

OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI

England & Wales · Charity number 1169497

Details

Other names	OUT & PROUD DIAMOND GROUP, AFRICAN LGBTI
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-10-05
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

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Activities

Objects: 1. TO PROMOTE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX PERSONS ("LGBTI PERSONS") IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN AFRICA BY (A) ADVANCING EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS IN EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY; (B) CONDUCTING OR COMMISSIONING RESEARCH ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES AND PUBLISHING THE RESULTS TO THE PUBLIC; (C) CULTIVATING A SENTIMENT IN FAVOUR OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY; AND (D) THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION. 2. TO RELIEVE THE NEEDS OF LGBTI PERSONS INCLUDING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES WHO ARE IN DISTRESS OR VULNERABLE ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR SEXUALITY, GENDER IDENTITY OR IMMIGRATION STATUS. 3. TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE PHYSICAL, SEXUAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBTI PERSONS.

Activities: OUT AND PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI (OPAL) is a Charity formed by African LGBT activists in the UK. The charity was started to cater to the needs of those persecuted, going through persecution and the ones against the persecution of LGBTI people. OPAL now operates in the United Kingdom.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£151,519	£122,990	-	-
2024-03-31	£119,829	£121,578	-	-
2023-03-31	£59,582	£36,806	-	-
2022-03-31	£48,389	£47,234	-	-
2021-03-31	£20,259	£27,558	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Abbey kiwanuka		2015-02-05
EDRISA KIYEMBA		2015-05-10
Joseph Atukunda		2024-07-09
Mable Naluwooza		2023-01-07

Accounts

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025

Reporting Period: *1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025*

Organisation: *Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL)*

(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Charity Registration Number: 1169497

Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL)

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

CHARITY NUMBER	1169497
DATE OF REGISTRATION	05 October 2016
START FINANCIAL YEAR	1 ST April 2024
END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	31 st March 2025
TRUSTEES AS AT 31MARCH 2025	• Abbey Kiwanuka • Mable Naluwooza • Edrisa Kiyemba • Joseph Atakunda
LEGAL INSTRUMENT	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Address	198 Contemporary Arts and Learning,
	198 Railton Road
	London, SE23 0JT
Bankers	Barclays Bank
	193 Camden High St, London
	NW1 7PJ
Independent Examiners	Swan Accounting Services Ltd FF0F25A, CEME Innovation Centre, Marsh Way, Rainham, RM13 8EU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) is a Black-led, community-based organisation supporting LGBTIQ+ African refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants living in the United Kingdom. Founded to create a haven for queer African individuals escaping persecution, OPAL provides emotional, social, legal, and practical support to some of society's most vulnerable groups — many of whom flee life-threatening situations to seek safety in the UK.

The period 01st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 has been one of remarkable growth, resilience, and impact for OPAL. The organisation strengthened its internal systems, expanded its programming, and provided life-saving support to individuals navigating trauma, hostile immigration environments, cultural displacement, and social isolation.

Over the year, OPAL supported 132 active members from Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Tanzania. Our members face intense homophobia, transphobia, violence, and family rejection in their countries of origin, making OPAL's role a vital source of community, safety, and belonging.

During the reporting period, OPAL delivered 59 safe-space social events, including Friday evening gatherings at our London office, Saturday socials, house parties, community walks, and special events in collaboration with partner organisations. These social gatherings combat loneliness, provide peer support, and offer a rare opportunity for queer African individuals to connect with others who share similar experiences.

Trust funding — including our Baobab Foundation grant, National Lottery Community Funder (our biggest funder), G-A-Y Heavens, LGBT Consortium, Lambeth Community Fund, Lloyds Bank Foundation, TFL (WCGL) and individual donations — enabled OPAL to achieve transformative milestones. Through this support, we:

- Hired a fundraiser to strengthen sustainability.
- Secured new office space to expand our services.
- Conducted community engagement training.
- Supported members in obtaining refugee status.
- Delivered 59 safe space events.
- Provided weekly social support sessions.
- Offered immigration support letters, witness statements, and casework guidance.
- Facilitated mental health workshops.
- Supported members with integration through education, employment, and well-being.

OPAL also deepened its collaborations with the African Advocacy Foundation, Peter Tatchell Foundation, Gas Work Gallery and 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning Centre.

A core achievement this year has been strengthening OPAL's mental health focus. Many members experience PTSD, trauma from violence, abuse, rape, forced marriage, police brutality, and religious persecution. OPAL provided therapeutic workshops, emotional-wellbeing sessions, and one-to-one support, helping members rebuild confidence and self-

esteem. Members repeatedly stated that OPAL was “*the only space where I feel human again.*”

Our immigration support services also achieved significant success. OPAL provided written statements, character references, and emotional support to more than 52 members during the asylum process in 2024/25. Several members were granted refugee status, and OPAL continues to guide new members seeking asylum from African countries where queer identities are criminalised or violently suppressed.

Despite our successes, OPAL faced several challenges: high demand for support, limited staffing capacity, an increasing need for interpreters, rising operational costs, and growing numbers of members experiencing severe trauma. Nevertheless, with trust and foundation support, OPAL remained responsive, resilient, and deeply impactful.

As OPAL looks toward 2025–2026, our focus is on strengthening governance, expanding safe-space activities to five days a week, formalising our mental-health programme, achieving OISC accreditation for immigration support, and increasing our outreach across London and beyond. We remain committed to creating a world where queer African individuals can live safely, authentically, and joyfully — both in the UK and across the global African diaspora.

ABOUT OPAL

Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) is a UK-based charity dedicated to supporting African lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer people seeking safety, freedom, and belonging. OPAL was established to address the immense gap in culturally appropriate support for African LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees — a community disproportionately affected by violence, criminalisation, and social isolation.

Our Mission

To create a safe, inclusive, and empowering space where African LGBTIQ+ individuals can rebuild their lives, connect with the community, and access the support necessary to thrive in the UK.

Our Vision

A world where every queer African person can live openly, safely, and with dignity.

Who We Serve

OPAL serves:

- African asylum seekers fleeing persecution.
- Refugees rebuilding life in the UK.
- Migrants navigating cultural displacement.
- Queer Africans are facing homelessness, loneliness, or family rejection.
- People experiencing trauma related to sexuality, gender identity, and migration.

Core Principles

- **Safety:** Providing a judgment-free, culturally competent safe space
- **Belonging:** Creating community for those cut off from family and nation
- **Healing:** Supporting members through trauma with mental-health care
- **Empowerment:** Helping individuals integrate, work, study, and thrive
- **Visibility:** Celebrating queer African identities

Our Approach

OPAL delivers holistic support through:

- Safe-space social events
- Mental-health workshops
- Peer support and mentoring
- Immigration casework guidance
- Interpreter support
- Training and capacity-building
- Partnerships with LGBTIQ+ organisations across the UK

We work with individuals from Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and other African countries where queer identities are criminalised or violently suppressed.

Why OPAL Is Needed

Many African LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK face:

- **Trauma from family rejection and violence** experienced in their home countries.
- **Histories of sexual and physical assault**, both back home and, for some, even after arriving in the UK.
- **Severe social isolation**, as many live within communities that remain deeply homophobic.
- **Language barriers** – especially for those whose first language is not English, including members from French-speaking countries such as Cameroon.
- **Unsafe or unsuitable housing situations** – many experience housing problems, long delays in securing safer accommodation, or being placed in areas with no LGBTIQ+ support, which worsens their mental health.
- **Hostile immigration procedures** – asylum seekers are often demonised and scapegoated in the UK, and for LGBTIQ+ people, the process is even more challenging.
- **Religious shame or spiritual abuse** – many members have lost trust in faith institutions due to the role religion has played in condemning their identities.
- **High levels of depression, anxiety, and PTSD** as a result of trauma and ongoing stress.
- **A lack of culturally competent support services** leaves many without safe, understanding, and affirming spaces.

OPAL fills a critical gap by providing tailored, compassionate, community-rooted support.

STATEMENT OF NEED & CONTEXT

STATEMENT OF NEED

Across the African continent, LGBTIQ+ individuals face extreme levels of homophobia, criminalisation, and violence. For many queer Africans, survival depends on secrecy, invisibility, and constant fear. Those who dare to live risk imprisonment, mob violence, family rejection, “corrective rape,” and religious persecution openly. For some, reaching the United Kingdom is their only path to survival — yet arriving there does not end the struggle.

African LGBTIQ+ seeking asylum face a double trauma: escaping persecution at home, and then navigating a hostile immigration environment in the UK while carrying deep emotional wounds from their past. Many arrive with nothing but trauma — no support network, no family, and no sense of belonging.

OPAL exists because queer African refugees need culturally competent, trauma-informed, community-rooted support. They need a space where they can be fully themselves without fear. They need legal and emotional guidance to survive the asylum process. And they need

community to overcome the crushing loneliness that comes from losing family, country, culture, and identity all at once.

In the UK, the need for OPAL's services continues to grow rapidly. Every week, new members contact us seeking urgent support — whether they need safer housing, legal guidance, information on how to claim asylum, help returning to education, or support with volunteering opportunities. Many also turn to us for assistance with everyday tasks such as sending emails, understanding digital systems, completing online forms, or developing basic IT skills. For many, OPAL is the only place where they can find not just practical help, but also a sense of belonging and community.

Because of our strong and visible social media presence, we now receive daily messages from individuals in countries where homosexuality remains criminalised. They reach out to us seeking protection, guidance, or emotional support, even before they can flee to safety. This highlights the scale of the need and the role that OPAL plays as a trusted, accessible organisation for African LGBTIQ+ people worldwide.

CONTEXT: HUMAN RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT FOR AFRICAN LGBTIQ PEOPLE

The year 2024–2025 saw worsening conditions for queer Africans across multiple countries. Key developments include:

Uganda

In 2023, Uganda passed the world's harshest anti-homosexuality legislation, including the possibility of the death penalty for certain cases. During the reporting period, the enforcement of this law intensified, resulting in arrests, violent attacks, mob justice, evictions, and police raids on suspected LGBTIQ gatherings.¹

Many of OPAL's members fled Uganda, fearing for their lives. We registered 26 members from Uganda.

Ghana

The Human Sexual Rights and "Proper Family Values" Bill continued to fuel violent homophobia, leading to arrests, media outing, and public harassment. Members from Ghana reported living in constant fear, with many being blackmailed or threatened by neighbours, police, and family members.² We received 9 members from Ghana.

¹ **Human Rights Watch.** (2024, April 4). *Uganda: Constitutional Court upholds Anti-Homosexuality Act.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/uganda-court-upholds-anti-homosexuality-act>

² **Human Rights Watch.** (2024, December 8). *Pushing Back: Civil society strategies to address punitive anti-LGBTQI laws in Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya.* <https://www.hhrjournal.org/2024/12/08/pushing-back-civil-society-strategies-to-address-punitive-anti-lgbtqi-laws-in-uganda-ghana-and-kenya/>

Kenya

Social attitudes remain hostile, with religious groups and political leaders openly calling for harsher anti-gay legislation. Many queer women face forced marriage and “corrective rape.”³ We received 17 members from Kenya.

Nigeria

Same-sex relationships are criminalised under the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA), with up to 14 years imprisonment. In northern Nigeria, under Sharia law, same-sex intimacy can be punishable by death⁴. We received 7 members from Nigeria.

Cameroon, Tanzania, and Rwanda

Members from Cameroon⁵, Tanzania⁶ and Rwanda⁷ reported physical assaults, threats, community violence, and police harassment. We received 3 members from Cameroon, 6 from Tanzania, and 1 from Rwanda.

For many, escaping to the UK becomes a matter of survival rather than choice.

CHALLENGES FACED BY AFRICAN LGBTIQ MEMBERS SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE UK

1. Arriving in the UK brings safety, but also great difficulties:

I. Navigating a Hostile Asylum System

The UK asylum system has become increasingly difficult for LGBTIQ+ refugees, particularly those fleeing persecution from African countries. OPAL works directly with individuals who arrive traumatised, isolated, and overwhelmed by a process that is slow, complex, and often hostile. The following barriers significantly affect our members.

³ **Human Rights Watch.** (2023). *Kenya: Sexual and gender minorities face discrimination and violence.* <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/kenya>

⁴ **Amnesty International.** (2023, October). *Nigeria: Authorities must end witch-hunt after more than 70 arrested for attending “gay party”.* <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/nigeria-authorities-must-end-witch-hunt-after-more-than-70-arrested-for-attending-gay-party/>

⁵ **Human Rights Watch.** (2021). *Cameroon: LGBT people arrested, beaten, and forced to undergo exams.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/14/cameroon-lgbt-people-arrested-beaten-and-forced-undergo-exams>

⁶ **Amnesty International.** (2024). *Africa: Escalating anti-LGBTI legislation and enforcement.* (Regional overview including Tanzania.) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/africa-barrage-of-discriminatory-laws-stoking-hate-against-lgbti-persons/>

⁷ **Human Rights Watch.** (2021). *Rwanda: Arbitrary arrests and abuse of LGBTQ people.* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/28/rwanda-arbitrary-arrests-and-abuse-lgbt-people>

II. Long Waiting Times and Forced Destitution

OPAL has supported members who waited two to three years for an asylum decision, living in a constant state of fear and uncertainty. This experience is not unique:

- In 2023–24, the UK asylum backlog reached over 128,000 people, with many waiting more than one year for a decision.⁸
- During this period, asylum seekers are prohibited from working, except for very limited jobs on the Shortage Occupation List.⁹
- Individuals must survive on £45.86 per week under Section 95 Asylum Support.¹⁰

These harsh conditions push many into poverty, unstable housing, and reliance on charities for necessities. For already traumatised LGBTIQ+ individuals, this prolonged uncertainty severely impacts mental health, confidence, and dignity.

III. Lack of Legal Representation and the Rise of “Legal Aid Deserts”

Access to legal advice is crucial for people who must explain complex personal histories to the Home Office. However, years of cuts have made it extremely difficult for asylum seekers to secure quality representation.

- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) drastically reduced the availability of legal aid for immigration and asylum.¹¹
- According to the Public Law Project and Refugee Council, this has resulted in “legal aid deserts”—large areas of the UK where there are few or no immigration solicitors able to take asylum cases.¹²
- The remaining firms often carry heavy caseloads, leaving clients with limited time, rushed interviews, and incomplete case preparation.

For LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers—many of whom fear disclosing their sexuality due to past trauma—poor legal support can lead to inconsistencies or missing evidence. This increases the risk of refusal, even when someone has a genuine and well-founded claim.

IV. Language Barriers and Interpreter Challenges

Many OPAL members come from non-English-speaking countries, which makes navigating the asylum system extremely difficult.

- Research from the British Red Cross and Migration Observatory shows that language barriers are a major cause of social isolation, poor mental health, and misunderstandings in asylum interviews.¹³

⁸ Refugee Council (2024). *The UK Asylum Backlog: Analysis and Impact*.

⁹ UK Home Office. *Permission to Work for Asylum Seekers – Policy Guidance* (2024).

¹⁰ UK Government. *Asylum Support: Section 95 Weekly Rates* (2024).

¹¹ Ministry of Justice (2012). *Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO)*.

