



Fightback Charity

Society of Disabled Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Annual Accounts and Reports

April 2024

Trustees' Annual Report for the Year 2023/2024

Overview

Fightback was formed in Sunderland in 2004 as a multicultural, one-stop, holistic, user-led, not-for-profit organisation. Fightback continues to be one of only a few projects that works with people who experience multiple disadvantages arising out of intrinsic factors, such as, disability, race, ethnicity, language, cultural barriers and immigration status.

Fightback charity provides a range of practical, social and educational services and activities to refugees, asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and other BME and marginalised groups.

Fightback's holistic approach aims to improve the mental health and well-being of our clients by involving, supporting and engaging marginalised and disadvantaged individuals, facilitating autonomy, building confidence, reducing social isolation, and promoting integration into the wider community and community cohesion.

Practical Services

Drop-in Service

Our twice-weekly Drop-in service provides a wide range of practical support, offering clients advice and assistance with everyday challenges. From reading and replying to letters to making appointments, paying bills, dealing with utilities, and navigating complex systems like housing, benefits, or job applications, we're here to help. Fightback takes a holistic approach, advocating for, and supporting clients while also empowering them with the skills and understanding needed to tackle these issues independently. Many clients tell us that these everyday tasks are a significant source of stress due to their complexity, but knowing they have access to help in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment makes a big difference.

By reducing anxiety and providing practical tools and guidance, we aim to increase resilience, build autonomy, and enhance life chances for those who we serve. We also provide access to phones, the internet, the use of a laptop and a printer.

From April 2023 to April 2024, we provided Advice to 1,008 clients and Advocacy/Mediation on behalf of 225 clients.

Form Filling

Our service is an absolute lifeline for many clients who face challenges with language, reading, writing, or understanding complex forms that are required to access essential support.

Fightback provides hands-on assistance by writing letters and completing forms on behalf of clients with language or cognitive difficulties. These forms include housing applications, housing and council tax benefits, PIP, DLA, Universal Credit, ESA medical questionnaires, driving licenses, passports, and more. Between April 2023 and April 2024, we have successfully filled out 211 forms, ensuring our clients can access the services and benefits they need, while alleviating stress and providing essential support to navigate these often-complicated processes.



Provision of Food Parcels

The demand for food support at Fightback continues to increase weekly and extends beyond our usual user groups, such as, refugees, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers, to other BME groups, the elderly, disabled, students, benefits claimants, and low-income working families. In recent months we have had increasing numbers of people requesting support and accessing our services from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan and some South American countries.

Although utility prices have fallen over the past year, according to National Energy Action (NEA, 2024) around 6 million people are still struggling to pay gas and electricity charges, with over 5.3 million in debt to their energy suppliers, as prices remain significantly higher than the pre-cost-of-living crisis. In October 2024 the inflation rate for food prices was 1.9%, compared to the record high of 19.1% in March 2023. However, the prices of food products have not fallen back to their pre cost of living crisis levels, making staples such as, Eggs, Bread, Milk, Oil, Meat, Rice, Potatoes, Cheese, Pasta, Vegetables and fruit, unaffordable for

many households. The high costs of food and utilities are massively impacting millions of people as they struggle with debt, and forcing them to choose between warmth, food, and juggling other household and living expenses. Fightback continues to receive referrals from other agencies, such as CAB, churches, Sunderland City Council and other charities.

From April 2023 till April 2024, we provided 6,002 food parcels to single people and families with children.



Provision of Hygiene Products

Many people who are locked in poverty or those who find themselves in times of crisis often experience severely restricted options. This leaves them caught between being able to heat their home, pay their rent, buy food or keep clean. Hygiene poverty can be shaming, humiliating

and excluding and can result in social isolation. Hygiene poverty can lead to a lack of confidence and can negatively affect good health, mental well-being and social interaction.

At Fightback we provide hygiene products to clients. From April 2023 to April 2024, we gave out 1,575 hygiene items.



Social Services and Activities

Fightback holds a twice weekly '**Coffee Morning**' and '**Befriending Service**'. These social activities enable people to come together and enjoy a selection of refreshments in a safe and welcoming environment. Our aim is to reduce social isolation and loneliness, while promoting social inclusion and good mental health wellbeing amongst our user groups. Many families and single parents with children attended our coffee morning illustrating that people needed to socialize. We have received positive feedback from our clients who are so happy to be able to get out and socialize in safe and relaxed atmosphere.

