

Charity registration number 1153220

PRO BONO COMMUNITY
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Livia Velicu (Chair) Omar Qadir (Treasurer) The Honourable Mr Justice Adam Johnson Daniel Laking Claire Marshall Harriet Hall Steve Levett (Resigned 2 May 2024) Kanav Kothari (Appointed on 23 April 2025)
Senior Management:	Bill Skirrow – Executive Director
Charity number	1153220
Registered office	93 Tabernacle Street London EC2A 4BA
Correspondence Address:	93 Tabernacle Street London EC2A 4BA
Independent examiner	David Terry FCA Ramon Lee Ltd Chartered Accountants 93 Tabernacle Street London EC2A 4BA
Bankers	Triodos Bank Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AS

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

CONTENTS

	Page
Trustees' report	1 - 10
Independent examiner's report	11
Statement of financial activities	12
Balance sheet	13
Notes to the financial statements	14 - 23

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 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 constitution, 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).

Objectives and activities

Purposes of the charity

As set out in its constitution, Pro Bono Community's overarching purpose is to improve access to justice through legal education, for the public benefit. Pro Bono Community's objects are for the public benefit:

- The advancement of legal education and the study of law;
- The prevention and relief of poverty, hardship and distress through the promotion of effective legal education and training in the areas of law most likely to affect those in poverty or need and to the benefit of those in poverty or need and the provision of free legal advice and assistance to people who are unable to afford to pay for such advice; and
- The promotion of the sound administration and development of the law.

Aims and Objectives

Pro Bono Community ('PBC') is a registered charity which provides specialist training to equip lawyers, trainees and law students with the skills and expertise to become effective volunteers, before placing them in advice agencies and clinics. By training volunteers and providing them with volunteering placements, we aim to increase the amount – and improve the quality – of free legal advice, in the areas of law most affecting those in need.

We have developed rigorous, specialised training courses, which are delivered by experts in the relevant field. These courses, some of which are integrated into university undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, aim to improve the quality of education in the advice sector in general.

We also arrange placements for the volunteers in advice agencies, and seek to help those organisations overcome the constraints on their capacity to use more volunteers effectively. Attendees of PBC's training gain valuable skills and experience in areas of the law they are unlikely to have come across either in law school or practice. We hope that our training will serve to embed pro bono culture in the hearts and minds of young lawyers and that many of them will go on to become champions for volunteering and pro bono work in their future careers. We are increasingly making use of technology in innovative ways to achieve our aims as well as looking at ways in which the charity can become more directly involved in the delivery of advice.

The charity's key goals over the past year were to:

- Build on the success of the previous five-year student volunteer training and placement project funded by City Bridge Trust and deliver the target outputs over the first year of a new five-year programme funded by City Bridge Foundation.
- Consolidate the relationships with universities such as City University, LSE and SOAS and encourage others, particularly from outside London, to adopt similar models which are independently-funded and integrate PBC's training into mainstream legal education;
- Continue to expand PBC's activities outside London, particularly using the opportunity presented by the growth of remote working to link advice agencies in the regions with students based in London and elsewhere;
- Undertake grant projects which build on PBC's experience and expertise, particularly ones including dedicated resource for volunteer supervision and addressing the needs of people in poverty or need;
- Continue to refine the training material delivered by PBC and expand into new areas where a potential demand can be identified.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Main Activities

Overview: PBC's tenth full year of operations took place in the context of an ongoing cost-of-living crisis which placed continuing strain on advice agencies and the advice sector, in general. At the same time, the impact of the global pandemic on working practices became less pronounced as an increasing number of advice agencies returned to either office or hybrid working. Whilst most of PBC's training programmes continued to be delivered online, the majority of volunteering placements arranged by the charity were in-person for the first time since early 2020.

In the summer of 2023, we had managed to secure a new five-year grant from City Bridge Foundation for a series of student volunteer training and placement programmes providing volunteers for advice agencies within Greater London. This project follows the template of a successful scheme supported by City Bridge Trust and Therium Access between 2016 and 2022. These programmes provide a solid foundation for PBC's core activities, enabling the charity to forge relationships with new universities and build new income streams from directly-commissioned programmes and related activities.