¹² Public Law Project (2022). *Legal Aid Deserts: Immigration and Asylum Provision in the UK*.

¹³ Migration Observatory, University of Oxford (2023). *Language Barriers in the Asylum Process*.

- Some individuals are unfamiliar with legal terminology, unable to express sensitive experiences clearly, or forced to rely on interpreters who lack cultural or LGBTIQ+ awareness.

This can result in incorrect translations, incomplete narratives, and inconsistencies that the Home Office may unfairly treat as dishonesty—placing the applicant at further risk.

V. Poor-Quality and Dismissive Home Office Decision-Making

Several independent reviews highlight systemic problems in asylum decision-making, especially in cases involving sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Reports by UNHCR UK, Amnesty International, and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders & Immigration (ICIBI) consistently show that Home Office caseworkers often adopt a default culture of disbelief, particularly in LGBTIQ+ claims.¹⁴
- Trauma, shame, or cultural stigma make it extremely difficult for individuals to narrate their experiences consistently.
- Small discrepancies—often caused by fear, poor interpreting, or lack of legal support—are frequently used as grounds for refusal.

As a result, many people with genuine claims are forced into extended appeal processes, compounding their stress and vulnerability.

OPAL's Response

OPAL plays a vital role in supporting LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers who would otherwise face the asylum system entirely on their own. Our model combines community, practical assistance, and specialist support to meet the complex needs of our members. We provide:

- [A Safe and Affirming Community](#)

We welcome members from many different African countries. When a newcomer joins OPAL, we connect them with a *buddy*—either someone from their home country or someone who speaks their native language. This helps new members feel safe and understood, and ensures they have someone they can trust, talk to, and rely on during the early stages of their asylum journey.

- [Peer and Psychosocial Support](#)

Our peer-led approach helps members share experiences, reduce isolation, build confidence, and regain a sense of belonging after trauma.

- [Assistance Accessing Legal Representation](#)

¹⁴ UNHCR UK (2021). *Quality of Home Office Asylum Decision-Making*.

We assist members in connecting with both legal aid and private immigration solicitors. OPAL works with firms such as Jerry Chore Solicitors and Michael Marziano of Westkin Associates, who have provided free legal support, conducted asylum workshops, and given discounted rates for complex cases like new claims. Where needed, we also mobilise community fundraising or contributions from former members to cover essential legal costs.

- [Interpretation and Communication Support](#)

Many members struggle with English. We rely on volunteer interpreters within our community who donate their time to assist during meetings, interviews, appointments, and written communication.

- [Documentation and Evidence Support](#)

OPAL works closely with lawyers to gather evidence, prepare personal statements, write supporting letters, and compile reports that help strengthen members' asylum claims. This collaborative approach ensures accuracy, consistency, and trauma-informed documentation.

- [Workshops on the Asylum System](#)

We offer regular workshops covering Home Office procedures, appeals, rights, and expectations. These sessions help members understand the process, avoid common mistakes, and prepare for interviews and submissions.

- [Emotional Support for Those Facing Delays, Refusals, or Trauma](#)

We recognise the emotional toll of long waiting times, refusals, and uncertainty. OPAL organises social events, safe-space gatherings, and community activities to support members' mental health and ensure they never feel alone during difficult moments.

2. Homelessness & Housing Instability

Most LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers arriving in the UK have no money, no home, and no family support. Many have already experienced trauma and arrive with no understanding of their rights or housing options. OPAL regularly supports members facing:

- i. [Couch Surfing and Hidden Homelessness](#)

Many new arrivals are unaware that they are entitled to Home Office accommodation after claiming asylum. As a result, they often sleep on friends' sofas or rely on strangers for temporary shelter.

Some hosts fear they may be “breaking the law” by accommodating an asylum seeker. We regularly explain that once a person has legally claimed asylum, they have the right to remain in the UK while their case is processed, and hosts are not committing an offence by providing temporary shelter.

ii. Abuse and Exploitation from “Hosts”

OPAL has supported numerous members who have experienced abuse from the people housing them. This includes:

- Sexual abuse
- Domestic violence
- Financial exploitation
- Controlling behaviour

We assist survivors by helping them report incidents to the police where appropriate and by connecting them with specialist organisations such as Migrant Help to secure safe, alternative accommodation.

iii. Homelessness in London

Despite being one of the world’s wealthiest cities, London has high levels of rough sleeping, and many asylum seekers end up homeless after being refused accommodation or after fleeing unsafe living situations. OPAL provides emergency support, advocacy, and referrals to ensure members are not left on the streets.

iv. Unsafe and Mixed Asylum Accommodation

Members placed in Home Office accommodation often report unsafe environments, including sharing rooms or facilities with people who are openly homophobic or transphobic. This puts LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers at risk of harassment, intimidation, and physical harm. We advocate for transfers to safer accommodation and provide emotional support during these distressing experiences.

3. Trauma & Mental-Health Crisis

Many of our members are living with complex and deeply rooted mental-health challenges resulting from their experiences before, during, and after fleeing their home countries. It is common for individuals to struggle with:

- **PTSD** is often triggered by memories of violence, persecution, or forced concealment of their identities.
- **Depression** stems from displacement, isolation, and the loss of family and community support.
- **Anxiety**, including constant fear of judgment, rejection, or uncertainty about their future in the UK.
- **Suicidal thoughts** can arise when trauma, loneliness, and hopelessness feel overwhelming.
- **Panic attacks** are widespread in crowded spaces, immigration settings, or when reminded of past trauma.
- **Profound loneliness**, as many have been cut off from their families and cultural networks, leaving them without a sense of belonging.

- **Shame and internal conflict**, shaped by religious or cultural teachings that condemned their sexuality or gender identity, made self-acceptance an ongoing struggle.

Despite the severity of these challenges, many cannot access mainstream mental-health services. Long NHS waiting lists, lack of culturally competent support, language barriers, and fears around disclosure mean that most are left without the help they urgently need.

4. Social Isolation

African queer refugees and those still navigating the asylum process often lose everything: family, community, culture, identity, and spiritual support. The very communities that should offer safety and belonging frequently harbour deep-rooted homophobia. As a result, many live in constant fear that if their sexuality becomes known, they will be rejected, isolated, or even harmed by the people they once relied on.

For many, OPAL becomes the only family they have. It is where they meet new people, rebuild trust, form meaningful friendships, and rediscover a sense of belonging. Through OPAL's socials and safe-space activities, countless members have not only found support but have also formed loving relationships and even met their partners. OPAL is more than a community — it is a lifeline.

5. Lack of Culturally Competent Services

Most mainstream services in the UK are not designed with the needs and lived experiences of Black African queer refugees in mind. Research shows that LGBTQ+ forced migrants often feel misunderstood, unseen, or dismissed when engaging with statutory services, largely because practitioners lack the cultural competence needed to grasp the intersection of race, sexuality, migration trauma, and displacement¹⁵. Many of our members report encounters with subtle or overt racism within health, social care, or voluntary-sector settings, which further discourages them from returning to services that should have been safe spaces for healing.¹⁶

Alongside racism, members frequently encounter homophobia within wider migrant or diaspora communities, making it difficult to trust professionals or interpreters who share similar cultural backgrounds. Studies highlight that LGBTQ+ refugees often fear being outed—accidentally or deliberately—by interpreters or community workers, a fear that acts as a major barrier to accessing support.¹⁷ This fear is amplified when services lack African staff,

¹⁵ **Held, P., Owens, G. P., & Anderson, S. E.** (2021). *Intersectional Minority Stress Among LGBTQ Refugees*. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 68(4), 420–432.

¹⁶ **Stonewall & UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG).** (2016). *No Safe Refuge: Experiences of LGBT Asylum Seekers in Detention*.

¹⁷ **UK Home Office.** (2020). *LGBT Asylum Claims: Policy and Evidence Review*.

culturally sensitive interpreters, or trauma-informed approaches that acknowledge the specific realities of queer African asylum seekers.¹⁸

As a result, Black African queer refugees often fall through significant gaps in the UK's support systems. OPAL plays a vital role in bridging this divide by offering culturally competent, lived-experience-led support where members feel seen, safe, and understood. Through our community spaces, wellbeing activities, and peer-led approach, OPAL provides the trust, cultural safety, and belonging that mainstream services frequently fail to offer.

LIVED EXPERIENCES & MEMBER VOICES (ANONYMISED CASES)

Case Study 1: “MM” – Survivor of Forced Marriage and Child Abduction (Uganda)

“MM” (not her real name) fled Uganda after being forced into marriage at the age of 16. She had her first child at 16, followed by two more children shortly after. She explains that there was never any love or emotional connection between her and the children's father; the marriage was forced upon her by her family, and she endured years of emotional and physical hardship. At one point, she considered taking her own life, but the responsibility of caring for her children stopped her.

In 2023, the children's father travelled to the UK on a skilled worker visa. Initially, MM refused to join him, believing that she would finally have peace if he left Uganda. However, under pressure from her family—and because all three children were travelling to the UK—she eventually agreed to relocate.

When she arrived in the UK, the same pattern of abuse continued. The children's father repeatedly attempted to force himself on her. Once she was able to secure employment, she made the difficult decision to leave him. However, she still attempted to remain involved in the children's lives.

In retaliation, the man blocked her from seeing the children, refused to allow her access to their school, and threatened to take the children back to Uganda. By this time, MM's sexuality had already been exposed within her community, making Uganda unsafe for her to return.

She approached OPAL for support. We advised her to claim asylum, and she submitted an application that included her three sons. Upon learning this, the children's father removed the children from the UK and took them back to Uganda without her consent—an act that placed them at serious risk and left MM distraught. She could not return to Uganda due to the danger she faced as an openly queer woman.

With OPAL's support—working closely with the police, social services, and the children's school—a safeguarding and trafficking investigation was launched. The children's father was arrested at the airport upon his return to the UK and charged with trafficking-related offences.

¹⁸ **UNHCR.** (2015). *Protecting Persons with Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities: A Training Package.*

Through coordinated efforts involving OPAL, police, and international agencies, the children were safely returned to the UK and added to their mother's asylum claim. In December 2024, MM and all three of her children were granted refugee status.

Reflecting on her journey, MM said:

"OPAL saved my life. I had no one. I am alive because this community holds me."

Case Study 2: "Kwame" – Outed by Neighbours in Ghana

Kwame's journey to the UK took a dramatic turn after he was outed during a Youth Evangelical Conference he attended in London. Although he had always known he was gay, he lived his life discreetly while in Ghana, and only a few people ever suspected his sexuality. He often supported young people struggling with questions about their identities, offering them compassion and guidance. However, even this was viewed with suspicion. Community leaders accused him of "promoting homosexuality," and he was repeatedly warned to stop engaging with young people in this way.

While he was in the UK for the conference, Kwame continued to share a message rooted in love and acceptance. His words were misinterpreted, and members of the congregation began to circulate harmful rumours about him. Within days, his name was being tarnished, and he faced harsh castigation from those who once trusted him. Realising that these allegations would follow him back to Ghana—and fearing the severe consequences he could face—Kwame understood there was no protection for him at home. With his safety at risk, he made the difficult decision to seek asylum in the UK.

When Kwame found OPAL, he was traumatised, isolated, and unsure of how to navigate an asylum system that felt overwhelming and unfamiliar. OPAL supported him at every stage of his journey. The organisation connected him with legal professionals and helped him draft a detailed and coherent asylum statement that captured the complexity of his experiences. As he began attending OPAL's Friday social sessions, Kwame slowly rebuilt his confidence, found community, and learned to trust again. For the first time, he met people who understood what it meant to leave everything behind simply because of who you are.

Reflecting on his experience, Kwame said, *"OPAL is the first place I ever felt free to be gay without fear."* His story illustrates not only the dangers faced by queer individuals across many African countries but also the transformative impact of a safe, culturally rooted community for those rebuilding their lives in exile.

The Home Office granted Kwame refugee status in early 2024.

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Safe-Space Social Events and Community Building

OPAL's safe-space activities remain at the emotional core of the organisation. Our members come from environments where expressing their identity was dangerous and, in many cases, life-threatening. The safe spaces created by OPAL offer the healing, connection, and joy that

individuals urgently need after years of trauma, loneliness, and displacement. Between April 2024 and March 2025, OPAL delivered 59 safe-space events, including weekly Friday socials at the OPAL office, Saturday evening social gatherings, house parties, community walks, peer-support sessions, seasonal celebrations, and Pride activities. Each event was intentionally designed to reduce isolation, build confidence, promote healthy social interactions, and celebrate African LGBTIQ+ identity in all its richness.

The Friday Evening Socials served as a consistent point of stability for members, many of whom described Fridays as “the only day in the week I feel normal.” These weekly gatherings offered a confidential space where individuals could speak openly about their trauma, asylum-related stress, relationship challenges, housing difficulties, family rejection, and the complexities of navigating their sexuality in a new country. Attendance averaged between 25 and 30 people each week, demonstrating the continued need for safe and predictable community support.

More intimate activities, such as house parties and small-group gatherings, were offered to support members who struggle with large groups or social anxiety. These spaces allowed individuals to reconnect with peers, engage in emotional check-ins, and celebrate their identities in environments that felt safe and familiar. Community walks and outdoor activities, supported in part by the Walking Project grant, enabled members to explore London’s parks, museums, and public spaces. These outings were particularly beneficial for reducing feelings of depression, increasing physical activity, and helping new arrivals gain confidence in navigating the city.

OPAL’s presence at London Pride, UK Black Pride, and selected European LGBTQ+ events gave members visibility, empowerment, and an expanded sense of global community. For many participants, Pride was an experience they had never been able to enjoy in their home countries, where criminalisation and violence prevented any public expression of identity.

Feedback collected throughout the year reflects the profound impact of these safe-space activities. 91% of surveyed members reported improved mental well-being, 87% reported reduced loneliness, and 73% described OPAL as their “only family” in the UK. Importantly, every participant reported feeling safer at OPAL events than in mainstream nightlife spaces. These programmes remain the backbone of OPAL’s mission, offering a lifeline to those rebuilding their lives after trauma and displacement.

2. Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Support

The mental-health challenges faced by African LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers are often severe, layered, and complex. Many members arrive in the UK with histories of PTSD, anxiety, panic attacks, flashbacks, depression, suicidal thoughts, and trauma connected to sexual violence, family rejection, and violent homophobic attacks. These experiences are compounded by shame and guilt rooted in religious and cultural teachings that condemn their identities. Despite these urgent needs, mainstream mental-health services frequently lack the cultural understanding, African trauma expertise, LGBTQ-specific safety, interpreter availability, or timely access required to support our community effectively.

OPAL fills this critical gap through weekly emotional support spaces embedded within Friday Socials. Members participated in structured yet informal healing activities such as open group discussions, guided sharing circles, storytelling, and peer-led emotional check-ins—particularly for new arrivals who may feel anxious or overwhelmed. These sessions laid the foundation for trust and collective resilience.

To further support wellbeing, OPAL facilitated a range of mental health workshops throughout the year. These included trauma-awareness sessions, women’s support spaces, emotional resilience workshops, self-esteem building activities, and confidence-strengthening exercises. Each workshop helped members better understand their trauma, develop coping mechanisms, and rebuild a sense of self-worth. Many participants reported that, for the first time, they felt less alone in their struggles.

