

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Registered Charity Number: 1174000



**Social Workers
Without Borders**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Trustees	3
Charity Objects	5
Direct Work	6
Education	11
Campaigns	13
Volunteer Support	15
Volunteers	17
Staff	18
Trustees	20
Structure, Governance and Management	24
Financial Review	28
Declaration	30
Statement of Accounts	31
Independent Examiners Report	33

LETTER FROM TRUSTEES

As I write this letter to introduce our sixth annual report, it is an opportunity to reflect and review not only our work but the wider context in which we operate.

In recent years, a series of legislative changes have intensified the UK's hostile environment strategy, embedding border controls into nearly every aspect of daily life. As a social work led charity, we are increasingly concerned at the way the language of “safeguarding” has been used to justify harmful, punitive immigration measures. Claiming asylum in the UK has been effectively criminalised under the guise of protecting people from “people smugglers” and “criminal gangs”. Social workers are now embedded in the Home Office via the National Age Assessment Board and age assessments are completed for “immigration purposes” rather than an assessment of children’s safety and welfare needs.

In providing Independent Social Work Reports we bear witness to the harmful impact of hostile-by-design immigration policies. This includes people with complex health needs, disabilities, mental health difficulties and extensive histories of trauma being placed in impossible situations because of their immigration status. It also includes families being torn apart by immigration policies, with decisions about separating a child from a parent being made without the procedural rigour that is required to centre on children’s rights in such life-changing decisions.

We continue to renew our commitment to social work practice that is grounded in social justice and human rights. Our vision is for social work to not be complicit with harmful immigration policies and we believe that a person’s immigration status should not determine the quality of support they receive from social workers. We use our social work practice to promote the best interests and voices of those impacted by immigration and asylum law to decision-makers through independent social work practice.

As a small charity, we have continued to grow and develop across our three main strands, as evidenced in this report. Our focus is on:

- Independent social work assessments (Direct Work)
- Education
- Campaigns

SWWB is immensely grateful for the continued support from the Tudor Trust for renewing our grant for a further three years and for new funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund. This has enabled us to create a team of paid staff, creating new roles of Managing Director, Volunteer Coordinator and Head of Direct Work as well as being able to

commission specialist external services to aid our financial management and our role as an employer. Within the Trustee Board we have also delegated specific roles and responsibilities to strengthen our governance and statutory compliance.

We continue to benefit from the hard work and commitment of our amazing volunteers who play key roles in our Steering Group and in each of our three work strands. Without their relentless passion to join with their colleagues and stand in solidarity with those adversely impacted by borders, we would not be where we are today or be able to continue.

As we look ahead and make plans for the coming year, we are confident that we have found our niche and that we do have an important role to play as a social work-led charity in this sector and we hope to attract new funding streams to enable us to increase our capacity and to sustain and strengthen our work.

Phillida Miles

Chair

CHARITY OBJECTS

Social Workers Without Borders (**SWWB**)¹ was established for the public benefit to relieve need and to promote the physical and mental health of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the UK and internationally by:

- Providing excellent social work services
- Promoting excellence in social work practice and developing a model of social work practice with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- Providing education and training to social workers and others working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

The trustees follow Charity Commission guidance on public benefit when planning and reviewing spending and activities. Social Workers Without Borders furthers its charitable objectives through its Direct Work, Education and Campaigns.

¹ Social Workers Without Borders is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its charity registration number is 1174000.

DIRECT WORK

Our Direct Work Team is made up of a dedicated team of Case Coordinators who support and supervise social workers and social work students to prepare Independent Social Work Reports. An Independent Social Work Report is a piece of expert evidence that is the outcome of a social work assessment, and makes recommendations about a person's needs, safety and welfare.

Our team of Case Coordinators are social workers who have expertise in social work practice with people with insecure immigration status and they have knowledge and experience of preparing expert evidence. Each case is allocated to a Case Coordinator, a Lead Social Work Assessor, and a Supporting Social Work Assessor. The Lead Social Work Assessor must be a qualified and registered social worker and this role is allocated to the person with the most relevant professional experience. The role of Supporting Social Work Assessor is usually allocated to new volunteers, or newly qualified social workers, or social work students.