PBC continued to deliver good outcomes through the Advice Connect digital advice project run in partnership with Citizens Advice Haringey which was extended until March 2024. Furthermore, we obtained a new grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to extend and broaden the scope of Advice Connect which was due to commence in September 2024. In September 2023, we paused the Remote Appeals Clinic run by PBC and funded by Trust for London in order to seek the additional funding required to operate the clinic on a sustainable basis. We were unable to obtain this additional funding and took the decision to wind the clinic up during late 2023 and close it in early 2024. In the year from September 2023, PBC trained cohorts of students from law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and universities including City University, LSE, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes, SOAS, King's College London, the University of Law, Royal Holloway University, BPP, Birkbeck and Queen Mary University. The income derived from sales to law firms and universities was supplemented by grant income from City Bridge Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Training: PBC has developed modular training courses in a variety of areas of social welfare law. PBC continued to refine its training by tailoring it to the particular needs of clients and partners and offering flexibility in terms of content, format, duration, schedule and venue. The training comprises a general introduction to legal advice and the practical skills involved in volunteering before going on to focus on specialist legal advice topics including welfare benefits, housing and employment law. In 2020, PBC had put considerable effort into making its existing training content suitable for digital learning and this investment continued to pay off in 2023-24 with most of our training being delivered online. PBC also sought to expand its network of freelance trainers.

Volunteers: 245 people attended PBC training programmes during the year. Most of these volunteers went on to undertake volunteering placements at advice agencies and play their part in addressing the need for free legal help, a demand which was exacerbated by the ongoing impact of the energy and cost-of-living crises, particularly in areas of social welfare law such as welfare benefits, housing and debt. In all cases, PBC facilitated these volunteering placements through the network of advice agencies with which it has developed relationships. Most advice agencies had developed systems to support remote volunteering placements by September 2022 and the majority continued to involve volunteers working remotely. However, by summer 2023 it was clear that advice agencies were beginning to return to office-based or hybrid working and, for the first time since early 2020, the majority of volunteers placed by PBC in 2023-24 undertook placements that were either in-person or hybrid. Nevertheless, the demand for remote volunteering placements remains significant as PBC works with an increasing number of universities outside London in regions where there are too few advice agencies to place all the volunteers locally.

Grant Projects: PBC's grant of £64,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund for the second year of a two-year digital advice project called "Advice Connect" run in partnership with Citizens Advice Haringey officially ended in September 2023. However, the Fund agreed to allow PBC to use a grant underspend to fund the project until the end of March 2024. In the 30 months to March 2024, the project met all its targets supporting 1,145 people with 2,089 separate issues, the majority of which were related to housing matters and associated problems. PBC subsequently submitted a new application to the National Lottery Community Fund for funding to extend and broaden the scope of Advice Connect which was successful and is due to commence on September 1st 2024.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

In 2022, PBC had obtained a grant of £45,000 per year from Trust for London to help support a two-year project delivering remote advice to clients requiring assistance with welfare benefits appeals. By the end of the project's first year it became apparent that the budget of £45,000 per annum was insufficient to operate the clinic on a long-term, sustainable basis. The decision was taken to pause the clinic in September 2023 and not to request the next grant payment then due until additional funding had been obtained either from Trust for London or elsewhere – this was determined by the trustees to be the only way to ensure continued operation of the clinic in an appropriate and sustainable manner. The charity was unable to gain this funding so took the decision to wind up the clinic in an orderly manner, ensuring that all clients whose cases had been accepted were either resolved or passed on to another advice agency (there was therefore no adverse impact on beneficiaries of the clinic, or the charity's reputation as a result of this). The clinic was officially closed in early 2024 but, during the period it had operated, resolved the cases of 40 clients who collectively generated financial gains of more than £200,000 directly as a result of the advice received through the PBC Remote Appeals Clinic.

In June 2023, PBC obtained a five-year grant of £36,000 per year from City Bridge Foundation to run a student volunteer training and placement programme that City Bridge Trust, as it was then known, had previously funded from 2016-21. During the first year of the project, PBC trained and placed 85 students from universities in London including University of Law, BPP, Royal Holloway, KCL, Birkbeck and Queen Mary. The volunteers exceeded the project's key targets, volunteering for over 4,000 hours in total and assisting more than 3,300 people in need of legal advice and support.

Accredited and Extra-Curricular Volunteer Training and Placement Programmes: PBC was re-commissioned for the seventh consecutive year by City University to deliver two credit-bearing Pro Bono Training modules as options within the University's undergraduate and postgraduate law degree programmes. The LLB module focused on legal advice and welfare benefits law whilst the LLM option featured welfare benefits and housing law as its specialist content. PBC delivered several other extra-curricular volunteer training and placement programmes which were independently-funded by LSE, SOAS, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes as well as law firm Freshfields.