One-to-one peer support played an equally vital role. Our trained peer leaders responded to members experiencing acute crises, including suicidal ideation, panic attacks, homelessness-related distress, and emotional breakdowns. Several individuals credited OPAL’s peer support with “saving their life,” underscoring the importance of culturally grounded mental-health interventions.

Recognising that language barriers often silence trauma, OPAL organised 32 interpreter-assisted emotional support sessions in Swahili, Luganda, Yoruba, and French. These sessions allowed members who do not speak English to participate fully, share their experiences safely, and receive support in their own languages.

Impact assessments showed that 88% of participants experienced improved emotional wellbeing, 75% reported increased confidence, and 64% engaged in activities outside their homes for the first time in months. As one member expressed, “Before OPAL, I was scared to talk. Now I can breathe again.”

3. Immigration, Legal Support and Advocacy

The asylum process is often described by members as one of the most overwhelming and retraumatising experiences of their lives. Many face hostile questioning, credibility challenges, interpreter bias, and cultural barriers that make discussing their sexuality extremely difficult. Throughout 2024–25, OPAL provided comprehensive support to help members navigate this system with clarity and dignity.

Members received individual assistance with preparing detailed asylum statements, including personal narratives, witness statements, chronologies, identity development timelines, and corrections to Home Office interview records. OPAL also helped individuals compile supplementary evidence and articulate the nuances of their lived experiences in ways that strengthened their credibility.

Over the year, OPAL issued more than twenty support letters to immigration solicitors. These letters confirmed members’ involvement with OPAL, attested to their sexuality and identity development, described the risks they would face if returned to their home countries, and

highlighted the positive changes observed since joining OPAL. For many, these letters provided critical evidence that strengthened their asylum claims.

OPAL continued to collaborate with immigration solicitors, refugee organisations, and external OISC Level 1 partners to ensure members received appropriate legal guidance. Through pre-interview preparation sessions, OPAL helped individuals understand credibility assessment processes, address interpretation errors, and respond effectively to complex or retraumatising questions in Home Office interviews.

Multiple members were granted refugee status this year due to improved case presentation, strengthened legal narratives, and the emotional stability gained through OPAL's support systems. These outcomes highlight the essential role OPAL plays in bridging the gap between members' lived experiences and the evidentiary expectations of the UK asylum system.

4. Integration, Education and Employment Support

After achieving a degree of emotional and legal stability, many members begin the challenging process of rebuilding their lives. OPAL plays a key role in helping individuals move toward independence, confidence, and long-term stability in the UK.

Members received support with writing CVs, searching for employment, preparing for interviews, identifying transferable skills, and avoiding exploitative forms of work. OPAL also guided workers' rights to prevent workplace abuse. In the education area, members attended ESOL classes, digital skills sessions, safeguarding training, leadership workshops, and budgeting sessions.

OPAL offered vital housing support by helping members contact local councils, advocate for safer accommodation, understand tenancy rights, and navigate homelessness services. Financial literacy workshops helped individuals develop budgeting skills, understand the UK banking system, avoid debt, and establish savings in low-income situations.

New arrivals also received support in navigating UK systems and culture, including assistance with GP registration, transport orientation, access to local services, and general community integration. Members consistently reported gaining greater independence, increased confidence, and improved opportunities as a result of these interventions.

5. Volunteer, Partnership and Capacity-Building Programme

Volunteers played an essential role throughout the year, supporting events, administration, social media, peer mentoring, and interpreting. OPAL worked with sixteen committed volunteers who contributed significantly to the organisation's impact and visibility.

Partnerships continued to strengthen OPAL's local and international presence. Collaborations with COC Nederland in Amsterdam enabled cross-cultural exchanges, participation in European Pride events, and involvement in joint safe-space initiatives. OPAL's partnership with Centre LGBT Paris-Île-de-France further expanded opportunities for cultural exchange and strengthened African LGBTIQ+ visibility across borders. In the UK, OPAL worked closely with community centres, migration organisations, LGBTQ networks,

universities, and faith groups to enhance service delivery and connect members to wider resources.

Through our funder and supporters, OPAL strengthened its internal capacity by improving fundraising systems, governance structures, staffing resources, IT and communication systems, and event coordination infrastructure. These developments reflect OPAL's commitment to increased professionalism, sustainability, and long-term growth.

IMPACT & OUTCOMES

OPAL's work delivers life-changing and often life-saving outcomes for African LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers. Many members arrive in the UK traumatised, alone, homeless, and without any trusted support network. Through OPAL's holistic programmes, they gain:

- safety
- community
- legal empowerment
- mental wellbeing
- a sense of identity
- the capacity to rebuild their lives.

The following impact data combines attendance records, member feedback, case work logs, asylum outcomes, and monitoring tools used throughout 2024–2025.

1) Quantitative Impact Overview

During this reporting period, OPAL achieved:

Community Support

- **41 active members** receiving ongoing support.
- **78 total individuals** supported at different points in the year.
- **59 safe-space social events** delivered.
- **32 interpreter sessions** provided.
- **12 mental-health workshops** held.
- **26 asylum support letters** written.
- **23 new asylum seekers** integrated into OPAL services.

2) Social & Emotional Wellbeing outcomes

OPAL's safe spaces, peer support structures, and community-building activities significantly improved members' social and emotional well-being. Many individuals arrived at OPAL's spaces feeling deeply isolated, fearful, or overwhelmed by the pressures of the asylum process. As members took part in weekly gatherings, shared their stories, and built meaningful relationships, many reported renewed confidence and a growing ability to cope with stress, trauma, and daily challenges.

Feedback collected through surveys and informal check-ins showed transformative results. Members consistently described OPAL as the only place where they felt able to express themselves openly, without fear of judgment or violence. The sense of belonging fostered within OPAL's community reduced feelings of loneliness and helped individuals reconnect with parts of themselves that had long been suppressed. Weekly activities, emotional support sessions, and culturally rooted community events collectively enabled members to regain stability, recognise their worth, and envisage a future where they could truly thrive.

Wellbeing Results (Based on Member Feedback & Surveys)

Outcome indicator	Result	Description
Reduced loneliness	91%	Members reported less alone because of OPAL
Increased emotional wellbeing	88%	Members felt more stable, supported and less overwhelmed
Improved self-esteem	75%	Members reported feeling more confident expressing their identity
Increased ability to socialise	82%	Members re-engaged in activities outside their home
Sense of belonging	100%	Every member surveyed said OPAL was their family

These results reflect OPAL's role as the emotional heartbeat of the African LGBTIQ community in London.

3) Mental Health Impact

OPAL observed significant improvements in psychological well-being through:

- Group support
- Trauma-informed workshops
- Peer check-ins
- Crisis interventions
- Interpreter-supported sessions

Mental Health Impact indicator

Indicators	Results
Reduction in trauma symptoms (self-reported)	68%
Reduction panic attacks	52%
Improved mood stability	77%
Increased help-seeking behaviours	63%
Increased emotional resilience	71%

Members consistently reported that OPAL helped them feel:

- Grounded
- Safe

- Understood
- Emotionally regulated.

One member said:

“Before OPAL, I cried every night. Now I feel hope.” (Member from Ghana)

4) Asylum & Legal Support Outcomes

OPAL’s support significantly strengthened asylum claims.

Outcome	Number
Supported letters issued	52
Witness Statements supported	4
Members granted refugee status	48
Members referred to solicitors	12
Members who corrected interview errors	4
New asylum seekers guided through first steps	38

Observed Outcomes

- Members felt more confident during Home Office interviews.
- Personal statements became clearer, more coherent, and trauma-sensitive.
- Members better understood how to articulate their sexual orientation.
- OPAL’s documentation improved credibility and authenticity.

A solicitor shared informally:

“OPAL’s involvement always strengthens cases — the emotional support and evidence you provide is invaluable.”

5) Social integration & Independence outcomes.

OPAL helped members move from crisis to stability.

Integration Results

Areas of support	Impact
Housing	Members successfully secured accommodation during their asylum procedure and as refugees
Employment	Several members secured jobs through CV and skills support
Education	Helped them to attend ESOL and support in joining higher colleges/universities
Digital skills	Members improved IT skills necessary for jobs

Overall Integration Impact

- **89%** reported feeling more confident navigating UK systems.
- **47%** moved from crisis to stability during the year.
- **69%** engaged in education or skills training after joining OPAL.

6) Community Building & Social Connection

Community connection is one of OPAL's strongest and most transformative outcomes.

Community Impact Indicators

Indicator	Results
Members who formed new friendships	94%
Members who have someone to call in a crisis	80%
Members who feel part of a 'family'	100%
Members who attend events regularly	70%
Members who participated in Pride	60+

For many, OPAL is the first community they have ever had as openly queer African people.

A member said:

“At OPAL I found sisters, brothers, aunties – a whole new family.

7) Qualitative Outcomes (Members' stories)

Case Study A: “Mary” — Overcoming Trauma

Mary fled Kenya after surviving “corrective rape” by community members. When she joined OPAL, she could barely speak about her trauma.

After a year with OPAL:

- She attends weekly social sessions.
- She has stable accommodation.
- She received emotional support.
- OPAL helped her solicitor understand her past.
- She won her refugee status.
- She now mentors new members.

Mary said:

“OPAL helped me heal. I can breathe again.”

Case Study C: “Martha” — Rebuilding Confidence

Linda, a lesbian from Uganda, had spent years hiding her identity. She thought she was “cursed.”

OPAL helped her:

- Rebuild self-esteem.
- Meet other African lesbians.
- Participate in workshops.
- Feel proud of who she is.
- Won her asylum and is now at Middlesex University pursuing a degree in mental health nursing.

Martha said:

“I arrived broken. Now I am strong.”

8) Partnership Impact

OPAL’s partnerships strengthened visibility and access to support:

Partners

- Migrant organisations – such as the African Advocacy Foundation.
- NHS community teams – such as 56 Dean Street Clinic in the London West End
- LGBTQ groups – such as Peter Tatchell Foundation and UK Black Pride.
- Food-bank networks
- Legal Firms and individual legal advisors – Jerry Chore Solicitors & Westkin Associates.
- Nightclubs such as Heaven Night Club
- Academic Colleges
- Art Galleries – such as Gas Works and 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning

These collaborations expanded OPAL’s reach and professional capacity.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

OPAL entered the 2024–2025 financial year with a clear mission: to strengthen organisational capacity, stabilise operations, and enhance the quality and quantity of services provided to African LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers. Thanks to trust and foundation support, OPAL achieved notable financial growth and stability.

During this period, OPAL expanded its staffing, relocated to a new office, supported more members, and delivered 59 community events, all while maintaining strong financial discipline and transparent accounting practices.

TEAM OPAL (March 2024 – April 2025)

During this financial year, we welcomed **twelve new volunteers** to the OPAL team. Their dedication, patience, and hard work have been invaluable. We are deeply grateful for their commitment and the meaningful impact they have made.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to our wider community of supporters. Many individuals regularly contributed by providing refreshments, offering meeting spaces, documenting our activities, and promoting our work across social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Their support has played a crucial role in strengthening OPAL's social initiatives.

We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year.

Looking Forward

1. Staffing and Volunteer Capacity

- By March 2026, we will recruit one Volunteer Coordinator, one full-time staff member, and two part-time staff members to strengthen service delivery and volunteer management. This will increase our active volunteer base by at least 40% and improve volunteer retention and support.

2. Youth-Focused Services

- By September 2025, we will secure at least one long-term funding agreement (minimum 2–3 years) to expand our youth-focused services. This will enable us to deliver structured programmes that support wellbeing, confidence, and skills development for young people, reaching at least 100 beneficiaries annually.

3. Trustee Board Development

- By December 2025, we will recruit at least two new trustees with expertise in finance, safeguarding, fundraising, or legal governance, and deliver annual trustee training to strengthen oversight, accountability, and strategic leadership.

4. Partnerships and Collaboration

- By March 2026, we will establish at least five new strategic partnerships with local authorities, community organisations, and specialist service providers to increase referrals, joint delivery, and shared learning.

5. OISC Accreditation

- By March 2026, we will complete the necessary training, policies, and governance requirements to apply for OISC accreditation, enabling the organisation to provide regulated immigration advice and strengthen support for individuals navigating immigration processes.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

For the year ending 31 March 2024, OPAL's income increased from **£119,823.74** to **£151,519.47**, while expenditure rose to **£122,989.81**. This increase was primarily due to the receipt of a three-year project grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

Except for the first appointed trustees, all trustees serve **three-year terms**, appointed by resolution at a properly convened meeting. When selecting trustees, the Board considers the skills, knowledge, and experience required for the effective governance and administration of the CIO.

RISK STATEMENT

OPAL faces a range of operational, financial, and reputational risks. The Trustees regularly review activities to identify significant risks and, where possible, implement appropriate mitigation measures.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

Under charity law, Trustees must prepare annual financial statements that record all receipts and payments for the year. Trustees are responsible for:

- Maintaining accurate accounting records
- Ensuring financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011
- Safeguarding the charity's assets
- Taking reasonable steps to prevent fraud or irregularities

RESERVES POLICY

OPAL is currently heavily dependent on grant funding. Any significant reduction of the financing could jeopardise our ability to deliver essential services. To ensure sustainability, the Trustee Board has agreed to build reserves that would allow OPAL to continue core operations for at least 6 months. These reserves will be generated from unrestricted income.

SUPPORTERS

Charitable Trusts and Foundations

We gratefully acknowledge support from:

- National Lottery Community Fund
- G-A-Y Foundation (non-monetary)
- LGBT Consortium
- Baobab Foundation
- Lloyds Bank Development Grant (non-monetary)
- Lambeth Community Fund
- TFL (WCGL)
- Synergi Foundation

Individual Donors

We extend heartfelt thanks to all individual donors. Their contributions—including creative fundraising campaigns, sporting events, and community crowdfunding—have enabled OPAL to support more LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK than ever before.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees must prepare financial statements that present an accurate and fair view of the charity's financial activities and position. In preparing these statements, Trustees must:

- Apply appropriate and consistent accounting policies.
- Make reasonable judgments and estimates.
- Follow relevant accounting standards and guidelines.
- Prepare accounts on a going concern basis unless circumstances indicate otherwise.
- Maintain proper accounting records to comply with the Charities Act 2011
- Safeguard the charity's assets and prevent fraud or irregularity.

The Trustees confirm that they have provided all relevant information to the independent examiners and are aware of no undisclosed matters. Trustees have no personal financial interest in the charity.