The contribution made by our volunteers is phenomenal, and we would not be able to do the work that we do without the committed support of so many fantastic social workers and social work students. We pride ourselves on producing high quality reports, which are well received by the judiciary. Producing an Independent Social Work Report requires a lot of time and skill. We maintain the high standards of our reports, whilst also offering practitioners the opportunity for professional learning and development, by operating a robust supervision, review, and quality assurance process. To achieve this, **we harnessed 1400 hours of volunteer time in our Direct Work Team.**¹

During the period 1st April 2023-March 31st 2024, the Direct Work Team accepted 25 referrals. This figure represents an 34% decrease in case work compared to the previous year. There were a further 12 referrals received in this period that were either declined or withdrawn due to a change in the client's circumstances. Decisions to decline cases were usually due to the lack of capacity in the team meaning the piece of work could not be completed in the timeframe required by the client or because the referral request fell outside the remit of Social Workers Without Borders.

The decline in the number of cases completed this year reflects the capacity issues within our Direct Work Team. Specifically in relation to having volunteer Case Coordinators to supervise and support other volunteers to complete ISWRs. From September 2023 to January 2024, we closed our waiting list and did not accept any new referrals. This pause allowed us to catch-up on the long list of referrals we had stacked up.

During this period of pause we also had a focus on recruiting more Case Coordinators. Case Coordinators are highly dedicated volunteers who make a substantial commitment to delivering the charity's service, and are aligned with our values and ethos. The role is highly specialised, requiring

social workers who have demonstrated excellent report writing skills, rigorous understanding and application of expert witness duties, and expertise in immigration based social work. We revised our recruitment strategy and plans for inducting new Case Coordinators into the role. However, we did not identify anyone who wanted to take on the role. Many of our existing volunteers declined the opportunity to apply for the voluntary role, citing their preference to remain in a role that allows them to work directly with our beneficiaries by carrying-out the social work assessment. Alongside this we recognise that Case Coordinating is a significant role to take on in a voluntary capacity and this is also likely a contributing factor for our difficulties in recruiting to this role.

Fortunately, we are now able to employ an additional member of staff as our Head of Direct Work. From June 2024 we will have a member of staff whose remit is to manage the Direct Work strand of the charity. This increased personnel resource will enable us to address the difficulties we are facing in recruiting Case Coordinators and having consistent capacity in our Direct Work Team.

23 of the Independent Social Work Reports concerned the Best Interests of children. These included;

- 13 reports for families who are making an application for family reunion
- 5 reports for children with a parent facing deportation
- 5 reports for children facing removal from the UK

Children's rights in immigration decision-making

The cases we work involve life-changing decisions for children, such as a child being separated from their family because of an immigration decision. Independent Social Work Reports are a crucial piece of evidence, and we believe that social work assessment addressing the best interests of a child ought to be considered a key component to compliance with domestic and international law and ensuring children's access to justice.

The UK's domestic legislation sets out a duty on authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in immigration matters.² This is aligned with the UK's obligations in international human rights law, specifically the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC 1989).

Adherence to UNCRC 1989 requires decisions about a child's life to be made with primary consideration to the best interests of the child. To achieve this principle there needs to be a holistic assessment, carried-out by an appropriately qualified professional, who can provide an independent

view about the child's unique circumstances and needs. This is consistent with the interpretation of UNCRC 1989 Article 3 as articulated in General Comment 14, which states that:

*"The Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) has identified article 3, paragraph 1, as one of the four general principles of the Convention for interpreting and implementing all the rights of the child and applies it as a dynamic concept that requires an assessment appropriate to the specific context."*³

And:

*"Children are a diverse group, with each having his or her own characteristics and needs that can only be adequately assessed by professionals who have expertise in matters related to child and adolescent development. This is why the formal assessment process should be carried out in a friendly and safe atmosphere by professionals trained in, inter alia, child psychology, child development and other relevant human and social development fields, who have experience working with children and who will consider the information received in an objective manner."*⁴

The assessment facilitates children's participation in proceedings in a manner that is child-focussed and developmentally and emotionally appropriate for the child. Children have a right to be seen and heard when life-changing decisions are being made about their lives. This approach is aligned with Article 12 of UNCRC 1989 and is explained in General Comment 12 (UNCRC, 2009), which states:

*"Article 12 stipulates that simply listening to the child is insufficient; the views of the child have to be seriously considered when the child is capable of forming her or his own views."*⁵

2 of the Independent Social Work Reports concerned the needs and rights of adults. These included;

- 2 reports for undocumented adults with multiple complex needs and who were applying to regularise their immigration status on Article 8 private life grounds.