Achievements and performance

Overview

During the year, 245 students attended PBC training programmes across 11 cohorts, the great majority of whom went on to undertake volunteering placements. Our online volunteering portal shows that these volunteers undertook more than 10,000 hours of volunteering during which time they assisted at least 7,500 people in need of legal advice and assistance. These figures exclude a substantial number of volunteers who undertook placements but failed to update their volunteer logs.

During the course of the year, PBC's volunteers were placed at the following Law Centres and advice agencies: Age UK Islington, Age UK Lambeth, Age UK Richmond, Agnes Smith Advice Centre, Arachne, Asylum Welcome, Barton Advice Centre, Cambridge House, Centre 70, Citizens Advice Barking & Dagenham, Citizens Advice Bedford, Citizens Advice Brent, Citizens Advice Hammersmith & Fulham, Citizens Advice Haringey, Citizens Advice Harrow, Citizens Advice Havering, Citizens Advice Kensington & Chelsea, Citizens Advice Oxford, Citizens Advice Peterborough, Citizens Advice Redbridge, Citizens Advice Southwark, Citizens Advice SORT, Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, Citizens Advice West Sussex, Citizens Advice Westminster, Debt Free London, Ealing Law Centre, Island Advice, Justice For Tenants, Limehouse Project, Plumstead Community Law Centre, South West London Law Centres, Southwark Pensioners, Sufra NW London, Waltham Forest Migrant Action, Wiltshire Law Centre and Youth Legal & Resource Centre.

The volunteers have undertaken a wide range of tasks depending on their skills, confidence, experience and the needs of the Law Centre or advice agency at which they are volunteering. The activities undertaken include fielding and triaging new clients, signposting or referring clients, manning reception, acting as first point of contact for clients and arranging appointments and answering calls. The volunteers have liaised with third parties on behalf of clients, either over the phone or through drafting correspondence, for example, to government departments and local authorities. Volunteers drafted client advice letters, submissions and letters to court, including PIP and ESA appeals to the Upper Tribunal. They provided case summaries and attendance notes for their supervisors and, under supervision, advice and information to clients on a range of legal issues. Volunteers interviewed and assessed clients, in order to effectively triage and identify next steps for the clients, and to assist them to complete forms such as PIP applications. Some volunteers attended outreach centres, including food banks and job centres, assisting clients with queries such as entitlement to food bank vouchers and welfare benefits.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Feedback from clients, agencies and volunteers included the following:

"Yes, very good and very helpful. Ashama was very helpful and so was Riyad. I am very thankful for what they have done, I am no longer stressed since this has now been sorted. Happy to say my debt relief order has been approved."

Client's Trustpilot review of PBC volunteers at Debt Free London

"The two PBC volunteers have been absolutely amazing: one volunteer was able to assist a very vulnerable client in the initial stages of a benefit application; this was an outstanding outcome for the client as they have been trying to get this assistance for a very long time. The other volunteer was very significant in assisting with a client getting representation at an employment hearing which is very likely to be successful."

Citizens Advice Barking & Dagenham

"The PBC volunteers assisted in gaining positive outcomes for clients, the advice centred on housing issues such as repairs and rights regarding eviction notices."

Citizens Advice Haringey

"Shahroz and Tahmim have been a great addition to our busy team and the clients they have supported have all been extremely happy with the professional service they received. Shahroz has taken on every challenge that we presented to him with willingness to contribute to the team whilst Tahmim approached each challenge with great drive and determination - she has shown exceptional leadership skills."

Southwark Pensioners

"All the students with whom we work have been utterly professional and focused in their approach." **Age UK Lambeth**

"All of our PBC volunteers have been amazing and have helped us in making our services more accessible for our users. Thank you PBC volunteers!"

Citizens Advice Harrow

"It has been deeply rewarding and fulfilling to be able to work within welfare benefits and contribute meaningfully to my community. It has also been a really enjoyable challenge to learn and develop in a new area of law."

Shirely-Anne Mason, PBC volunteer at Island Advice

"My volunteering placement with Justice for Tenants was an incredibly rewarding experience. The training provided by Pro Bono Community alone was hugely insightful, providing an overview of various legal issues affecting disadvantaged people, how these rules are applied, and the unfair outcomes which they tend to produce. With a heightened understanding of broad problems that university teaching is rarely able to provide, the volunteering placement then provides a platform to put this knowledge into action. At Justice for Tenants, I was able to gain valuable experience in communicating with clients, handling cases through various stages, and in practically applying the law to differing circumstances. Whilst I was well supported by the team, who were always on hand to answer queries, I eventually developed my own approach, with the importance of proactive approach being emphasised."