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Trustees of OPAL

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL)

I report to the Trustees on my examination of OPAL's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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 OPAL's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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 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 that give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Swan Accounting Services Ltd

FF0F25A, CEME Innovation Centre,
Marsh Way, Rainham, RM13 8EU
Tel: 0845 467 7245
Fax: 0871 714 2256

Date: 14/01/2026

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025**

INCOME RESOURCES	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2025 Fund £	2024 Fund £
Donation & Grant	9,309.77	142,209.70	151,519.47	119,828.74
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	9,309.77	142,209.70	151,519.47	119,828.74

OUTGOING RESOURCES

Charitable Expenditure	9,309.77	113,680.04	122,989.81	121,578.48
Total Outgoing Resources	9,309.77	113,680.04	122,989.81	121,578.48

Net Incoming Resources	0.00	28,529.66	28,529.66	-1,749.74
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Balance brought forward.	0.00	21,025.88	21,025.88	22,775.57
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Balance carried forward	0.00	49,555.54	49,555.54	21,025.83
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**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31ST MARCH 2025**

CURRENT ASSET	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at Bank	56,259.54	23,073.83
Cash in Hand	0.00	360.00
	56,259.54	23,433.83

CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditor & Accruals	6,704.00	2,408.00

NET CURRENT ASSETS	49,555.54	21,025.83
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FUNDS OF THE CHARITY

Unrestricted Funds	0.00	5,283.16
Restricted Funds	49,555.54	15,742.67
	49,555.54	21,025.83

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1. Basis of Preparation of Financial Statement

The financial statements are prepared under the historic cost convention and include the results of the charity's continuing operations, as described in the Management Committee's Report.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting by Charities.

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption under Financial Reporting No. 1, as it is required to produce a cash flow statement because it qualifies as a small charity.

1.2. Incoming Resources.

1.2.1. Revenue grants are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities on the earlier date of when they are received or when they are receivable, unless they relate to a specific future period, in which they are included on the Balance Sheet as deferred income to be recognised in the coming accounting period.

1.2.2. Grants received for a specific purpose are accounted for as **restricted funds** in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA).

1.2.3. **Donations** are recognised on a **cash basis** unless income is deferred.

1.2.4. **Other Incoming Resources:** Other incoming resources are recognised on an **accrual basis**.

1.2.5. **Deferred Income:** Where a grant or donation is received in advance for expenditure in a future accounting period, recognition of that income is deferred and released in the period in which the related expenditure is incurred.

1.3. Restricted Funds

Restricted funds represent income received for specific purposes as specified by the donor. Expenditure that meets these purposes is charged to the relevant fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

1.4. Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds comprise donations and other income received or generated for the organisation's general objectives, without donor-imposed restrictions, and are available for general use.

1.5. **Designated Funds**

Designated funds are unrestricted funds that the Management Committee has earmarked for specific purposes.

1.6. **Resources Expended**

Direct charitable expenditure includes all costs incurred by **Out & Proud African LGBTI Charity** in the direct pursuit of its charitable objectives.

Management and administration expenditure includes costs not directly attributable to charitable activities and which cannot be allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

1.7. **Tangible Fixed Assets**

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of tangible fixed assets over their estimated useful economic lives. Depreciation is charged at **25% per annum on a straight-line basis**.

2.0. **TAXATION**

There is no liability to Corporation Tax because of its Charitable status

3.0. **CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS**

	2025 £	2024 £
Office Laptop		2,408.00
T-Shirts + Credit Card + legal & professional support	6704.00	

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025**

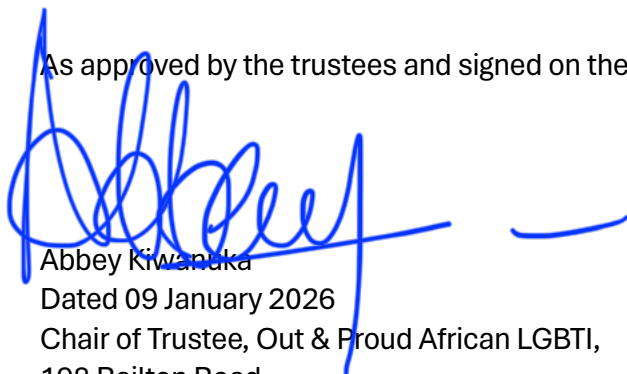
INCOMING RESOURCES	Unrestricted Fund £'s	Restricted Fund £'s	2025 Total £'s	2024 Total £'s
Individual Donation	6,459.86		6,459.86	12,406.74
Cost of Living Community Fund				66,672.00
National Lottery Community Fund		88,382.70	88,382.70	9,950.00
Baobab Foundation		10,961.00	10,961.00	15,000.00
National Express				4,000.00
Gasworks				300.00
Mayor's Fund				1,500.00
G-A-Y Foundation				10,000.00
Crowd Fund	1,788.58		1,788.58	
LGBT Consortium		22,866.00	22,866.00	
Mercantile	561.33	561.33	561.33	
Hachette UK	500.00		500.00	
National Survivor Fund		5,000.00	5,000.00	
Grounds Work		5,000.00	5,000.00	
London Community Fund		10,000.00	10,000.00	
Total Incoming Resources	9,309.77	142,209.70	151,519.47	119,828.74

OUTGOING RESOURCES

Charitable Activities

Volunteer Expenses		15,541.26	15,541.26	20,058.91
Social Events		12,287.53	12,287.53	10,922.23
Capacity Building		2,230.11	2,230.11	1,110.63
Telephone		1,881.37	1,881.37	1,787.46
Stationary/Postage		2,028.17	2,028.17	1,451.24
Subscription		2,505.47	2,505.47	2,451.42
Rent		17,215.01	17,215.01	12,190.00
Furniture/IT Equipment's		15,106.65	15,106.65	16,065.43
Fundraiser Fees		1,200.00	1,200.00	
Legal fees		1,990.00	1,990.00	650.00
Transport		6,521.66	6,521.66	20,954.73
Promotion		208.28	208.28	553.38
Hardship		5,604.59	5,604.59	17,015.03
Food/refreshment				12,707.29
T-shirts				2,083.00
Website		9,270.07	9,270.07	2,083.00
Accountant		340.13	340.13	
Interpretation		290.00	290.00	
Office Renovation		670.00	670.00	
Counselling		1,400.00	1,400.00	
Partners/International Work	9,309.77	1,283.75	10,593.52	
Workshop		14,756.34	14,756.34	
Total Expenditure	9,309.77	113,680.04	122,989.81	121,578.48

As approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abbey Kiwanuka', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Abbey Kiwanuka

Dated 09 January 2026

Chair of Trustee, Out & Proud African LGBTI,

198 Railton Road

London,

SE24 0JT

Accounts



Out & Proud African LGBTI
Receipts and Payment Account
31 March 2024

Registered Charity Number 1169497

Out & Proud African LGBTI

Reference and administrative details

For the period ended 31 December 2024

Charity number	1169497
Registered office	198 Railton Road London SE24 0JT
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year ending 31 March 2024 were: • Abbey Kiwanuka (Chair) • Mable Naluwooza • Edrisa Kiyemba • Joseph Atukunda
Bankers	Barclays Bank 193 193 Camden High St, London NW1 7PJ
Independent examiners	Swan Accounting Services Accounting & Business Consultancy 55 Stephens Road London E15 3JJ Tel: 0845 467 7245

Independent Examiners

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) This gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirement;

- To keep accounting records by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006;
and
- To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met, or

(2) In my opinion, attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....

Dated 31/12/2024.

Swan Accounting Services
Accounting & Business Consultancy
55 Stephens Road
London
E15 3JJ
0845 467 7245

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The Board of Trustees approved this report on 30 December 2024 and signed on its behalf. The Trustees present their Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024. The statements appear in the format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Introduction

Out and Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) is a grassroots group set up by, for and run by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) refugees and people seeking asylum. We started after identifying gaps and needs for inclusive support in the wake of the growing toxic anti-gay persecution people seeking asylum in the UK faced in their countries of origin for their perceived sexuality. Today, OPAL provides a safe and supportive environment for asylum seekers in the UK. OPAL registered as a charity in October 2016.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision

Our vision is a strong, inclusive, respectful African LGBTIQ+ community in the UK and worldwide.

Mission

Our mission is to support LGBTIQ+ refugees and those seeking asylum, creating a safe and inclusive environment for them. We aim to integrate those granted refugee status into UK society and guide those in the asylum procedure. Our goal is to provide resources for LGBTIQ+ refugees and those seeking asylum to build better lives and contribute to society.

Core Values

1. ***Inclusive:*** We ensure that all our events and activities are inclusive regardless of people's disability, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, partnership status, pregnancy or other circumstances.
2. ***Safety:*** We strive to create a safe social culture space and emphasise the well-being of everyone involved with OPAL.
3. ***Integrity:*** We are open and honest in everything and take responsibility for our actions. We want to be accountable to our communities and those who support us.
4. ***Belonging:*** We welcome and include all LGBTQI+ people, and we celebrate and value their range of experiences in terms of gender, religion, race, age, disability status, and class. Through our services, we remove obstacles to participation, champion equality, and promote a sense of family or home.

5. **Member-led:** *Our members are at the heart of everything we do. We are led by the lived experiences of our founder, Abbey Kiwanuka – a survivor of torture, and member trustees who are all LGBTQ+ refugees. Many of our members volunteer to support the organisation and their peers.*
6. **Collaborative:** *We work in partnership with other groups; they have been so valuable to our growth and development. We are part of a vast network of organisations comprised of activists, non-profits, and organisations in the UK who all come together to support LGBTQ+ refugees.*

OPAL COMMUNITY /WHAT WE DO

As a community, we:

- Create a safe space where all members can express themselves without fearing harm. We help openness, encouraging our members to gain confidence to openly embrace their true identities -- often for the first time and in their own time.
- Comprise many countries and cultures, sharing knowledge and experiences in our African homelands and host countries. We share knowledge and help other LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution to understand better the UK's cultures and those of countries other than their own. Navigate asylum procedures with members who have claimed asylum, supporting them in finding legal representation and medical attention if necessary and offering them "a shoulder to lean on".
- Organise workshops every Saturday around essential themes such as HIV, mental health, education, employment, financial concepts and legal advice from visiting qualified legal advisers. We also invite doctors, advocates and academics to facilitate these workshops. Sometimes, our own professionally qualified members facilitate our workshops.
- Organise weekly social gatherings, enabling members to interact with each other, including house parties, beach parties, and summer parties in parks to promote visibility and boat cruise parties. We offer a family to many of our members who have left families behind, relieving our members from hectic asylum procedures and promoting mental health.

OUR 31st March 2023 TO 31st March 2024 -- RESULTS

Our achievements briefly during the financial year 31 March 2023 – 31 March 2024:

- a. We supported community members in navigating the challenging asylum process in the UK. Among those granted refugee status in the UK were 47 individuals from Uganda, five from Ghana, two from Cameroon, two from Kenya, three from Tanzania, and eight from Nigeria.
- b. 912 LGBTIQ+ community members were reached.

- c. We organised eight Asylum Legal Support Workshops, which were facilitated by solicitors. On average, 37-45 people attended each workshop.
- d. Six HIV Awareness Workshops and, on average 42 people attended.
- e. We organised three demonstrations (Ghana Embassy, Commonwealth Meeting in London, and Rwanda Policy)
- f. We supported 23 community members in joining educational institutions.
- g. 42 Social events, and each attended, on average, 35-45 community members.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes we wanted to see in our client group included:

- a. Reduction in anxiety, depression, and related post-traumatic symptoms.
- b. Increased ability to articulate traumatic history and withstand the challenges of asylum procedure.
- c. Reduced isolation through organising various activities to combat it.
- d. Increased sense of belonging and integration into British society.
- e. An increased sense of well-being and individuals' meaning and purpose in life.
- Supporting our community members in navigating the asylum procedure and winning their cases.
- f. Provide financial assistance to those in need through hardship funds.

Outcomes Achieved

In reflecting on our EOY March 2023, our community members' anonymous annual survey respondents said:

- a. 95% felt that their mental health has improved because of being part of OPAL
- b. 95% felt more optimistic about the future.
- c. 80% felt "more listened to".
- d. 96% felt more able to access advice, information and support on housing,
- e. 100% of the participants felt that they had made at least one friend and had someone to call a friend or communicate with in case they were distressed or going through a difficult time.

- f. 70% of respondents reported feeling supported when they needed financial assistance.

"I experience a profound sense of belonging and security within my new community each time I attend the weekly social event. I am no longer apprehensive about any circumstances. I can express affection towards my girlfriend with complete confidence and without fear of repercussions—an outcome I would have previously deemed unattainable in my home country. A member from Uganda

CASEWORK SERVICES

We have been able to refer many of our members to specialist legal and third-sector support, thanks to our connections with those organisations – this includes law firms specialising in “outside of the rules” family reunion and complex immigration matters,

In 2023-2024, We supported:		
NO	Issue	Support Offered
116 Members	Dealing with asylum issue	By providing assistance to access specialised legal support and guidance on how to apply for asylum and give testimony in immigration tribunals.
66 Members	Dealing with a housing issue or homelessness	By advocating, making referrals and providing advice.
18 Members	Struggling to access mental and physical health care	By ensuring their voice is heard and making referrals to support.
8 Members	Who the Home Office dismissed their asylum cases	By referring them to good lawyers and support to document their evidence and testify in their Immigration Tribunals.
4 Members	Family reunion	Referring them to legal advisors and fundraising for their legal advice.

OPAL Music & Dance Project

We have continued our Music and Dance Project, which we started in 2021. The project has allowed members to learn new contemporary dance styles, socialise with others, play games, and enjoy delicious meals. Our members have been invited to perform at UK Black Pride and many community events in London.

We look forward to continuing to provide these fantastic experiences for OPAL members for many years.

One hundred forty-four members participated in the project, and, on average, 26 members each session. OPAL members highly value socialising with their peers and connecting with their community. One member described their experience of being a part of OPAL as feeling "at home," demonstrating the significance of individuals being part of a community and feeling connected to their environment and those around them. OPAL gives members a sense of belonging and a nurturing atmosphere to cultivate meaningful relationships.

POLICY & CAMPAIGNS.

Our campaign against the Home Office Rwanda Policy was driven by our passionate mission to speak up for the rights of LGBTQ+ refugees. We argued that the policy would have a negative impact on asylum seekers who entered the UK unlawfully or through deception, pushing many into the hands of traffickers and increasing cases of domestic servitude. We contacted our allies in the House of Commons and Lords to raise awareness of the policy's implications and advocated internationally to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ in countries such as Uganda with anti-gay laws.

Additionally, OPAL provided a platform for members to share their experiences, and we contributed to research about the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees in the UK. We hope these efforts will help bring about changes in policy and practice and raise public understanding of the challenges our members face.

TEAM OPAL

We welcomed 12 new volunteers to our team. Their dedication, patience, and hard work over the past year have been truly invaluable to us. We are genuinely grateful for their contributions. Furthermore, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the community members who have demonstrated their unwavering support. Whether providing nourishment, arranging meeting spaces, documenting our activities, or promoting our work on social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and others, their efforts have played a crucial role in the success of OPAL social initiatives. Our entire team is sincerely thankful for the assistance and support received from all those involved, and we eagerly anticipate the opportunities that the upcoming year will present.