Adults with insecure immigration status: supporting people with complex needs

In addition to assessing the rights and needs of children, we have also worked with a small number of adults with multiple complex needs, such as acute mental health difficulties, physical ill-health, social isolation, destitution and homelessness. All of which present significant barriers to a person being able to resolve their immigration status and achieve the stability and safety they need.

Pro bono expert evidence and access to justice

The burden of proof in immigration and asylum matters lies with the applicant, this means that the person who is making an application to regularise their immigration status must provide the evidence to prove the circumstances that their application is based upon. The vast majority of the Independent Social Work Reports we completed were in instances where a person could not access legal aid funding, this means that there was no funding available to pay for an expert to prepare a report. People who do not have the funds to pay for a report themselves, are significantly disadvantaged in preparing their case. **We can carry-out our work without charging a fee (pro bono), and in doing so we are able to tackle barriers to justice that are the outcome of economic disadvantage.** In the period 2023/2024 we completed Independent Social Work Reports on a pro bono basis to the value of £39,805⁶

We are of the view that there are injustices built into the UK's immigration and asylum system that disproportionately impact racialised people.⁷ **We view our work as contributing to access to justice in a hostile immigration system, and our practice is grounded in a commitment to antiracist social work practice.**



Over 90% of the people we completed reports for were referred by migrant justice and legal NGOs, this includes organisations such as: Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit,⁸ Refugee and Migrant Forum for Essex and London,⁹ Praxis,¹⁰ Red Cross,¹¹ Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants,¹² Bail for Immigration Detainees,¹³ and university law clinics.

Social Workers Without Borders' Independent Social Work Reports are frequently sought by lawyers who are working in the charity sector, as such we consider our service to be a key component of the infrastructure that supports lawyers in the migration justice charity sector to ensure their clients have access to justice.

We operate a broad referral criteria and this allows us to consider referrals on a case-by-case basis and keep our decisions person-centred. This means we work with people who might slip through the gaps in other services and who do not have access to other statutory social work provision.

Referrals to our service continue to be most related to two case types: complex family reunion cases and parental deportation. SWWB received referrals for family reunification cases when the sponsor and applicant's circumstances fell outside the immigration rules and as such, they need to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances that make them eligible for family reunion. In the majority of cases this was when a former unaccompanied child is the UK-based sponsor making an application for their sibling/s or parent, or the application concerned a familial relationship in the wider family network beyond the parent-child dyad. Children with a parent with a deportation order continues to be an area of work in which SWWB receives a significant proportion of our referrals. These referrals concern British children or children who have been continuously resident in the UK for a long time, and it is their parent who is subject to immigration control. These children are at risk of being separated from their deportee parent or having to leave the UK with their parent in the event of deportation. In order to revoke a deportation order the Home Office or the tribunal must decide that it would be 'unduly harsh' to deport the parent with or without their child, this means that these children face a particularly high legal test to have their right to a private and family life upheld.

Feedback about the impact of our Independent Social Work Reports:

"Happy to report that we have been finally granted leave to remain on the basis of private life.

We wanted to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for all your hard work and dedication throughout the case. Your expertise and commitment were truly invaluable."

Beneficiary

"Independent social work reports are incredibly valuable tools. They provide comprehensive evidence of a family's situation, children's needs, and their best interests. They are key tools to ensuring decision-makers have access to independent quality evidence so they can make informed decisions. They increase the chance of better outcomes for vulnerable families who can then evidence their entitlement to the protections and support they need. The fact that SWWB can provide reports on a pro bono basis is unique, highly valued, and essential. SWWB has allowed vulnerable families the chance to secure crucial evidence where they would otherwise have no alternatives due to the capacity crisis in the Legal Aid immigration advice sector."

Solicitor, Praxis Community Projects

EDUCATION

Social work education is key to making positive changes to the social work profession. Our teaching raises awareness of the intersection between social care and immigration policy and promotes best social work practice and a rights-based approach to practice with people with insecure immigration status.

During this year we have focused our energies on recruiting a new team of Educators. In October 2023 a team of 8 new volunteers joined the education team. The team now consists of a group of people with varied experiences of social work practice and education, lived experience of migration and the UK immigration & asylum system, and activism.