Fraser Hay, PBC volunteer at Justice For Tenants

"My volunteering experience has been incredibly rewarding. Although I was initially nervous about starting my first legal work experience in the UK, the comprehensive training provided by the scheme ensured I felt well-prepared. My team was extremely accommodating and supportive, assisting me with any issues that arose in my work. I find the work immensely fulfilling, especially knowing that it gives back to the community. Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed the scheme and hope to continue my volunteering after I graduate!"

Frances Bajaj, PBC volunteer at Citizens Advice Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale and Trafford

Deliver Target Outputs of Core Student Volunteer Training and Placement Programme

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

A key objective for the year 2023-24 was to deliver the target outputs of a student volunteer training and placement programme funded by City Bridge Foundation for five years from June 2023 and thus build on the success of a similar scheme funded by City Bridge Trust and Therium Access from 2016-22. During the first year of the project, PBC trained and placed 85 students from universities in London including University of Law, BPP, Royal Holloway, KCL, Birkbeck and Queen Mary. The volunteers exceeded the project's key targets, volunteering for over 4,000 hours in total and assisting more than 3,300 people in need of legal advice and support across 17 advice agencies throughout London.

Pre- and post-training questionnaires showed a 73% improvement in the participants' understanding of legal advice and welfare benefits law as a result of the training they received through PBC. Following the completion of the students' placements, a PBC survey showed that 90% of advice agencies agreed that the volunteers enabled them to spend more time on providing core services and allowed them to address clients' problems and progress cases more speedily, whilst all advice agencies who responded agreed that the scheme addressed a need for volunteers at the centre and that they would consider using volunteers from PBC again in the future.

Consolidate and Build Relationships with Universities

One of PBC's strategic objectives is to integrate our training into mainstream legal education, thus increasing the level of support advice agencies receive from well-trained and highly-motivated student volunteers, whilst also developing a positive attitude towards pro bono work in young lawyers and making social welfare law part of the curriculum.

The charity took an important step towards achieving this objective when it formed a partnership with City University whereby PBC delivered a credit-bearing, pro bono training module to City University's undergraduate law students from October 2017. In 2018-19, the university commissioned a second credit-bearing module for postgraduate students doing the LLM/BPTC. Both these modules have been re-commissioned every year since. PBC was also commissioned to deliver extra-curricular volunteer training and placement programmes in 2023-24 for LSE, SOAS, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University as well as for law firm Freshfields which commissioned a training and placement programme for its pre-trainees doing the GDL at BPP for the tenth consecutive year.

Expand PBC's Activities to New Regions

In previous years, PBC has struggled to develop sustainable relationships with advice agencies outside London because these were dependent on participating universities and law firms being located sufficiently nearby for volunteers to travel to the workplace. Following the pandemic and the widespread introduction of remote working, PBC has generated relationships with numerous advice agencies in towns and regions ranging from Greater Manchester and Oxford to Wiltshire and West Sussex. This, in turn, has helped PBC to develop relationships with universities outside London such as Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University. As a result, at least 13% of clients receiving assistance from PBC volunteers lived outside London.

Developing Legal Advice Projects

PBC is committed to finding ways to mitigate the constraints on the use of volunteers by advice agencies as a result of limited resources for supervision. Furthermore, we have sought to develop grant applications for projects which address the needs of people whose lives have been adversely affected by the Covid-19, cost-of-living and energy crises.

In 2021 and 2022, we successfully applied for grants to undertake digital advice projects from the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and Trust for London (TfL). Both grant applications were designed to provide end-to-end digital advice in which all participants – trainers, supervisors, administrators, volunteers and clients – are located remotely.

The NLCF "Advice Connect" project is run in partnership with Citizens Advice Haringey and commenced in October 2021 for two years. It is targeted at people living in the private rented sector in Haringey experiencing difficulties with housing, employment and debt, a group that has been disproportionately affected by both the pandemic and the subsequent cost-of-living crisis.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

The project was scheduled to end in September 2023 but the National Lottery Community Fund permitted PBC to use a grant underspend to fund the project until the end of March 2024. In the 30 months to March 2024, the project met all its targets supporting 1,145 people with 2,089 separate issues, the majority of which were related to housing matters and associated problems. The advice was delivered entirely remotely and digitally. 68% of Advice Connect's clients were aged under 40, 51% were from a non-white background, 59% of clients were female and 53% identified themselves as disabled or having a long-term physical or mental health condition. By March 2024, Advice Connect recorded outcomes for clients in terms of income gains, reimbursements and loans amounting to more than £889,000. PBC subsequently submitted a new application to the National Lottery Community Fund for funding to extend and broaden the scope of Advice Connect which was successful and due to commence on September 1st 2024.