Looking forward

The trustees looking forward hope to:

- Substantially increase the number of volunteers and support for them by employing a volunteer coordinator
- Seek long-term funding for the provision of youth work.
- Review and implement new approaches to employment projects.
- Strengthen, enlarge, and upskill the trustee team.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During the year ending on 31st March 2024, our income increased from £59,581.65 to £119,823.74, and our expenditure increased by £84,772.40. This was due to receiving a one-time restricted cost of living grant of £66672 from the National Lottery Community Fund, which we were required to use over six months.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment, the charity trustees must consider the skills, knowledge, and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

RISK STATEMENT

The charity is exposed to various risks - be they operational, financial, or reputational. The trustees review the charity's activities regularly to identify significant risks, and, where possible, they take appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

Charity law requires us, as Trustees, to prepare financial statements for each accounting year, which record the charity's receipts and payments for the year.

We are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the charity's financial position and enable us to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

We also have a responsibility to safeguard the charity's assets and take reasonable steps to prevent fraud or other irregularities.

RESERVES POLICY

OPAL is currently dependent mainly on grant funding to sustain its activities. This means that if there were to be a shortfall in grant funding, OPAL would likely have to close services. To avoid closure if funding difficulties were to happen, the Trustee Board has agreed to keep a certain level of financial reserves to ensure that primary operations can continue for six months minimum. The main concerns of the Trustee Board are to provide staff with the ability to continue working, primarily to secure new funding so clients can move on to other services. Reserves will be built up from unrestricted income.

Key activities

Outreach: We leveraged our social media networks, such as our YouTube Channel, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok via our website, to reach as many people as possible. We promoted our work online, visited detention centres, and forged partnerships with the NHS, local authorities, and Doctors of the World. Furthermore, many organisations and individuals referred LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers to OPAL, and other members learned about our work through online searches or word of mouth from people we have supported.

Assessment: The initial evaluation was conducted to identify the individual's needs and provide them with the necessary support. We invited people to our office, where a team of male, female and trans people were available to talk to. We ensured everyone felt comfortable and safe to open up and discuss their needs. For privacy and confidentiality, private rooms were provided where words spoken in confidence could not be overheard. We also explained our services and the expectations we had of our members. Furthermore, if needed, we connected members to external support networks such as lawyers, therapists, housing associations, social workers, or physical or psychological trauma specialists.

Workshops: OPAL hosted weekly seminars for its members, facilitated by experienced OPAL volunteers or respected external speakers who are experts in their field. Our workshops sought to enhance understanding of issues specific to LGBTQ+ refugees and to empower members with the skills needed to settle in a new country successfully. These seminars covered topics such as 'coming out' and the consequences of concealing one's identity, as well as educational sessions on physical, mental, and sexual health, finding safe housing as an LGBTQ+ asylum seeker, and an overview of LGBTQ+ rights in the UK.

Social events and reducing isolation: We continued with our social events and provided opportunities for members to connect, socialise, and share experiences and encouragement.

At OPAL, advocacy is a crucial aspect of our work. We understand that members face challenges when navigating the asylum process, and we strive to provide comprehensive support in all areas. Our team has attended immigration tribunals and engaged with the Home Office and local authorities on behalf of our members, ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance to express themselves and live comfortably. Additionally, we offer ongoing support, including access to food banks and homeless shelters, help with letter writing and more. Our office is open from Monday to Friday, and members can seek legal support, welfare assistance, financial aid, help with CV writing, form filling, and finding volunteer opportunities. We have even helped members volunteer with organisations like Gasworks, a non-profit community arts space, and the Peter Tatchell Foundation. We aim to provide members with the resources and support they need to succeed.

SUPPORTERS

Charitable trusts and foundations

We received grants from the following foundations:

- National Lottery Community Fund (Cost of Living Fund)
- Black Lives Matter (UK)
- G-A-Y Foundation
- Baobab Foundation
- National Express
- Lloyds Bank Development Grant (No monetary grant)

Individual donors

We received significant donations from individuals whose support has allowed OPAL to support more LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK than ever before. These donors include some who have run creative initiatives, crowdfunding campaigns, and sporting events to raise funds for OPAL.

Plans for the Year Ahead

- Undertaking achievement training.
- Obtain Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) certificate
- Restructure the governing committee.
- Engage in upskilling our fundraising knowledge.
- Identify charities we do the same to partner with for better success.
- Move into a bigger Office Space
- Two full-time and one part-time staff

Key Fundraising Objectives

- **To increase £200,000 in income** by the year ending 31st March 2025 to ensure a smooth running of the organisation and to expand our work.
- **Marketing:** Increase charity awareness among all stakeholders and potential donors by 2025. Strive to become an organisation capable of influencing policies that affect LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in the UK and a first contact for African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in London.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** We will Create a strong culture of partnership and collaboration by proactively promoting approaches to creating new funding and service provision opportunities for African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. By 2025, we will seek to maintain current partnerships and develop at least three new partnerships/collaborations.
- **Service provision:** We will develop a culture of innovation and transformation for all our services and activities to expand our reach and impact on the lives of African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees through their involvement in

service development. By 2025, we will seek to develop or enhance at least two projects annually.

- **Impact measurement**: We also aim to create an organisational learning culture to understand better the intended and unintended outcomes we achieve and better articulate our impact on the lives of the African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees we support. In addition, we will have developed a clear and concise theory of change and evaluation framework to better capture and share our impact by the end of 2025.

Our goal is to broaden our reach in supporting LGBTIQ+ individuals seeking asylum and engage with a broader audience by implementing pioneering initiatives such as workshops, seminars, newsletters, press releases, and various other ventures. We acknowledge the significance of obtaining supplementary funding to sustain these endeavours. We are grateful for the kindness of our benefactors, including those who generously donate and fundraise on our behalf.

Statement of Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees must prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and accurate overview of the charity's financial activities and position, including the net income or expenditure of the charity for the year. In preparing these statements, the trustees are required to:

- Choose appropriate accounting policies which must be consistently applied.
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates where required;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Collate financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is believed that the charity will not continue to operate.
- The Trustees and Treasurer are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy, the charity's financial position at all times. This enables them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees and Treasurer are also responsible for safeguarding the charity's assets and must, therefore, take appropriate steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees state that they are aware of any relevant audit information that the independent examiners should be informed of. They also confirm that they have taken all necessary measures to obtain and communicate all relevant examination information to the independent examiners.

The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**

INCOME RESOURCES	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2024 Fund £	2023 Fund £
Donation & Grants	22,706.74	97,122.00	119,828.74	59,581.65
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Incoming Resources	22,706.74	97,122.00	119,828.74	59,581.65
OUTGOING RESOURCES				
Charitable Expenditure	20,623.58	100,954.90	121,578.48	36,806.08
Total Outgoing Resources	20,623.58	100,954.90	121,578.48	36,806.08
Net Incoming Resources	2,083.16	-3,832.90	-1,749.74	22,775.57
Balance brought forward	3,200.00	19,575.57	22,775.57	0.00
Balance carried Forward	5,283.16	15,742.67	21,025.83	22,775.57

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31ST MARCH 2024**

	2024	2023
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	23,073.83	22,544.00
Cash in Hand	360.00	231.18
	<u>23,433.83</u>	<u>22,775.18</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors & Accruals	2,408.00	
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>21,025.83</u>	<u>22,775.18</u>
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY		
Unrestricted Funds	5,283.16	3,200.52
Restricted Funds	15,742.67	19,575.04
	<u>21,025.83</u>	<u>22,775.56</u>

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**

1) ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1. Basis of preparation of Financial Statement

The financial statements are prepared under the historic cost convention and include the results of the charity's operations which are described in the Management Committee's Report and all of which are continuing.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting by Charities.

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption of Financial Reporting No 1 from the requirements to produce a cash flow statement on the grounds that it qualifies as a small charity.

1.2. Incoming Resources.

- 1.2.1. Revenue grants are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities on the earlier date of when they are received or when they are receivable, unless they relate to specific future period, in which case they are included on the Balance Sheet as deferred income to be recognised in the future accounting period.

1.2.2. Grants received for specific purpose are accounted for as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.2.3. Donations

Donations are accounted for on a cash basis unless deferred.

1.2.4. Other incoming resources

Other incoming resources are accounted for on an accrual basis.

1.2.5. Deferred Income

Where a grant or donation is received in advance for expenditure in a future accounting period recognition of that income is deferred and released in the period in which the expenditure is incurred.

1.3. Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

1.4. Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the organisation without further specific purpose and are available for general funds.

1.5. Designated Funds

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Management Committee for particular purposes.

1.6. Resources Expended

Direct charitable expenditure includes all expenditure incurred by Out & Proud African LGBTI Charity in direct pursuit of its charitable objectives.

Management and administration expenditure includes all cost not directly related to the charitable activities and which cannot be allocated to direct charitable expenditure.

1.7. Tangible fixed Assets

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets over their estimated useful lives. Depreciation is charged at 25% straight line on the cost of the asset.

2.0. TAXATION

There is no liability to Corporation Tax because of its charitable status.

3.0. CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Office Laptop	<u>2,408.00</u>	<u>00</u>

**OUT & PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024**

INCOMING RESOURCES	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	Fund	Fund	Total	Total
Individual Donations	12,406.74		12,406.74	17,626.77
Cost of Living Community Fund		66,672.00	66,672.00	
LGBT Consortuim Fund				5,800.00
Baobab Foundation		15,000.00	15,000.00	
National Express		4,000.00	4,000.00	
Gasworks	300.00		300.00	
BLM				30,000.00
UK Black Pride				5,000.00
Mayor's Fund		1,500.00	1,500.00	
National Lottery Community Fund		9,950.00	9,950.00	1,154.88
G-A-Y Foundation	10,000.00		10,000.00	
Total Incoming Resources	22,706.74	97,122.00	119,828.74	59,581.65

OUTGOING RESOURCES

Charitable Activities				
Volunteer expenses	7,230.00	12,828.91	20,058.91	
Social Events	3,200.00	6,372.58	9,572.58	
Capacity Building		1,110.63	1,110.63	4,562.00
Telephone		1,787.46	1,787.46	850.98
Stationary/Postage		1,451.24	1,451.24	179.13
Subscription		2,451.42	2,451.42	895.97
Rent		12,190.00	12,190.00	9,073.00
Furniture/IT	5,800.00	10,265.43	16,065.43	6,728.99
Fundraiser Fees				840.00
Legal fees		650.00	650.00	880.00
Transport		20,954.73	20,954.73	4,416.80
Boat Hire				4,132.99
Promotion		553.38	553.38	
Hardship	2,310.58	14,704.45	17,015.03	763.00
Food/refreshement		12,707.29	12,707.29	3,483.22
T-shirts	2,083.00		2,083.00	
Website		2,927.38	2,927.38	
Accountant				
Total Expenditure	20,623.58	100,954.90	121,578.48	36,806.08

As approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

.....
Abbey Kiwanuka

Dated 05 January 2025

Chair of Trustees, Out & Proud African LGBTI,

198 Railton Road,
London
SE24 0JT

Accounts

Charity registration number: 1169497



Financial Annual Report
For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Out & Proud African LGBTI

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Out & Proud African LGBTI

Reference and Administrative Details

Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

CHARITY INFORMATION

Trustees

- Abbey Kiwanuka
- Edrisa Kiyemba
- Mable Naluwooza

Charity Registration Number

1169497

Registered Office

198 Railton Road
London,
SE24 0JD

Bankers

Barclays Bank
193 Camden Town
London
NW1 7PJ

Independent examiners

Swan Accounting Services
Accounting & Business Consultancy
55 Stephens Road
London, E15 3JJ
Tel: 0845 467 7245

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

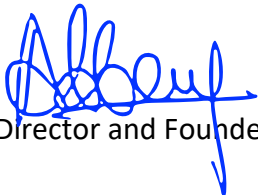
Over the past year, OPAL has made an incredible, humbling, and life-changing impact on many LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees throughout the UK. This success is due to the unwavering support of donors, volunteers, staff, trustees, and other stakeholders who have helped raise the charity's profile and extend its reach.

At OPAL, we have shared many memorable moments, watching individuals who lacked hope rise to become business owners and university students. We have seen community members who were at their breaking point now volunteering to provide comfort and assistance to other members facing difficulties such as the asylum process and mental health issues. We are a family dedicated to helping and uplifting one another.

It has been a great honour and privilege to be part of OPAL's fantastic story, and it is a cause that is very close to my heart. I want to thank everyone who has supported us, including members, volunteers, funders, friends, and other stakeholders. Without your support, OPAL would not exist. We appreciate your dedication and ask that you continue to support our work and encourage your friends to do the same.

I am hopeful for the future of OPAL as we continue to expand our outreach and make lasting changes.

Abbey Kiwanuka



Director and Founder

Date: 29 August 2023

Independent Examiners

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 March 2023

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



.....

Date: 20/09/2023

Swan Accounting Services
Accounting & Business Consultancy
55 Stephens Road
London
E15 3JJ
0845 467 7245

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Board of Trustees approved this report on 04 September 2023 and signed on its behalf. The Trustees present their Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023. The statements appear in the format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Introduction

Out and Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) is a grassroots group set up by, for and run by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) refugees and people seeking asylum. We started after identifying gaps and needs for inclusive support in the wake of the growing toxic anti-gay persecution people seeking asylum in the UK, faced in their countries of origin for their perceived sexuality. Today OPAL provides a safe and supportive environment for those seeking asylum in the UK. OPAL registered as a charity in October 2016.

Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision

Our vision is a strong, inclusive, respectful African LGBTIQ+ community in the UK and worldwide.

Mission

Our mission is to support LGBTIQ+ refugees and those seeking asylum, creating a safe and inclusive environment for them. We aim to integrate those granted refugee status into UK society and guide those in the asylum procedure. Our goal is to provide resources for LGBTIQ+ refugees and those seeking asylum to build better lives and contribute to society.

Core Values

- a. Inclusive: We ensure that all our events and activities are inclusive regardless of people's disability, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, partnership status, pregnancy or other circumstances.
- b. Safety: We strive to create a safe social culture space and emphasise the well-being of everyone involved with OPAL.
- c. Integrity: We are open and honest in everything and take responsibility for our actions. We want to be accountable to our communities and those who support us.
- d. Respect: We believe everyone is equal and deserves the same courtesy, care, and attention. Therefore, we respect the rights, wishes and feelings of our service users and campaign for their rights to be respected through the asylum and immigration system.

- e. *Belonging:* We welcome and include all LGBTQI+ people, and we celebrate and value their range of experience in terms of gender, religion, race, age, disability status and class. In addition, we remove obstacles to participation, champion equality, and promote a sense of family or home through our services.
- f. *Member-led:* Our members are at the heart of everything we do. We are led by the lived experiences of our founder, Abbey Kiwanuka – a survivor of torture, and member trustees who are all LGBTQ+ refugees. Many of our members volunteer to support the organisation and their peers.
- g. *Collaborative:* We work in partnership with other groups; they have been so valuable to our growth and development. We are part of a vast network of organisations comprised of activists, non-profits, and organisations in the UK who all come together to support LGBTQ+ refugees.

