



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	<p>The trustees who served during the year ending 31 March 2024 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.



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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 Fund	Restricted Fund	2024 Total	2023 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