The Trust for London grant provided some funding towards a digital advice clinic run by Pro Bono Community itself which specialised in welfare benefits appeals and commenced in September 2022. As noted above, we were unable to obtain the additional funding required to operate the clinic sustainably and thus closed it in early 2024. Nevertheless, during the period the clinic had operated, it resolved the cases of 40 clients who collectively received financial gains of more than £200,000 directly as a result of the advice received through the PBC Remote Appeals Clinic.

Training Programmes

All PBC's training prior to March 2020 had been delivered face-to-face so the charity's decision to move all its training online for the foreseeable future represented a major challenge. We trialled various tools and settled on Zoom as the most effective and reliable platform for digital training and adapted training materials to make them more suitable for online delivery. The majority of the training we provided in the year from September 2023 was live and remote. Although it is difficult to replicate the intimacy of classroom teaching, we are confident that our online training remains interactive and engaging - feedback from attendees has continued to be overwhelmingly positive and comparable with that received in previous years for classroom teaching.

Our volunteers

Although we train and place volunteers in other organisations, this year the charity did not itself use volunteers.

Public benefit statement

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PD2)'. The achievements and activities above demonstrate the public benefit arising through PBC's activities.

Financial review

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statements of Financial Activities on page 12. The charity recorded an overall deficit of £18,581 (2023 – surplus £16,211). The financial position at the year revealed by the Balance Sheet on page 13 shows net current assets or working capital of £60,234 (2023 – £78,815).

Principal funding sources

PBC aims to develop a diverse funding base for its activities. PBC continues to attract funding for its various projects from a wide range of other sources – other charities, private companies (such as law firms) and the charity's own income generating activities (having regard to HMRC and Charity Commission guidance relating to "Charities and Trading").

Investment powers and policy

The trustees have considered the most appropriate policy for investing surplus funds and have found that, at this stage, bank deposit accounts provide the appropriate combination of security, accessibility and income growth.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Reserves policy

As at 31st August 2024 accounts showed reserves of £60,234 (2023 - £78,815), of which £7,085 (2023 - £30,233) was restricted. The unrestricted funds not designated or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity are £53,149 (2023 - £48,582).

The trustees seek to ensure that the level of reserves are appropriate for the charity, balancing the need to keep funds aside to mitigate risk against the need to ensure that funds can be spent in furtherance of the charity's aims.

Having regard to the particular circumstances of any ongoing effects of the cost-of-living crisis, Pro Bono Community's trustees recognised that charities face a variety of risks and that it is important that there are sufficient free reserves to tide an organisation over in difficult financial circumstances or, in the worst case, to allow an organisation to wind up in an orderly manner, meeting its obligations to staff and service users.

The principal risk to Pro Bono Community is an unexpected shortfall in either sales or grant income and the trustees have agreed to keep a certain level of financial reserves to ensure that main operations can continue for a period in the event of severe financial difficulties.

The main concerns of the board are to ensure:

- That staff can continue working, primarily to secure new sales or grant funding; and
- That any service for which income has already been received can be properly fulfilled.

The trustees met regularly during 2023-24 to monitor the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the charity's finances and agreed to maintain a level of unrestricted reserves which would keep the charity running for at least six months and up to a year.

The approach to reserves is under regular review by the trustees - the trustees have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance "How to set a reserves policy for your charity".

Future Activities

PBC's principal strategic objective is to address the urgent and growing need for increased access to high-quality pro bono advice from well-trained and highly-motivated volunteers at Law Centres and other advice agencies. This mission is even more urgent in the light of the ongoing economic effects of the cost-of-living crisis, causing people who have never needed advice before to seek assistance with problems related to employment, housing, welfare benefits, debt and other areas of social welfare law.

The charity is also focused on ensuring the charity remains active, effective and resilient in the face of the challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis. In that context, our aim is to grow the outputs of the charity by building on our income-generating activities and seeking new sources of grant funding.

Additionally, the range of objectives during 2024-25 and beyond include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Build on the success of the first year of the five-year student volunteer training and placement project funded by City Bridge Foundation and deliver the target outputs over the second year;
- Consolidate the relationships with universities such as City University, SOAS and Oxford University and encourage others, particularly from outside London, to adopt similar models which are independently-funded and integrate PBC's training into mainstream legal education;
- Continue to expand PBC's activities outside London, particularly using the opportunity presented by the growth of remote working to link advice agencies in the regions with students based in London and elsewhere;
- Undertake grant projects which build on PBC's experience and expertise, particularly ones including dedicated resource for volunteer supervision and addressing the needs of people in poverty or need;
- Continue to refine the training material delivered by PBC and expand into new areas where a potential demand can be identified.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

The organisation is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) registered as a charity with the Charity Commission on 2 August 2013 (Charity no. 1153220). The charity is established under a written constitution that specifies the objects and powers of the charity and is also governed under this constitution.