OPAL COMMUNITY /WHAT WE DO

As a community, we:

- Create a safe space where all members can express themselves without fearing harm. We help openness, encouraging our members to gain confidence to openly embrace their true identities -- often for the first time and in their own time.
- Comprise many countries and cultures, sharing knowledge and experiences in our African homelands and host countries. We share knowledge and help other LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution to understand better the UK's cultures and those of countries other than their own. Navigate asylum procedures with members who have claimed asylum, supporting them in finding legal representation and medical attention if necessary and offering them "a shoulder to lean on".
- Organise workshops every Saturday around essential themes such as HIV, mental health, education, employment, financial concepts and legal advice from visiting qualified legal advisers. We also invite doctors, advocates and academics to facilitate these workshops. Sometimes our own professionally qualified members facilitate our workshops.
- Organise weekly social gatherings, enabling members to interact with each other, including house parties, beach parties, and summer parties in parks to promote visibility and boat cruise parties. We offer a family to many of our members who have left families behind, relieving our members from hectic asylum procedures and promoting mental health.

OUR 2022-2023 -- RESULTS

Our achievements briefly during the financial year 31 March 2022 – 31 March 2023:

- a. 31 members obtained their refugee status in the UK.
- b. 784 LGBTQ+ community members were reached.
- c. 56 LGBTQ+ community members joined the group.

- d. 13 Asylum Legal Support Workshops. (Facilitated by legal advisors)
- e. 8 HIV Awareness Workshops.
- f. 6 Contributions to News and Media.
- g. 12 Podcast episodes.
- h. 120 Social Activities (including two house parties, two men's retreats, three women's retreats, two beach parties).
- i. 6 community members graduated from universities.
- j. 1,422 casework sessions and actions to prevent food poverty, destitution and homelessness, improve access to education and training, and help our members navigate the asylum process and find good legal advice.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes we wanted to see in our client group included:

- Reduction in anxiety, depression, and related post-traumatic symptoms.
- Increased ability to articulate traumatic history and withstand the challenges of asylum procedure.
- Reduced isolation through organising various activities to combat it.
- Increased sense of belonging and integration into British society.
- An increased sense of well-being and of individuals' meaning and purpose in life.
- Supporting our community members to navigate the asylum procedure and winning their cases.
- Provide financial assistance to those in need through hardship funds.

Outcomes Achieved

In reflecting on our EOY March 2023, our community members' anonymous annual survey respondents said:

- 90% felt that their mental health has improved because of being part of OPAL.
- 95% felt more optimistic about the future.
- 80% felt "more listened to".
- 90% felt more able to deal with the effects of trauma, including depression and anxiety.
- 96% felt more able to access advice, information and support on housing, education, benefits, etc.
- Improvement in members' involvement in decision-making and sense of agency.
- 70% of respondents reported feeling supported when they needed financial assistance.

"Whenever I come to the weekly social, I feel a sense of belonging and security with my new family. I am no longer scared of anything, and I can kiss my girlfriend with absolute confidence and without any fear of reprisal - something I would never have thought possible in my home country". Members from Nigeria

CASEWORK SERVICES

We have been able to refer many of our members to specialist legal and third-sector support, thanks to our connections with those organisations – this includes law firms specialising in "outside of the rules" family reunion and complex immigration matters,

community care law firms, homelessness organisations, counselling and mental health support organisations, mentoring and educational organisations, and many more. We have worked on 97 cases (including immigration and asylum issues, social services disputes, housing and homelessness, health and mental health matters, family reunion cases and more) to support our members with their special needs. Of those 97 cases, 47 have been resolved and closed, while 50 are still ongoing and being worked on. In addition, we also work with social services and advocate for vulnerable people when their voices aren't heard.

In 2022-2023, our organisation has supported:

NO	Issue	Support Offered
46 Members	Dealing with asylum issue	By giving help to access specialist legal support and support on how to claim asylum and go to testify in immigration tribunals.
26 Members	Dealing with a housing issue or homelessness	By advocating, making referrals and providing advice.
16 Members	Struggling to access mental and physical health care	By ensuring their voice is heard and making referrals to support.
9 Members	Who the Home Office dismissed their asylum cases	By referring them to good lawyers and support to document their evidence and testify in their Immigration Tribunals.
6 Members	Family reunion	Referring them to legal advisors and fundraising for their legal advice.

OPAL Music & Dance Project

In 2021, members of OPAL came up with various activities such as football, dance & music, and running projects. We were proud to have taken on the dance & music project successfully. This allowed members to learn new contemporary dance styles, socialise with others, play games, and enjoy delicious meals. Our members were invited to perform at many community organisations, including the England vs. Uganda Netball match at the O2 Arena in July 2022. They were also asked to perform various functions, allowing them to learn a new skill and stay fit and healthy.

We look forward to continuing to provide these fantastic experiences for OPAL members in for many years.

Number of OPAL members who attended OPAL Dance and Voice	146 OPAL Members
Average attendance per week across the last 6 months of the financial year	22 OPAL Members

OPAL members highly value socialising with their peers and connecting with their community. One member described their experience of being a part of OPAL as feeling "at home", which shows how significant it is for individuals to be part of something and feel connected to their environment and those around them. OPAL gives members a sense of belonging and a nurturing atmosphere to cultivate meaningful relationships.

POLICY & CAMPAIGNS.

Our campaign against the Home Office Rwanda Policy was driven by our passionate mission to speak up for the rights of LGBTQ+ refugees. We argued that the policy would have a negative impact on asylum seekers who entered the UK unlawfully or through deception, pushing many into the hands of traffickers and increasing cases of domestic servitude. We contacted our allies in the House of Commons and Lords to raise awareness of the policy's implications and advocated internationally to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ in countries such as Uganda with anti-gay laws.

Additionally, OPAL provided a platform for members to share their experiences, and we contributed to research about the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees in the UK. We hope that these efforts will help to bring about changes in policy and practice and raise understanding among the public about the challenges faced by our members.

Campaign against the Nationality and Borders Bill

Before the Nationality and Borders Bill was given Royal Assent, we campaigned against this cruel legislation that will cause harm to those seeking asylum in the UK.

What we achieved:

- A submission to the Government consultation on the Nationality and Borders Bill.
- Joined the Refugees Welcome Rally in London.
- Protested with Amnesty International to stop the Rwanda Flights in London.

Voice in media

We have contributed to many news articles in mainstream UK newspapers and tabloids. In the UK, concerning the plight of LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum and refugees in the UK and globally, most recently in countries that criminalise homosexuality and others that have introduced or enacted new anti-gay laws.

TEAM OPAL

In 2022-23, the OPAL Service welcomed 12 new volunteers. Their patience and hard work over the past year have been truly appreciated. We want to extend our deep gratitude to them, as well as the community members who have shown support by bringing food, setting up meeting places, documenting our work & posting it on our social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, or otherwise helping to make the OPAL socials a success. We also replaced four trustees with two new energetic trustees, resulting in four trustees. Our team sincerely appreciates the help and support from all those involved, and we look forward to what the next year will bring.

Looking forward

The trustees looking forward hope to:

- Substantially increase the number of volunteers and support for them by employing a volunteer coordinator
- Seek long-term funding for the youth work provision.
- Review and implement new approaches to employment projects.
- Strengthen, enlarge, and upskill the trustee team.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During 2022/2023, our income grew from £39,599.24 to £59,581.65 and expenditure decreased by £10,427.46. As a result, the cash held by the charity increased by £30,411.41.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

RISK STATEMENT

The charity is exposed to various risks - be they operational, financial, or reputational. The trustees review the charity's activities regularly to identify significant risks, and, where possible, they take appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

Charity law requires us as Trustees to prepare financial statements for each accounting year, which record the receipts and payments of the charity for the year.

We are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the charity's financial position and enable us to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

We also have a responsibility to safeguard the assets of the charity and to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud or any other irregularities.

RESERVES POLICY

OPAL is currently dependent mainly on grant funding to sustain its activities. This means that if there were to be a shortfall in grant funding, OPAL would likely have to close services. To avoid closure if funding difficulties were to happen, the Trustee Board has agreed to keep a certain level of financial reserves to ensure that primary operations can continue for six months minimum. The main concerns of the Trustee Board are to provide: that staff can continue working, primarily to secure new funding so clients can move on to other services. Reserves will be built up from unrestricted income.

Key activities

Outreach: We leveraged our social media networks, such as our YouTube Channel, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok via our website, www.africanlgbti.org, to reach as many people as possible. We promoted our work online, visited detention centres, and forged partnerships with the NHS, local authorities, and Doctors of the World. Furthermore, many organisations and individuals referred LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers to OPAL, and other members learned about our work through online searches or word of mouth from people we have supported.

Assessment: The initial assessment was conducted to identify the individual's needs and provide them with the necessary support. We invited people to our office, where a team of male, female and trans people were available to talk to. We ensured everyone felt comfortable and safe to open up and discuss their needs. For privacy and confidentiality, private rooms were provided where words spoken in confidence could not be overheard. We also explained our services and the expectations we had of our members. Furthermore, if needed, we connected members to external support networks such as lawyers, therapists, housing associations, social workers, or physical or psychological trauma specialists.

Workshops: OPAL hosted weekly seminars for its members, facilitated by experienced OPAL volunteers or respected external speakers who are experts in their field. Our workshops sought to enhance understanding of issues specific to LGBTQ+ refugees and to empower members with the skills needed to settle in a new country successfully. These seminars covered topics such as 'coming out' and the consequences of concealing one's identity, as well as educational sessions on physical, mental, and sexual health, finding safe housing as an LGBTQ+ asylum seeker, and an overview of LGBTQ+ rights in the UK.

Social events and reducing isolation: We continued with our social events and provided opportunities for members to connect, socialise, and share experiences and encouragement.

We organised men's and women's retreats, house parties and end-of-the-year. Our men's retreat is a five-day retreat in Weybridge in Surrey. The retreat helped our members who attended to interact with other British-born or non-refugee black gay men in the UK. By sharing their experiences, they learn about other people's struggles. It also helped members to network and sometimes generated support for their asylum claims.

At OPAL, we believe that advocacy is a crucial aspect of our work. We understand that members face challenges when navigating the asylum process, and we strive to provide

comprehensive support in all areas. Our team has attended immigration tribunals and engaged with the Home Office and local authorities on behalf of our members, ensuring that they receive the necessary assistance to express themselves and live comfortably. Additionally, we offer ongoing support, including access to food banks and homeless shelters, help with letter writing and more. Our office is open from Monday to Friday, and members can seek legal support, welfare assistance, financial aid, help with CV writing, form filling, and finding volunteer opportunities. We have even helped members volunteer with organizations like Gasworks, a non-profit community arts space, and the Peter Tatchell Foundation. Our goal is to provide members with the resources and support they need to achieve success.

SUPPORTERS

Charitable trusts and foundations

We received grants from the following foundations:

- UK Black Pride
- Awards for All
- LGBT Consortium
- Black Lives Matter (UK)
- 56 Dean Street Clinic
- G-A-Y

Individual donors

We received significant donations from individuals whose support has allowed OPAL to support more LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK than ever before. These donors include some supporters who have run creative initiatives, crowdfunding, and sporting events to raise funds for OPAL.

Plans for the Year Ahead

- Undertaking achievement training
- Employing a part-time professional fundraiser to enable the charity to be in an excellent financial position.
- Restructure the governing committee.
- Engage in upskilling our fundraising knowledge.
- Identify charities we do the same so that we can partner with for better successful fundraising,
- Making at least four funding applications every month.
- Taking on more volunteers.
- Identifying proper volunteers
- Put the charity paperwork in order (policies, governing documents, accounts, monitoring tools, insurance) and funds to pay for our meeting space and staff
- Upskilling volunteers and members of staff

Key Fundraising Objectives

- To increase £100,000 income by %25 each year to ensure a smooth running of the organisation and expand our work.

- Marketing – Increase charity awareness for all stakeholders and potential donors by 2024. To strive to become an organisation capable of influencing policies that affect LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in the UK and a first contact for African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in London.
- Partnership and Collaboration – Create a strong culture of partnership and collaboration by proactively promoting approaches to create new funding and service provision opportunities for African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. We will seek to maintain current partnerships and develop at least five new partnerships/collaborations by 2024.
- Service provision – We will develop a culture of innovation and transformation for all our services and activities to expand our reach and impact on the lives of African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees through their involvement in service development. We will seek to develop or enhance at least two projects annually by 2024.
- Impact measurement –We also aim to create an organisational learning culture to understand better the intended and unintended outcomes we achieve and better articulate our impact on the lives of the African LGBT asylum seekers and refugees we support. In addition, we will have developed a clear and concise theory of change and evaluation framework to better capture and share our impact by the end of 2024.

Our goal is to broaden our reach in supporting LGBTIQ+ individuals seeking asylum and engage with a broader audience by implementing pioneering initiatives such as workshops, seminars, newsletters, press releases, and various other ventures. We acknowledge the significance of obtaining supplementary funding to sustain these endeavours. We are grateful for the kindness of our benefactors, including those who generously donate and fundraise on our behalf.

Statement of Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees must prepare financial statements, for each financial year, which give a true and accurate overview of the charity's financial activities and position, including the net income or expenditure of the charity for the year. In preparing these statements the trustees are required to:

- Choose appropriate accounting policies which must be consistently applied.
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates where required;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Collate financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is believed that the charity will not continue to operate.
- The Trustees and Treasurer are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time the charity's financial position, thereby enabling them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees and Treasurer are also responsible for safeguarding the charity's assets, and must, therefore take appropriate steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees state that they are aware of any information that is relevant to the audit that the independent examiners should be informed of. They also confirm that they have taken all necessary measures to obtain and communicate all relevant examination information to the independent examiners.

The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Out & Proud African LGBTI
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March, 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Fund (£)	Total 2023	Total 2022
INCOME FROM:					
Opening Bal				1,154.88	
Donations	1	17,626.77		17,626.77	17,241.26
Grants	2		40,800.00	40,800.00	15,900.00
Other Income					6,443.99
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCE		17,626.77	40,800.00	59,581.65	39,597.24
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Volunteer expenses	4				1,521.78
Event/communication					875.86
Capacity Building		4562.00			1,571.45
Telephone			850.98		1,090.40
Stationary			179.13		1,031.87
On-line Subscription			895.97		449.76
Office/Meeting Rent			9,073.00		9,717.29
IT (software hardware			533.74		1,340.20
Equipment		4,835.71			1,438.00
Office Furniture		1,359.54			
Fundraiser Fees		840.00			
Legal Fees		880.00			
Transport			4,416.80		4,328.02
Boat Hire		4,132.99			
General expenses					3,961.78
Food/Refreshment			3,483.22		5,968.92
Social/meeting/Items					1,173.13
Emergency Hardship Fund			763.00		12,765.49
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		16,610.24	20,195.22	36,806.47	47,233.98
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES				22,775.18	337.84

RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS

Total Fund Brought Forward	8,791.62
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Total Fund Carried Forward	22,775.18	1,154.88
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All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Donations.

Members' donation	17,626.77
Total	17,626.77

During FY23, we received individual donations from our community members through standing orders, attending fundraising events such as Boat Cruise Parties and House Parties, and buying some of our merchandise, i.e., We Exist T-shirts and Jumpers.

