estimated time spent on fundraising activities. Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs associated with furthering the charitable purposes of the charity through the provision of its charitable activities. Such costs include direct and indirect expenditure. All expenditure is stated inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of the charity it is necessary to provide support in the form of personnel development, financial procedures, provision of office services and equipment and a suitable working environment. Governance costs comprise the costs involving the public accountability of the charity (including examiner costs) and costs in respect to its compliance with regulation and good practice. Governance costs are included as a specific category within support costs. Support costs are allocated to expenditure on charitable activities in the same proportion as the direct costs of each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Expenditure on the charity's equipment of less than £500 per item is expended in the year of purchase. Items over £500 are capitalised and are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Equipment —20% straight line

Debtors

Debtors are recognised at their settlement amount, less any provision for non-recoverability. Cash at bank and in hand represents such accounts and instruments that are available on demand or have a maturity of less than three months from the date of acquisition. Deposits for more than three months but less than one year have been disclosed as short term deposits. Cash placed on deposit for more than one year is disclosed as a fixed asset investment.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are recognised at the amount the charity anticipates it will pay to settle the debt. They have been discounted to the present value of the future cash payment where such discounting is material.

Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specified purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Pensions

Contributions to defined contribution pension schemes are charged to the statement of financial activities when they are payable to the plan or scheme. The charity's contributions are restricted to the contributions disclosed in note 4. The charity has no liability beyond making its contributions and paying across the deductions for the employees' contributions.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MAY 2021

1. INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 £	2020 £
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust		5,000	5,000	-
AB Charitable Trust		-		10,000
ARM Trust		-		20,000
BBC Children in Need grant 2017 - 19		-		6,081
BBC Children in Need grant 2019 - 21		38,069	38,069	31,560
BBC Children in Need Covid Booster Grant		2,750	2,750	-
BIG GIVE	16,135	-	16,135	5,587
CAF Covid-19 Grant	-	3,500	3,500	-
Centre for Investigative Journalism	750		750	-
Clothworkers Foundation		-		3,000
Coca Cola Covid-19 Response Fund		-		500
Co-operative Community Fund		-		4,789
Feminist Review Trust	-	500	500	-
Foyle Foundation		-		7,000
Garfield Weston Foundation		-		10,000
Greater London Authority		3,333	3,333	-
Greggs Foundation		-		1,960
Groundwork London - Grow Back Greener		4,104	4,104	-
Henry Smith Charity		20,000	20,000	-
Heritage Lottery Fund		-		9,900
Indigo Trust	-			2,000
JR & JM Penny Trust	-			650
Kusuma Trust	-			10,000
Leathersellers Charitable Fund		4,970	4,970	4,970
London Funders Covid-19 Response (Trust for		-	-	3,900
London Funders Covid-19 Response (London		-	-	10,263
London Catalyst Samaritan Grant		-	-	1,000
London Churches Refugee Fund		1,750	1,750	1,500
Maudsley Charity		-	-	718
National Lottery Communities Fund		33,028	33,028	-
Neighbourly Covid-19 Response Fund		-	-	400
Northwick Trust	-			10,000
QSPW		-	-	3,000
Respond and Adapt		10,000	10,000	-
Richardson Family Trust	-		-	1,000
Tesco Bags of Help Covid-19 Response Fund		-	-	500
Trust for London Central Fund Grant 2017-2019		-	-	22,500
Trust for London Central Fund Grant 2020-22		16,250	16,250	
Woodward Charitable Trust		-	-	1,000
Individual and community donations	35,442	100	35,542	30,616
Other Income	832		832	8,502
Interest Income	411		411	
Total	53,570	143,354	196,924	222,896

2. RESOURCES EXPENDED

	Cost of generating funds	Charitable activities	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
Advice Project Costs		4330	4330	442
Core costs		8,949	8,949	15,039
Depreciation		486	486	755
Destitution Fund		21,540	21,540	8,396
Examiner's fee		525	525	175
Foodbank Project Costs		9,978	9,978	3,637
Fundraiser's/fundraising costs	216	-	216	490
Grants paid to clients		-		380
Immigration project with Southwark Law Centre		16,232	16,232	-
Insurance		632	632	560
Interpreting		836	836	-
Staff Salaries and oncosts		123,715	123,715	116,345
Miscellaneous		-		1,107
Rainbow Club Project Costs		7,212	7,212	17,987
Training		1,689	1,689	255
Travel & transport		-		35
Volunteer expenses				635
Wellbeing Projects: Allotment of Refuge and Art projects		1,686	1,686	-
2021 Total resources expended	216	197,810	198,026	166,237
2020 Total resources expended	490	165,747	166,237	
		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
2021 Total funds		24,534	173,493	198,027
2020 Total funds		22,574	143,663	166,237

3. NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Staff costs (note 4)	123,715	116,345
Depreciation (note 5)	486	755
Independent examiner's fee	<u>525</u>	<u>525</u>
	124,725	117,625

4. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs during the year were:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and wages	119,821	112,500
Pensions	<u>3,894</u>	<u>3,845</u>
	<u>123,715</u>	<u>116,345</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 (2020 - £nil). The average number of employees during the year, calculated on the basis on full time equivalents was 3.2 (2020: 3.1). The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The annual contribution made by the charity to the scheme is £3,894 (2020 —£3,845). The Trustees consider that they, together with the General Manager of the charity, are the key management of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. The total remuneration of key management personnel during the year was £23,575 (2020— £20,281) and total employer's national insurance contributions in respect to these individuals amounted to £3,945. No Trustee received any remuneration during the year (2020 —£nil). No trustees were reimbursed travel or other costs during the year (2020— £nil).

5. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office equipment
Cost at 1 June 2020	6,665
Additions during the year	-
Cost at 31 May 2021	6,665
Accumulated depreciation	
At 1 June 2020	4,723
Charge for the year	486
At 31 May 2021	5,209
Net book values	
At 1 June 2020	1,942
At 31 May 2021	1,456

6. DEBTORS

Debtors	2021	2020
Receivables	-	0

7. CREDITORS

	2021	2020
Payments in excess of petty cash	0	0
Accrued expenditure	0	0
Social security and other taxes	0	0

8. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

Funds balances as at 31 May 2020 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
Fixed assets	1,456		1,456
Current assets	92,878	45,958	138,836
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-		-
	94,334	45,958	140,292

9. FUNDS

Restricted Funds	As at 1 June 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers between funds	As at 31 May 2021
Advice Service	7,500	-	7,500		-
Client grants	150	-	-		150
Community Education in Lewisham	7,756	-			7,756
Core costs	16,036	61,361	51,711		25,686
Covid-19 response	12,863	16,250	29,113		-
Destitution Fund	1,633	1,750	2,783		600
Foodbank	2,668	4,704	25,084	8875	8,837
Heritage Lottery - Rainbow Club Storytell	9,230		3,080		6,150
Immigration Project with SLC	-	16,250	16,250		-
Monitoring & Evaluation	3,850	-	-		3,850
Office equipment	566	-			566
Rainbow Club	4,970	43,039	37,972		10,037
Total restricted funds	67,222	143,354	173,493	8875	45,958
Unrestricted funds	74,173	53,570	24,534	-8875	94,334
Total funds	141,395	196,924	198,027	0	140,292



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Action for Refugees in Lewisham

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st May 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1116344

Set out on pages

1

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 05 / 2021**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Nathaniel Appiyah

Date:

14/01/2022

Name:

Nathaniel Appiyah ACMA

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANTS

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