Recruitment and appointment of Trustees

New trustees of PBC are appointed by the board of trustees in accordance with clause 9 of PBC's constitution.

PBC recruits and appoints trustees in accordance with the following process:

- The trustees publish an advertisement;
- Interested persons are invited to contact the existing trustees, upon which they are provided with details of how to apply for the role, Declaration of Eligibility Forms and the details of current trustees – completion of eligibility forms, including the Charity Commission's trustee declaration, is a requirement pre-appointment of any proposed trustee;
- Applicants are shortlisted and invited for interview, in accordance with internal selection criteria;
- Following a successful interview, the proposed candidate is presented to the board of trustees for approval and formal appointment;
- Successful candidates are notified and formally appointed by the board of trustees.

Organisational Structure

The board of trustees takes strategic and major financial decisions. The trustees of PBC have delegated day-to-day management of PBC to executive director Bill Skirrow who, in turn, supervises the work of the training & volunteer coordinator as well as any external suppliers and freelance assistance such as trainers and consultants. The executive director works with the trustees to deliver the charity's goals and objectives set out in board papers, strategic documents such as business plans and in the terms and conditions of its grants. The executive director and training & volunteer coordinator supervise and manage the charity's relationships with partner organisations including law firms, course providers, law centres, advice agencies, suppliers and other third sector organisations.

Trustee induction and training

The trustees maintain a good working knowledge of charity governance and best practice through reading of charity press articles and guidance produced by the Charity Commission and other Government and voluntary organisation advisory websites.

New trustees are given copies of previous minutes as appropriate and have an induction conversation with the Chair. PBC reviews information provided to new trustees to ensure that they have a good understanding of the organisation. PBC also gives new trustees access to a shared drive including operational information relevant to the organisation (e.g., policies and procedures).

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Risk Management

The trustees have considered the major risks to which PBC is exposed and have reviewed those risks and established systems and procedures to manage them.

PBC's trustees consider that the principal risk to PBC is an unexpected shortfall in either sales or grant income. The charity mitigates this risk in the following ways:

- PBC's income is derived from both sales and grant income, enabling the charity to spread the risk from a shortfall in one income stream or the other.
- PBC has a very lean infrastructure and outsources the majority of its service provision to third parties who are not themselves paid until the relevant income has been received by PBC.
- PBC maintains a level of reserves which would permit it to continue operations for a period of time if such a shortfall were experienced.

The trustees also consider ensuring that funds are properly managed and accounted for is a major risk and the measures put in place to manage this risk include the Board of Trustees receiving regular financial reports from the Executive Director who takes routine day-to-day financial decisions. The Chair, Treasurer, Executive Director and other trustees as may be approved by the board from time to time have access to the charity's bank account and monitor payments in and out of the account on a regular basis. No payments of more than £500 may be made without the authorisation of two of the designated account operators. The charity's payroll is handled by accountancy firm Ramon Lee.

Related parties

PBC is one of several organisations that worked from the National Pro Bono Centre in Chancery Lane until June 2020. These organisations all operate within the field of pro bono legal assistance but there is no constitutional relationship between PBC and any other organisation. PBC has established informal relationships with organisations in the sector including The London Legal Support Trust, Advice Services Alliance, Advocate, Advice UK, Law Centres Network and LawWorks. PBC has developed a relationship with a number of universities to embed the charity's training and placement scheme in either their undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses or extra-curricular activities.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and the financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf:

Signed by:

D0FBC6E43C29459...
Livia Velicu
(Chair)

3 June 2025

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF PRO BONO COMMUNITY

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Pro Bono Community (the charity) for the year ended 31 August 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of 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

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

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 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do 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 financial statements to be reached.

Signed by:



BEA6442682BF4CE...