2. Grants

Grantors	Amount
UK Black Pride	5,000.00
Black Lives Matter	30,000.00
LGBT Consortium	5,800.00
	40,800.00

The UK Black Pride funds were allocated for the Voice and Dance Project and were meant to be used within six months. The UK Black Lives Matter grant, on the other hand, was awarded to cover general charity expenses and support the organisation's daily activities for 24 months. The funds from the LGBT Consortium were intended for capacity building and general expenses for a one-year period. This grant helped the charity to provide urgent and basic day-to-day necessities for its members.

3. We did not have a paid staff and depended mainly on volunteers.
4. During FY23, we acquired more podcast equipment, cameras, an outdoor PA system, and office and studio furniture.

Out & Proud African LGBTI

Balance Sheet

As Of 31 March 2023

		Unrestricted Fund (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total 2023 (£)
FIXED ASSETS				
Office Furniture/Equipment	5	6,195.30		6,195.30
CURRENT ASSETS				
Accrued Income				
Cash at bank and in hand	6	1,016.54	20,904.78	21,921.32
Depreciation				
CREDITORS:				
amount falling due within one year		-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		7,211.84	20,904.78	28,116.62
NET ASSETS		7,211.84	20,904.78	28,116.62
CHARITY FUNDS				
General Funds		7,211.84		
Restricted Funds			20,904.78	
TOTAL FUNDS		7,211.84	20,904.78	28,116.62

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 (continued)

5. Cash at the bank and in hand

Cash at bank	22544.00
Cash at hand	231.18
Total	22,775.18

OPAL maintains a small fund for transportation and food costs for members forced to survive without access to public funds or on the National Asylum Support Service's standard payment £40.85 per week.

We did not calculate the depreciation of the asset since we bought most of the assets towards the end of our financial year.

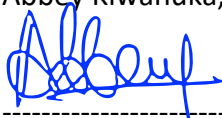
Cash in hand certificate

This cash in hand as of 31 March 2023 is as follow:

Location	Amount £s
198 Contemporary Office	231.18
Total cash in Hand	<u>231.18</u>

As approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Abbey Kiwanuka, Chair of the Board of Trustees



Edrisa Kiyemba, Trustee



Date 05 September 2023

Accounts

Charity registration number: 1169497



Out & Proud African LGBTI (OPAL)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Out & Proud African LGBTI

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Out & Proud African LGBTI

Reference and Administrative Details

Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

CHARITY INFORMATION

Trustees

- Abbey Kiwanuka
- Edrisa Kiyemba
- Mable Nalule
- Chukwuma Ewulu
- Osei Gerning

Charity Registration Number

1169497

Registered Office

198 Railton Road
London,
SE24 0JD

Bankers

Barclays Bank
193 Camden Town
London
NW1 7PJ

Independent examiners

Swan Accounting Services
Accounting & Business Consultancy
55 Stephens Road
London, E15 3JJ
Tel: 0845 467 7245

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I start my report with a huge thank you, to you, our supporters of which include members, volunteers, funders, friends and many other stakeholders. Without your moral and financial support, the Out and Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) charity would not exist; your continued commitment is valued, and we ask you to continue supporting us, and encourage your friends to support our work. We have seen many lives changed.

My appreciation also goes out to my fellow volunteers. Since we do not have paid staff, our work hugely depends on our volunteers.

We trustee also act as unpaid volunteers and directors of the charity, and provide guidance, human resources, public relations, information technology, fundraising and events assistance, policy research, office management and, importantly, support for other volunteers.

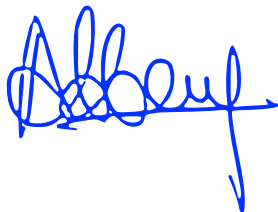
I am pleased to report a year of significant progress in developing a more robust organisation, and working towards securing many African Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals' legal status in the UK, and also working massively on their integration into British society. We have worked hard to establish a robust set of internal controls, governance and due diligence principles, and to build sounder foundations for our charity's finances.

If you would like to know more about OPAL, please look at our website and contact us.

Name Abbey Kiwanuka

Chair, Board of Directors

Date: 26 September 2022



Independent Examiners

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 March 2022

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached



.....
Date: 25/10/2022

Swan Accounting Services
Accounting & Business Consultancy
55 Stephens Road
London
E15 3JJ
0845 467 7245

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Board of Trustees approved this report on (date) and signed on its behalf.

The Trustees present their Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2022. The statements appear in the format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice for the Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

1. Introduction

Out and Proud African LGBTI (OPAL) is a grassroots group set up by, for and run by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) refugees and people seeking asylum. We started after identifying gaps and needs for inclusive support in the wake of growing toxic anti-gay persecution they have faced in their countries of origin for their perceived sexuality.

OPAL was registered as a charity in July 2016 and provides tailored support for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees, for whom very little support is otherwise available. Many organisations support refugees; however, their support often causes discomfort in forcing people to reveal their sexualities in ways inappropriate for LGBTIQ asylum seekers. OPAL is known to provide holistic support for its members' legal, physical, social, emotional and sometimes even financial needs.

2. Vision, Mission and Values

OPAL is a safe space for African LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. Our on-line presence makes us arguably one of the first contacts for LGBTIQ asylum seekers in the UK.

Vision

Our vision is to create an environment in which the freedom, rights and equality of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender and Intersex people are guaranteed and where there is no form of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Until this is possible, we believe the UK should provide a place of safety for LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, providing an environment in which everyone can flourish as their true self.

We engage with our members through one-on-one mentoring, workshops, social events, peer support, and referral to partner organisations for legal, financial, health and housing support.

Mission

To ensure the preservation of human dignity, freedom and justice, and the promotion of equality for LGBTI persons in Africa. We engage with our members through one-

on-one mentoring, workshops, social events, peer support, and referral to partner organisations for legal, financial, health and housing support.

As a community, we:

- Create a safe space where all members are free to express themselves without any fear of harm. We help openness, encouraging our members to gain confidence to openly embrace their true identities -- often for the first time, and in their own time.
- Comprise many different countries and cultures, sharing knowledge and experiences both in our African homelands and in host countries. We share knowledge, and help other LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution to better understand the UK's cultures, and those of countries other than their own. Navigate asylum procedures with members who have claimed asylum, supporting them in finding legal representation, medical attention if necessary, and offering them "a shoulder to lean on".
- Organise workshops every Saturday around important themes such as HIV, mental health, education, employment, financial concepts and on legal advice from visiting qualified legal advisers. We also invite doctors, advocates and academics to facilitate these workshops. Sometimes our own professionally qualified members facilitate our workshops.
- Organise weekly social gatherings, where enabling members to interact with each other, including house parties, beach parties, summer parties in parks to promote visibility and boat cruise parties. We offer a family to many of members who have left families behind, relieving our members from hectic asylum procedure and promoting mental health.

Values

We are:

Member-led: Our members are at the heart of everything we do. We are led by the lived experiences of our founder Abbey Kiwanuka – a survivor of torture, and member trustees who are all LGBTQ+ refugees. Many of our members volunteer to support the organisation and their peers.

Community-driven: Our focus is on building a community where everyone's expertise, skills and experiences are valued.

Collaborative: We work in partnership with other groups; they have been so valuable to our growth and development. We are part of a wide network of organisations, made up of activists, non-profits, organisation in the UK, who all come together to support LGBTQ+ refugees.

Inclusive: Even though we mostly cater for LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees from Africa, our doors are open to everyone regardless of age, disability, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, partnership status, pregnancy or other circumstance. We celebrate the diversity of our community, promote a sister-brother

model of interaction to help those who may have survived violence, and reach out actively to groups we are not yet supporting, especially marginalised groups, for example to elders in retirement homes.

3. Key activities

Outreach: We do much through our social media networks such as YouTube Channel, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok via our website www.africanlgbti.org. Many organisations and individuals also refer LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers to OPAL. Others find OPAL via online searches, or by word of mouth from people we have supported.

We cannot reach everyone who may need our help. So, we use our online presence to reach as many as we can. We promote our work online, visiting detention centres, and building partnerships with the NHS, local authorities and Doctors of the World.

Initial assessment and referrals: We invite people who need support to come to our office and meet us. We have a team of male, female and trans people and, after identifying someone's needs, we allocate each person to a peer with whom they feel comfortable to talk. We want to make everyone feel at peace and safe to talk about everything they want. We have private rooms in which words spoken in confidence cannot be overheard. We also explain what we do and what we expect of them.

The aim of the initial assessment is to know someone and understand their needs. We receive members who may need external support such lawyers, therapists, housing associations, social workers, or specialists in physical or psychological trauma.

One-to-one counselling: Members who need one-to-one counselling receive a round ten hours of informal counselling. Our social gatherings help members to alleviate loneliness. Most members have not yet applied for asylum or have nowhere to socialise and 'chill'. We have partnered with G-A-Y and Heaven to enable members to socialise in those two well-known venues LGBTIQ+ venues in London's West End, to play their own music and eat together.

"During lockdown, we were meeting online on Zoom, and after lockdown we are meeting face to face. This has helped me a lot." (Community Member 2021)

Workshops: OPAL hosts weekly workshops for its members, facilitated by OPAL volunteers, or external speakers who are leaders in their field. The aim of our workshops is to raise awareness and levels of understanding in areas specific to LGBTQ+ refugees, and to equip members with skills that help them to navigate life in a new country. These workshops range from discussions about 'coming out' and the impact of concealing your identity, to educational workshops about physical, mental, and sexual health, finding safe housing as an LGBTQ+ asylum seeker, and understanding LGBTQ+ rights in the UK.

"I was able to give my opinion about any matter happening in the group. I was also part of the decision-making process which boosted my confidence to

believe that I'm part of the community, not only a member receiving help and support but as part of the family". (Community member, 2021)

In partnership with London artists, musicians, poets, and galleries, we run creative workshops providing opportunities for members to build confidence and express themselves creatively, whilst learning new skills or practising an old one.

Social events and reducing isolation: The benefits of our social events are threefold:

To provide opportunities for members to connect with each other, socialise, and share experiences and encouragement.

To run events where LGBTQ+ refugees can meet others living locally, thus reducing isolation and helping people integrate with their new communities.

To build members' confidence in navigating and getting to know their local areas, helping people to feel more at home in the UK.

Every year, we organise a boat cruise party, a men's retreat, house parties and parties at the end of the year. Our men's retreat is a five-day retreat in Weybridge in Surrey. The retreat has indeed helped many of our members who get a chance to interact with other British born or none-refugee black gay men in the UK. By sharing experiences, they learn about other people's struggles. It also helps out members to network and sometimes generates support for their asylum claims.

Advocacy: For LGBTQ+ refugees, attending legal appointments, tribunals, GP and hospital appointments, or other meetings, can be incredibly stressful. In addition to the challenges of navigating complex, unfamiliar systems in a new language, many of our members fear detention, removal from the UK, deportation and, when using services for the first time, discrimination because of their sexual or gender identities.

At OPAL we assist our members to access the services they need, accompanying them to appointments and helping to communicate what they find hard to express, for example the effects of physical violence -- or when interlocutors fail to understand their voices.

We bear witness for members at asylum tribunals, and when they communicate with the Home Office and local authorities, ensuring that they receive the support necessary to express themselves and live safe, comfortable lives.

Ongoing support: Wherever members journey through asylum to life beyond it, OPAL is a point of support. Members can come to OPAL when in need and receive informal counselling and referrals to services otherwise inaccessible to them.

Each person's journey is different; we are as flexible as possible in the support we give. For example, sometimes we support community members to access food banks or homeless shelters, writing letters when a member is concerned that they are being treated unfairly, or simply being a listening ear to someone going through difficulties.

Our office is open from Monday to Friday. Members can thus arrange to drop in if they have questions about accessing legal support, welfare, and financial aid, writing CVs, filling forms such as travel document applications, or finding volunteering opportunities. Many of our members also volunteer with other charities, for example the non-profit community arts space Gasworks or the Peter Tatchell Foundation.

Crisis support: During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an increased need for funds to assist members urgently. In June 2020, with the support of the artist Jacob Joyce, we set up a ring-fenced emergency fund to help financially and practically during lockdown. We have used this fund to support members with travel to essential legal and medical appointments, or to buy data to attend online interviews and tribunal hearings, for emergency accommodation and food vouchers, etc. Our members have relied on, and greatly appreciated, this practical support in a time where homelessness and destitution among LGBTQ+ refugees are rife, and increasingly dangerous.

Speaking out: We are proud that so many of our members want to speak up for the rights of LGBTQ+ refugees and become activists themselves. We provide a platform for podcasts and YouTube interviews for members to share their experiences and express their opinions. We partner with other organisations to campaign for a fairer asylum process and better lives for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees.

4 Supporters

Charitable trusts and foundations

We received grants from the following foundations:

- Restricted funds from the Big Lottery Fund
- A one-off unrestricted grant from Pride London.
- A one-off restricted grant from the African Advocacy Foundation.
- An unrestricted grant from Gasworks.

Individual donors

We received a significant number of donations from individuals whose support has allowed OPAL to support an even larger number of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK than ever before. These donors include some supporters who have run creative initiatives, crowdfunding, and sporting events to raise funds for OPAL, in particular the artist Jacob Joyce and the Longfield Hall Trust and community centre, and numerous individual supporters. We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters.

5 Staff and volunteers

During the fiscal year ending 31 March 2022, OPAL has not had a paid employee. We have been able to depend on the many volunteers who have lent their skills to fundraising, policy work and event organisation, to name just a few areas of their support. The trustees would like to express thanks to everyone who volunteered with OPAL during this period.

6 Structure, governance, and management

Appointment of trustees

In the year to 31 March 2022, OPAL was managed by a board of five trustees. Our Trustees have been selected for their broad range of skills and commitment to helping OPAL achieve its vision. OPAL's constitution also stipulates that at least half of our trustees should have lived experience as LGBTQ+ refugees.

The Board of Trustees meets several times a year. All trustees contribute to the efficient and proper running and oversight of OPAL, whilst daily management of the charity is delegated to the Director and Programs Manager, who are also volunteers.

Risk management

As part of their role, all trustees have an obligation to identify, review and mitigate against risks to which OPAL is exposed, ensuring that suitable controls minimise risks of fraud and error.

7 Achievements and performance

OPAL has subsequently undertaken a successful programme of initiatives supporting its vision for EOY 31 March 2022. For reference, we list some of our key achievements and impact metrics below:

- In 2021, 76 members accessed one-to-one mentoring and counselling, typically led by someone with live experience of seeking asylum as an LGBTQ+ person. Following these sessions, 98% of members reported feeling more comfortable with their sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Thirty-two of our members were granted refugee status in the UK with the support of OPAL during 2021. All members who responded to our survey stated that they have been helped on their journey towards asylum by OPAL; we consider that the 12% unable to respond could have been prevented from doing so by the stress of asylum processes or other mental health problems.
- The British LGBT awards reorganised OPAL among the top ten outstanding charities for contributions to LGBT life in the UK.
- We supported six of our members in education who have now graduated with undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Snapshot in Numbers:

- 112 community members supported.
- 2,422 casework sessions and actions to prevent food poverty, destitution and homelessness, improve access to education and training, and to help our members navigate the asylum process and find good legal advice.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes we wanted to see in our client group included:

- Reduction in anxiety, depression and related post-traumatic symptoms.
- Increased ability to articulate traumatic history and withstand the challenges of asylum procedure.
- Reduced isolation through organising various activities to combat it.
- Increased sense of belonging and integration into British society.
- An increased sense of well-being and of individuals' meaning and purpose in life.