From April 2023 to April 2024, we have provided refreshments to 8,580 people.

The **Chat Club**: gives people the opportunity to engage with others, make positive social connections and break down barriers. We provide a safe, friendly, relaxed environment where

clients can talk about everyday life, their hopes, fears, plans for the future, and mental health worries without being judged. They can share experiences, information, and strategies for coping with life's ups and downs, connect with others who understand what they are going through, and be heard. This service is designed to build self-esteem, self-worth, and self-awareness, promote autonomy and increase motivation.

Tabletop Day

Fightback takes in donations of previously loved items and then redistributes them free of charge to anyone in need at our tabletop days. Items include clothing, toys and household items. This helps vulnerable individuals access everyday essentials, which can often be expensive and unaffordable for many people, fosters community support, and benefits the environment by reducing waste and promoting reuse, creating a positive impact on society and sustainability.



Job Skill Support

Fightback provides advice on how to look for jobs and apply for them online, creating and updating CV's, advice on approaching an employer with your CV or where to look for advertised vacancies. We also provide guidance on updating Universal Credit journals and fulfilling job search requirements. This service increases skills, promotes autonomy, enables clients to take advantage of employment opportunities when they arise, prevents clients who are already economically and socially disadvantaged from being sanctioned by the DWP, and increases positive life chances.

Volunteers and Volunteering Opportunities

We have 20 dedicated volunteers on rotation who organise and run our weekly coffee morning, befriending service and drop-in services, collecting, packing, distributing and delivering food parcels. Fightback is a continuously evolving user led project that actively encourages user participation at every level and to take up various roles within the project, such as, acting as trustees and using their skills and competencies for the benefit of the whole project.

Whether it is simply giving their time to help organise and run the coffee morning, befriending, or drop-in service, provide or enhance their clerical skills and IT support, use their bilingual or multilingual skills to act as an interpreter or assemble and distribute food parcels, or providing free haircuts, this support is valuable and appreciated. User participation through volunteering is essential as it helps us to continue to provide a wide range of services that are responsive to the needs of the users themselves. Providing our clients/users with volunteering opportunities helps them to gain new skills or enhance transferable skills which they can then use to secure paid employment or go on to enrol on college or university courses. Fightback is always happy to provide volunteers with references and letters of support.

Other Services

Free Hair Cuts

Many of our clients face numerous challenges, with low self-esteem being a common hurdle. Something as simple as a haircut can have a profound impact, offering a real boost to their confidence and helping them feel good about themselves. Recognizing this, we have continued to provide free haircuts for our clients, ensuring they experience this small but meaningful gesture of care and support. More recently, we now have a female hairdresser, who provides free haircuts for women.



Christmas Hampers

In December 2023, we provided Christmas Food Hampers to family and single people in need. This heartfelt initiative aimed to bring joy and warmth to those facing challenges during the holiday season, ensuring that they could experience the spirit of Christmas. We also made the holidays special for the children of our clients by providing each of them with a thoughtful gift, ensuring that the magic of the season reached the younger members of the community as well.



Coronation Honor for Our Charity

Our manager was deeply honoured to attend the Coronation at Westminster Abbey, a historic and momentous occasion. Representing our charity, city and region, at such a prestigious event was a privilege and a testament to the impact of our work within the community