David Terry FCA

Ramon Lee Ltd
Chartered Accountants
93 Tabernacle Street
London
EC2A 4BA

Dated: 3 June 2025

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
<u>Income from:</u>					
Income from Charitable activities	3	64,500	36,542	101,042	175,257
Investments	4	395	-	395	399
Total income		<u>64,895</u>	<u>36,542</u>	<u>101,437</u>	<u>175,656</u>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
Raising funds	5	17,631	-	17,631	16,405
Charitable activities	6	42,697	59,690	102,387	143,040
Total expenditure		<u>60,328</u>	<u>59,690</u>	<u>120,018</u>	<u>159,445</u>
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		4,567	(23,148)	(18,581)	16,211
Fund balances at 1 September 2023		<u>48,582</u>	<u>30,233</u>	<u>78,815</u>	<u>62,604</u>
Fund balances at 31 August 2024		<u><u>53,149</u></u>	<u><u>7,085</u></u>	<u><u>60,234</u></u>	<u><u>78,815</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 notes on pages 14 to 23 form part of these financial statements.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	11	1,678		1,749	
Cash at bank and in hand		71,652		85,990	
		<u>73,330</u>		<u>87,739</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	(13,096)		(8,924)	
Net current assets			60,234		78,815
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		7,085		30,233
Unrestricted funds			53,149		48,582
			<u>60,234</u>		<u>78,815</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 3 June 2025 and were signed behalf by:

Signed by:

D0FBC6E43C29459...
Livia Velicu
(Chair)

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011, 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 have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

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

The Charity's Accounts shows Net deficit of £18,581 (2023 – surplus £16,211) for the year and free reserves at £53,149 (2023 - £48,582). The trustees are of the view that these results have secured the immediate future of the Charity for the next 12 months and on this basis the Charity is a going concern.

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.

1.4 Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when the Charity is legally entitled to it, receipt is probable and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grant income

Grants are credited to the statement of financial activities when the Charity is entitled to the funds. Income is only deferred where there are time constraints imposed by the donor or if the funding is performance related.

Where entitlement to grants receivable is dependent upon fulfilment of conditions within the charity's control, the income is recognised when there is sufficient evidence that conditions will be met.

Grants supporting the core activities of the Charity and with no specific restrictions placed upon their use are included within donations and legacies. Grants that have specific restrictions placed upon their use are included within income from charitable activities.

Capital grants for the purchase of fixed assets are credited to restricted incoming resources on the earlier date of when they are received or receivable. Depreciation on the related fixed assets is charged against the restricted fund.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised in the period in which they are received. Legacy income is recognised when the charity's entitlement is judged to be probable and where the amount can be reliably measured.

Contract income

Income from charitable activities include income recognised as earned (as the related goods and services are provided) under contract.

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.

Allocation of support costs

Support costs comprise those costs which are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include governance cost, finance, and office costs. Governance costs are those costs incurred in connection with the compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The basis on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 6.

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 Taxation

The Charity is a registered charity and, therefore, is not liable for Income Tax or Corporation Tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.9 Creditors and Provisions

Creditors and Provisions are recognised when the charity has a legal or constructive present obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that the charity will be required to settle that obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the reporting end date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value. When a provision is measured at present value, the unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in net income/(expenditure) in the period in which it arises.

1.10 Volunteers

The value of the services provided by volunteers is not incorporated into these financial statements. Further details of their contribution is provided in the trustees' report.

1.11 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Accrued income and tax recoverable is included at the best estimate of the amounts receivable at the balance sheet date.

1.12 Donated goods and services

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably.

Donated professional services and facilities are included in income at the estimated value of the gift to the charity when received, based on the amount that the charity would have been prepared to pay for these services or facilities had it been required to purchase them, with a corresponding entry in the appropriate expenditure heading for the same amount. Donated fixed assets are similarly taken to income at the value to the charity with the other entry being capitalised in fixed assets.

1.13 Pension

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme on behalf of its employees. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which they are payable. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

1.14 Cash flow statement

The charitable incorporated organisation qualifies as a small charity and advantage has been taken of the exemption provided by SORP (FRS 102) as amended by Bulletin 2, not to prepare a cash flow statement.

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.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

3 Income from Charitable activities

	Legal advice training £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	63,985
Fees for Volunteer Training & Programmes	64,500	64,500	57,250
City Bridge Trust	36,542	36,542	9,022
Trust for London Grant	-	-	45,000
	<u>101,042</u>	<u>101,042</u>	<u>175,257</u>
Analysis by fund			
Unrestricted funds	64,500	64,500	57,250
Restricted funds	36,542	36,542	118,007
	<u>101,042</u>	<u>101,042</u>	<u>175,257</u>
For the year ended 31 August 2023			
Unrestricted funds	57,250		57,250
Restricted funds	118,007		118,007
	<u>175,257</u>		<u>175,257</u>

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Interest Income	395	395	399
	<u>395</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>399</u>
For the year ended 31 August 2023	<u>399</u>		<u>399</u>