Outcomes Achieved

The results of our work in 2021-2022 have been positive. We managed to support community members in Greater London throughout the pandemic. In reflecting on our EOY March 2022, our community members' anonymous annual survey respondents said:

- 96% felt that their mental health has improved because of being part of OPAL;
- 87% felt more optimistic about the future;
- 100% felt "more listened to";
- 100% felt more able to deal with the effects of trauma, including depression and anxiety;
- 96% felt more able to access advice, information and support on housing, education, benefits, etc.;
- Improvement in members' involvement in decision-making and sense of agency.

"I am very grateful for OPAL, I joined OPAL when I had lost trust in everything. I was in limbo and I did not have any friends. When I joined OPAL, they became my family and helped me to find a legal advisor, who helped me to get my refugee status. I can see the light at the end of tunnel now" (Community member, 2021 workshop)

8 Financial review

The Trustees are aware that OPAL is not in a good financial position, and we need at least two full-time salaried staff.

During 2022, the Charity will review its funding and grant structures to provide further resilience where possible. The Board of Trustees agrees that the Charity is in its first phase of growth and that therefore we need some time to plan for a stable future. The Board of Trustees will monitor and review funding opportunities and establish how the charity can grow financially. We shall review our plans in twelve months.

9. Plans for the Year Ahead

In the coming year, the Trustees of OPAL have authorised the following work:

- Casework to assist LGBT asylum seekers and refugees;
- Collaboration with artists;
- Continue HIV outreach work in BAME communities;
- Continue to provide safe space to socialise for asylum seekers and refugees;
- Organising retreats, social events such as beach parties, and boat parties all aimed to help our communities' members with mental health issues;
- Employing a professional fundraiser.

We aim to be able to offer support to more LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum, reach more members of the public to garner solidarity through new and exciting projects, workshops, seminars, newsletters, press releases, etc. One important focus is to apply for more funding in order to be able to sustain our project. We remain grateful to all our funders including those who donate and fundraise for us.

10 Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees have a duty to prepare financial statements, for each financial year, which give a true and accurate overview of the charity's financial activities and position, including the net income or expenditure of the charity for the year. In preparing these statements the trustees are required to:

- Choose appropriate accounting policies which must be consistently applied;
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates where required;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Collate financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is believed that the charity will not continue to operate.
- The Trustees and Treasurer are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records that disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time the financial position of the charity, thereby enabling them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees and Treasurer are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity, and must therefore take appropriate steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that to the best of their knowledge there is no information relevant to the audit of which the independent examiners are unaware. The Trustees also confirm that they have taken all necessary steps to ensure that they are aware of all relevant examination information and that this information has been communicated to the independent examiners.

The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Out & Proud African LGBTI
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Fund (£)	Total 2022	Total 2021
INCOME FROM:					
Opening Bal					6,564.18
Donations	1	17,241.26		17,241.26	12,875.00
Grants	2		15,900.00	15,900.00	11,502.79
Other Income [dean st]	3		6,443.99	6,443.99	6,680.66
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCE		17,253.25	22,343.99	39,597.24	31,058.45
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Volunteer expenses	4		1,521.78	1,521.78	-
Event/communication			875.86	875.86	-
Capacity Building		980.00	591.45	1,571.45	-
Telephone			1,090.40	1,090.40	553.90
Stationary			1,031.87	1,031.87	2652.93
On-line Subscription		449.76		449.76	2,439.31
Office/Meeting Rent			9,717.29	9,717.29	4,950.03
IT (software hardware			1,340.20	1,340.20	-
Equipment		1,438.00		1,438.00	-
Transport			4,328.02	4,328.02	1,278.05
General expenses		3,961.78		3,961.78	-
Food/Refreshment		4,320.00	1,648.92	5,968.92	881.75
Social/meeting/Items		1,173.13		1,173.13	-
Emergency Hardship Fund		11,850.57	914.95	12,765.49	9,510.86
TOATAL EXPENDITURE		24,173.24	23,060.74	47,233.98	22,266.83
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		378.88	-716.75	-337.84	8,791.62
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Fund Brought Forward		-	1,492.75	8,791.62	
Total Fund Carried Forward		378.88	776.00	1,154.88	8,791.62

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Donations.

Donars	Amount
Community members	17,241.26

During FY22, we received individual donations from our community members, and with the help of Jacob V Joyce, we set up an emergency fund to support our members during the lockdown.

2. Grants

Grantors	Amount
African Advocacy Foundation	10,000.00
Big Lottery Big	5,900.00
	15,900.00

Funds from African Advocacy Foundation were for capacity building whereas the funds National Lottery Big Lottery Fund were to facilitate members' urgent and basic day-to-day needs during the Covid pandemic, including food & essential phone/data top-ups, tax/travel fares and emergency cost.

3. Other Incomes.

Funder	Amount
56 Dean Street	6,443.99

56 Dean Street offered us space where we hold our weekly workshops.

4. We did not have a paid staff and depended mainly on volunteers.
5. During FY22, we acquired office space and purchased podcast equipment, cameras, an outdoor PA system, and office furniture.

Out & Proud African LGBTI

Balance Sheet

As Of 31 March 2022

		Unrestricted Fund (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total 2022 (£)
FIXED ASSETS				
Office Furniture/Equipment	5	6,601.00		6,601.00
CURRENT ASSETS				
Accrued Income				
Cash at bank and in hand	6	378.88	776.00	1,154.88
		6,979.88	776.00	7,755.88
Depreciation	7			
CREDITORS:				
amount falling due within one year		-	-	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		6,979.88	776.00	7,755.88
NET ASSETS		6,979.88	776.00	7,755.88
CHARITY FUNDS				
General Funds		6,979.88		6979.88
Restricted Funds			776.00	776.00
TOTAL FUNDS		6,979.88	776.00	7,755.88

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 (continued)

Analysis of fixed asset

Items	Amount in £
Comfee fridge	149.00
Podcast set	1,200.00
Sony ZV1 camera	749.00
Sound books speaker	1,100.00
Led lights	400.00
Three-Seater Sofa (Office)	499.00
Office chairs (4)	250.00
Office table (3)	469.00
Office stool	99.00
Wall cabinet	99.00
Office carpet	150.00
Camera gimble	369.00
Studio lights	268.00
Ridge collapse trolley	150.00
Bose Pro speaker	649.00
Total fixed asset	<u>6,601.00</u>

6. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank	597.08
Cash at hand	<u>557.80</u>
Total	<u>1,154.88</u>

OPAL maintains a small fund for transportation and food costs for members forced to survive without access to public funds or on the National Asylum Support Service's standard payment £40.85 per week.

7. Depreciation of capital costs of office furniture/equipment listed in Note 5.

We did not calculate the depreciation of the asset since we bought most of the assets towards the end of our financial year.

Name of restricted fund (FYE 31 March 2022)

Big lottery	This fund was for meeting urgent and basic day-to-day needs of members during the Covid pandemic, including food & essential phone/data top-ups, tax/travel fares and emergency cost
African Advocacy Foundation	This grant was for capacity building of our community members – covering transport, facilitator and other staffs

Cash in hand certificate

This cash in hand as of 31 March 2022 is as follow:

Location	Amount £s
198 Contemporary Office	557.80
Total cash in Hand	<u>557.80</u>

As approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Abbey Kiwanuka, Chair of the Board of Trustees



Edrisa Kiyemba, Trustee



Date 05 October 2022

Accounts

**Out & Proud African LGBTI
Trustees' Report and Financial Statements**

For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Registered Charity No. 1169497

Trustees:

**OUT AND PROUD AFRICAN LGBTI CHARITY
Unaudited annual Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2020**

CHARITY INFORMATION

Trustees:

1. Abbey Kiwanuka
2. Edrisa Kiyembna
3. Meble Nalule
4. Chukwuma Ewulu
5. Juliet Ewo
6. Osei Gerning

Registered Office: 198 Railton Road SE24 0JD

Bankers:

Barclays Bank
193 Camden Town London NW1 7PJ

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019**

The chairman presents his statement for the period.

I start my report with a huge thank you, to you, our supporters. Without your moral and financial support, the Out and Proud African LGBTI would not exist, your continued commitment is valued, and we ask you to encourage your friends to support our work.

My appreciation also goes to my fellow number of volunteers. Since we do not have any paid staff, our work hugely depends on the volunteers.

We trustees act in an unpaid volunteer capacity as directors of the organisation; and provide advice, human resources, volunteer support, public relations, information

technology, policy research, office management and fundraising and events assistance.

I am pleased to report a year of significant progress in developing a more robust organisation and working towards securing many African Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals legal status in the UK and working massively on their integration in the British society. We have worked hard to establish a robust set of internal controls, governance and due diligence principles - with financial advice.

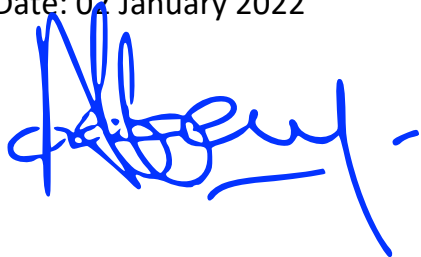
In 2020- 2021, the global world encountered the COVID-19 pandemic, and because of our work and the people we support, the pandemic affected us a lot. However, we learned how to navigate it and helped our vulnerable people through financial support, especially members who did not have income and were outside the government safety net.

If you would like to know more about our Charity, please look at our website and contact us.

Name Abbey Kiwanuka

Chair, Board of Directors

Date: 02 January 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abbey Kiwanuka', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020. **The Board of trustees approved this report on 19 December 2021 and signed on its behalf**

The trustees present their report and financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2021. The statements appear in the format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice for the Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

Objective and Activities

The charity's objects ('Objects') are specifically restricted to the following:

- 1- To promote equality, diversity for the public benefit of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons by,
 - Advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity
 - Conducting research on equality and diversity issues and publishing the results to

the public
 - Cultivating a sentiment on favour of equality and diversity; and
 - The elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation
2. To relieve the needs of LGBTI persons including asylum seekers and refugees who

are in distress or vulnerable on the grounds of their sexuality, gender identity or

immigration status.
3. To Preserve and promote physical, sexual and mental health of LGBTI Persons.

Activities

We provide advice, information, support, casework, education, awareness, research, publicity and advocacy on human rights issues and human rights law and safe space to lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and queer refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

We do casework advising and supporting individuals who are victims of human rights violations basing on their sexuality and gender identity. We advocate for their human rights and, where appropriate, refer them to specialist agencies. We also seek to influence public consciousness, value and culture regarding human rights.

OPAL works on a selected range of human rights law and issues in the UK and supports people fleeing their countries because of their sexuality. We consciously aim to avoid duplicating other human rights bodies' work, and our selective, targeted approach gives us a significant impact despite our small size.

Structure of Governance and Management

Out & Proud African LGBTI is a human rights organisation registered as a charity on 05 October 2016, no 1169497. We have a Board of Trustee (the Board) who are charged with the proper conduct of the OPAL in achieving its charitable objects. OPAL conforms fully to the Charity Commission's guidance on the requirement of charitable objects public benefits.

The Trustees regularly review the activities of OPAL to ensure that its activities are undertaken in furtherance of its stated charitable objects. The Board is made of the refugees and former refugees. All new Trustees are briefed on the Memorandum & Article of Association, policies, procedures, delegation of authority, risk register, reserves, conflict of interest and current and previous years' financial performance.

The Chair is responsible for the Board's leadership, ensuring that all Trustees can play a full part in its activities and conform to their obligation as Trustees. The Board determines the work of the Foundation. It receives regular detailed briefings, reports and recommendations from relevant trustees and the Director of OPAL on its activities, financial management and current/future plans. This enables the Board to robustly monitor, evaluate and develop the organisation to achieve its charitable objects.

Achievements and Performance

Through our casework, we are making a tangible, positive difference to the lives of people who have fled their home countries because of their sexual orientation and gender identity to the UK to seek asylum. One of our great strength is our ability to respond professionally to calls for help whenever they are from.

Very often, people contacting us are depressed, harassed and emotionally drained. OPAL is a small charity with a small budget. Despite this, we assist people in many ways; listen to their concerns Guide with information; provided tailored advice; provide moral support; and refer to specialist agencies.

This casework is provided free of charge and funded by our donors, to who we are very grateful.

Casework for the year ending 31 March 2021

The biggest category of people contacted us were those from African countries seeking asylum in the UK on grounds of their sexual orientation and gender identity. We supported 46 LGBT asylum seekers in the UK to obtain their refugee status. We did this through working with them by linking them to legal professional. 10 of the cases were fresh applications – the said members having failed their initial asylum application. We supported 13 members to go back to education. Provided 19 members who were self-isolating with food parcel

Why do people come to us?

We are one of the most visible African LGBT organisations in Europe. We have a big following on our social media, and since refugee and former refugees run the charity, people trust us, and we are known for getting things done. OPAL is the first contact for help on issues such as asylum based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Fundraising

OPAL relies on the generous support of its individual and corporate donors. Without it we would not be able to meet our charitable objectives. We fundraise for OPAL in many ways, including appeals on social media, payments for talks, organising or supporting fundraising events and applying for and receiving grants from individual organisations.

Financial Review

The accounts for the year to 31 March 2021 show that the charity's financial position is not good.

Plans

In the coming year, the trustees of OPAL have authorised the following work:

- Casework to assist LGBT asylum seekers and refugee.
- Human rights, equality and diversity talks in universities.
- Collaboration with Artists
- Continue HIV outreach work in BAME communities.
- Continue to provide safe space to socialise for asylum seekers and refugees.

- Organising retreats, social events such as beach parties, and boat parties all aimed to help our communities' members with mental health issues.
- Hiring an office space/employing a professional fundraiser.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity trustees (who are also directors of OPAL) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements under applicable law and the United Kingdom Accounting Standards.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the charity's financial position. They are also responsible for safeguarding charity's assets and taking appropriate steps to prevent fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Board of Trustee on: And signed on its behalf by Director and Chair of Trustees


Chukwuma Ewulu


Mabel May Nalle


Abbey

Income statement

Financial Statement For the FY - 2020/2021 Time Period: 26/03/2020 to 25/03/2021

Financial statements in Pound Sterling

DONATIONS AND GRANTS

DONATIONS	12,875.00	
GRANTS	11,502.79	
NET DONATIONS AND GRANTS		24,377.79

EXPENSES

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTIONS	2,439.31	
REFRESHMENTS	881.75	
TELEPHONE AND POSTAGE	553.90	
MEMBER HARDSHIP SUPPORT	9,510.86	
RENT AND FUNCTIONS	4,950.03	
TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL	1,278.05	
STATIONERY	2,652.93	
BANK INTEREST CHARGED	0.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		22,266.83

OTHER INCOME

REFUNDS	116.48	
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	6,564.18	
INTEREST INCOME	0.00	
Total other income		6,680.66

TOTAL INCOME		31,058.45
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Abbey Kiwanuka



Chukuwa Ewulu



Mable Nalule