Sunderland charity boss 'honoured' to have attended Coronation

🕒 8 May 2023



Coronation of King Charles III



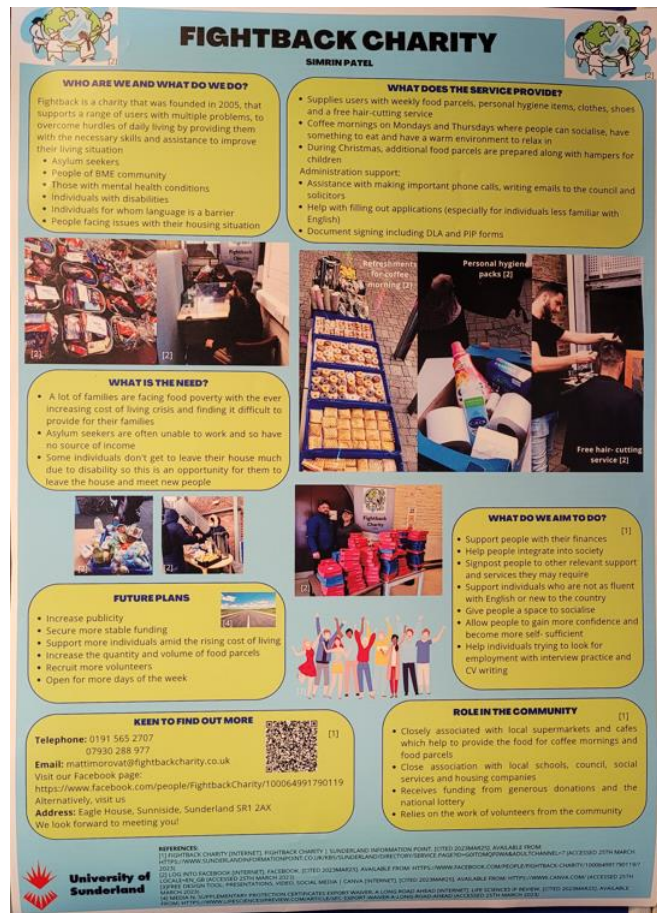
| Mahtab "Matt" Morovat said it had been an honour to represent the North East at the Coronation

Medical Placement Partnership with Sunderland University

Fightback Charity has teamed up with Sunderland University to host medical students as part of their community placements. The students have observed our activities, interacted with volunteers, and gained valuable insights by speaking to clients, staff, and learning about their diverse experiences. At the end of the placement, the students provided informative posters about our services.

Sunderland University Business School

In addition, business students externally reviewed our services and provided detailed recommendations to help improve our operations and impact.



Funding

National Lottery Community Fund

In Nov 2021, the, The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities, kindly donated funding for five years to cover the costs of our accommodation, rental, salary of our existing part-time manager and accountancy charges.

Household Support Fund

Between November 2023 and March 2024, Fightback acted on behalf of Sunderland City Council to distribute Household Support Fund grants to families and individuals in need. Fightback distributed £5,630 of grants.

Fundraising 2023-2024

- Jill and Norman Franklin Trust
- City of Sunderland Council

- Barbour Trust
- Community Foundation
- Groundwork
- Cash Philanthropy Donation
- Fightback is currently being supported by Sunderland City Council with Fareshare donations which help us to provide a wide range of food products in our food parcels.

Thank You for your Support

- To all our funders for their kind generosity
- Greggs (Union Street Sunderland), who provides unsold pastries for our coffee mornings.
- Sunderland City Council for financially supporting us with Food share contributions towards our weekly food bank.
- SVP Charity for their kind donations
- Sunderland Police Constabulary Community Officers.
- Northumbria Fire Brigade.
- Chris Howson, Sunderland University Chaplin
- Fightback charity trustees, staff and volunteers.

Business Information

Committee Members

Chairperson: Diana Lambton

Treasurer: David Lowther

Committee Member: Monique Gorvel

Committee Member: Claudia Conteh

Committee Member: Sabina Bain

Committee Member: Mahmood Sharif Rahim

Committee Member: Janet Nalweysio

Committee Member: Daniel Pearce

Committee Member: Ali Mirzaei

Accountants

Accountability

Nautilus House, Durham Rd, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, DH3 2PA

Bankers

Unity Trust: 4 Brindley Pl, Birmingham B1 2JB

Address

Fightback (Society for Disabled Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Registered Charity; Charity number: 1168874

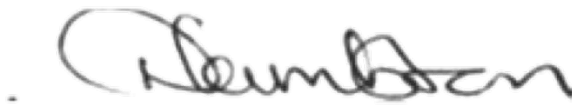
Units 4-6. Eagle Building High Street East Sunderland SR1 2AX.

Phone: 01915652707

Fightback

Approval statement

I approve these accounts which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. I acknowledge my responsibility for the accounts, including the appropriateness of the accounting basis as set out in note 1, and for providing all the information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Lambton', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Diana Lambton

10 January 2025

Fightback

Accountants' report to the members on the unaudited accounts to Fightback

You have approved the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled these unaudited accounts from the accounting records and information and explanations supplied to us.