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

5 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Staff costs	11,210	11,210	9,995
Share of support costs (see note 8)	5,444	5,444	5,236
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	977	977	1,174
	<u>17,631</u>	<u>17,631</u>	<u>16,405</u>
For the year ended 31 August 2023			
Fundraising and publicity	16,405		16,405
	<u>16,405</u>		<u>16,405</u>

6 Charitable activities

	Legal advice training £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Staff costs	50,591	50,591	50,337
Other direct costs	30,517	30,517	48,538
	<u>81,108</u>	<u>81,108</u>	<u>98,875</u>
Grant to Institution (see note 7)	9,864	9,864	32,770
Share of support costs (see note 8)	9,678	9,678	9,308
Share of governance costs (see note 8)	1,737	1,737	2,087
	<u>102,387</u>	<u>102,387</u>	<u>143,040</u>
Analysis by fund			
Unrestricted funds	42,697	42,697	45,595
Restricted funds	59,690	59,690	97,445
	<u>143,040</u>	<u>143,040</u>	<u>143,040</u>
For the year ended 31 August 2023			
Unrestricted funds	45,595		45,595
Restricted funds	97,445		97,445
	<u>143,040</u>		<u>143,040</u>

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

7 Grants to Institution

	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Citizens Advice Haringey	9,864	32,770
	<u>9,864</u>	<u>32,770</u>

8 Support costs

The Charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Governance costs and other support costs are apportioned separately between charity's key activity undertaken (see note 6) in the year. All the general support and governance costs have been apportioned to the various charitable activities on the basis of staff time allocated to each activity.

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Staff costs	11,210	-	11,210	9,995
Communication and IT costs	2,639	-	2,639	2,354
Insurance	986	-	986	886
Staff recruitment expense	-	-	-	499
Miscellaneous expenses	287	-	287	810
Legal and professional fees	-	674	674	1,031
Independent examination fees	-	2,040	2,040	2,230
	<u>15,122</u>	<u>2,714</u>	<u>17,836</u>	<u>17,805</u>
Analysed between				
Fundraising	5,444	977	6,421	6,410
Charitable activities	9,678	1,737	11,415	11,395
	<u>15,122</u>	<u>2,714</u>	<u>17,836</u>	<u>17,805</u>

9 Net movement in funds

	2024 £	2023 £
Independent Examination Fees	2,040	2,230
	<u>2,040</u>	<u>2,230</u>

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Direct charitable work	1.00	1.00
Raising funds	0.25	0.25
Office and administration	0.25	0.25
Total	1.50	1.50

Employment costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	69,023	62,456
Social security costs	604	5,083
Pension costs	3,384	2,788
	73,011	70,327

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

11 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other debtors	596	596
Prepayments	1,082	1,153
	1,678	1,749

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income	13	9,474	-
Taxation and social security		582	869
Pension		195	189
Accruals		2,845	7,866
		13,096	8,924

13 Deferred income

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

13 Deferred income		(Continued)	
		2024	2023
		£	£
Movements in the year:			
Deferred income at 1 September 2023		-	-
Resources deferred in the year		9,474	-
Deferred income at 31 August 2024		9,474	-

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

14 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 September 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 September 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 August 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
National Lottery Community Fund	9,671	63,985	(56,412)	-	17,244	-	(11,853)	5,391
Therium Access Limited	2,924	-	-	(2,924)	-	-	-	-
City Bridge Trust	-	9,022	(8,746)	-	276	36,542	(35,124)	1,694
TFL Grant	-	45,000	(32,287)	-	12,713	-	(12,713)	-
	<u>12,595</u>	<u>118,007</u>	<u>(97,445)</u>	<u>(2,924)</u>	<u>30,233</u>	<u>36,542</u>	<u>(59,690)</u>	<u>7,085</u>

City Bridge Trust: Grant towards a part-time salary, training costs and overheads to train law students to volunteer in community advice agencies.

National Lottery Community Fund: Grant for funding a project run in collaboration with Citizens Advice Haringey delivering housing law and other advice to people in Haringey

Trust for London Grant - towards the cost of developing and running a remote clinic providing free specialist social security legal advice to clients requiring casework and representation for appeals to the First Tier and Upper Tribunal.

PRO BONO COMMUNITY

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

15 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:						
Current assets/(liabilities)	53,149	7,085	60,234	48,582	30,233	78,815
	<u>53,149</u>	<u>7,085</u>	<u>60,234</u>	<u>48,582</u>	<u>30,233</u>	<u>78,815</u>

16 Pension Costs

The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the charity to the fund and amounted to £4,108 (2023 - £2,788). Contributions totaling £195 at the year end and are included in creditors.

17 Related party transactions

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