Accountability
Accountants

Nautilus House
Durham Road
Birtley
County Durham
DH3 2PA

10 January 2025

**Fightback
Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2024**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Incoming resources	48,673	51,278	99,951	78,732
Resources expended				
Wages, salaries and other staff costs	-	21,158	21,158	18,715
Travel, volunteer expenses & consumables	6,825	-	6,825	6,920
Rent, rates, power and insurance costs	644	9,674	10,318	9,295
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs	1,902	-	1,902	2,906
Food parcels	29,364	17,646	47,010	33,121
Household Support Fund	-	5,630	5,630	-
Bank, credit card and other finance charges	143	46	189	193
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees	634	2,208	2,842	640
Other business expenses	1,058	-	1,058	1,539
	40,570	56,362	96,932	73,329
Surplus	8,103	(5,084)	3,019	5,403
Balance brought forward	71,956	14,099	86,055	80,652
Balance carried forward	80,059	9,015	89,074	86,055

Fightback
Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets			
Bank/building society balances		98,478	86,665
Cash in hand		171	49
		<u>98,649</u>	<u>86,714</u>
Current liabilities			
Trade creditors		<u>9,575</u>	<u>659</u>
Net current assets		89,074	86,055
Net assets		<u>89,074</u>	<u>86,055</u>
Accumulated fund			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	
Balance at start of period	71,956	14,099	86,055
Net surplus	3 8,103	(5,084)	3,019
	<u>80,059</u>	<u>9,015</u>	<u>86,055</u>

Fightback
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2024

1 Accounting basis

The accounts have been compiled on a basis that enables surpluses to be calculated in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and that provides sufficient and relevant information to enable the completion of a tax return if necessary.

2 Income and Expenditure account analysis

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Fundraising	48,673	51,278	99,951	78,732
Wages, salaries and other staff costs				
Wages and salaries	-	9,910	9,910	13,549
Pensions	-	1,333	1,333	1,359
PAYE & NI	-	9,915	9,915	3,807
	-	21,158	21,158	18,715
Travel, volunteer expenses and consumables				
Volunteer general expenses	6,825	-	6,825	6,920
Rent, rates, power and insurance costs				
Rent	-	8,863	8,863	8,619
Rates	-	372	372	412
Property insurance	-	439	439	264
Water rates	644	-	644	-
	644	9,674	10,318	9,295
Telephone, fax, stationery and other office costs				
Telephone and fax & stationery	761	-	761	766
Stationery and printing	374	-	374	1,017
Software	767	-	767	1,123
	1,902	-	1,902	2,906
Food parcels				
Food parcels	27,019	17,646	44,665	29,732
Household Support Fund	-	-	-	-
Toiletries for failed asylum seekers	2,345	-	2,345	3,389
	29,364	17,646	47,010	33,121
Household Support Fund		5,630	5,630	-
Household Support Fund	-	5,630	5,630	-
Bank, credit card and other finance charges				
Bank charges	143	46	189	193
	143	46	189	193
Accountancy, legal and other professional fees				
Accountants fees	-	708	708	578
Other legal and professional	26	-	26	26
Interpreter	-	-	-	36
Organisational Development	608	1,500	2,108	-
	634	2,208	2,842	640
Other business expenses				
Other sundry costs	1,058	-	1,058	1,416
Christmas Celebrations	-	-	-	123
	1,058	-	1,058	1,539

Fightback
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 31 March 2024

3 Restricted funds

	Balance as at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming £	Transfer Between Funds £	Outgoing £	Balance as at 31 March 2024 £
The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities	13,987	28,199	-	33,087	9,099
Jill Franklin Trust	-	17,160	-	17,160	-
Community Foundation	111	-	-	111	-
HSF4 Fund	-	5,545	-	5,629	(84)
Groundwork UK -Tesco	-	375	-	375	-
	<u>14,098</u>	<u>51,279</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,362</u>	<u>9,015</u>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Fightback

On accounts for the year
ended

30/04/2024

Charity no
(if any)

1168874

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 30 / 04 / 2024.

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:

Date:

30/01/2025

Name:

Miss Darna Leng MAAT

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Association of Accounting Technicians

Address:

46 Fordlance Place

Sunderland
SR4 6UR

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.