We inspire future social workers to **uphold a model of social work practice that is anti-racist, grounded in principles of human rights and social justice**, and congruent to the profession's ethics, standards and the International Federation of Social Work definition of social work.²

Our Educators deliver specialist workshops for social work students. We offer teaching in-person / online. We create spaces for social work students to:

- Learn about the **harmful impact borders/immigration policy** has on all of us, and how this shows up in social work.
- Encourage thinking on how we work in **solidarity** with people & keep our **shared humanity** at the heart of our work.
- Build knowledge to offer **more care and support** and **resist complicity** with hostile policy and practice.
- To reflect on our **professional identity**.

² IFSW Global Definition of the Social Work Profession:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

Stand Up! Speak Out! A Toolkit to Resist the Hostile Environment in the Public Sector

This year saw us continue our collaboration with Migrants Organise³ and Positive Action For Refugees & Asylum Seekers,⁴ as members of the Solidarity Knows No Borders (SKNB) community, and deliver ‘Stand Up! Speak Out! A Toolkit to Resist the Hostile Environment in the Public Sector’.⁵

The Stand Up! Speak Out! Series is an annual training series of practical webinars to give public sector workers up-to-date knowledge of the rapidly changing immigration policy context and the implications for their work. We create spaces for public sector workers to reflect on their professional identity and empower them to resist complicity with hostile and inhumane immigration policy. We view education as a powerful tool for social change and we invite and inspire public sector workers to be allies in the movement for migrant justice. The series ran in 2023 and 2024.

Over the last two years, we have brought together 38 different specialist organisations and academics to deliver 49 webinars to over 2200 attendees ranging from frontline, management and senior practitioners from professions including social care, housing, employment, welfare, education & health.



³ [Home - Migrants Organise](#)

⁴ [Home - PAFRAS](#)

⁵ [Stand Up Speak Out 2024 - Solidarity Knows No Borders \(sknb.org\)](#)

CAMPAIGNS

Our campaign work continues against a backdrop of political rhetoric and policy objectives that promote the idea of illegality of migration and increase the means by which migrants can be criminalised.⁶ In the run-up to the 2024 General Election we have seen political parties from across the spectrum lean into hostile and scapegoating narratives about migration.

We focus on the intersection of immigration policy and social work practice. We have a core team of 5 volunteers who work with our Managing Director and Volunteer Coordinator to deliver our campaigning objectives. Our campaign goals are to:

- **Empower social workers to resist complicity with harmful immigration policies.**
- **Seek changes to the way that children's safeguarding and welfare needs are protected in immigration and asylum matters.**

Practice Discussion Space

Since January 2024, Campaigns volunteers have been facilitating a monthly online 'Practice Discussion Space'. This action is an outcome of a briefing for social workers about the "Illegal" Migration Act that we prepared in 2023. The purpose of this briefing was to give social workers knowledge about immigration policy changes and empower them to be able to raise their concerns about the policy in statutory workplaces. Feedback about the briefing indicated that practitioners want this kind of resource, but they did not then raise issues in their work environment. We reflected on this and decided there is a need for social workers to come and learn together about immigration policy and discuss how this impacts their work environment and organisational cultures. This is something that is also captured in the feedback from our wider volunteer network. We want to give social workers a space where they can have open, safe discussions about the intersection of social work practice and immigration and asylum policy.

Aims

- Share knowledge and learn together
- Reflect on ethical dilemmas, unanswered questions, and search for solutions
- Independent, non-judgmental, peer-to-peer support

⁶ NABA 2022 introduced new offences relating to knowingly arriving in or facilitating entry into the UK without valid entry clearance and significantly increases the sentences that people receive for such offences. The IMA 2023 severely limits the conditions under which individuals can seek asylum in the UK and extends the circumstances under which those who arrive through so-called "irregular methods" can be removed.

- Empower social workers to challenge hostile immigration policies in the workplace

How does this group work?

- Open to all social workers registered with a UK based social work regulator
- Maximum 10 people in each group + 2 group facilitators
- The space is held online, on the third Thursday of the month, 7-8.30pm

Feedback from social workers who have attended the Practice Discussion Space:

“Sharing experiences and thoughts as a group of social workers felt reassuring, validating and important. I left the session feeling invigorated.”

“I would like to be part of a movement that can create change based on our experiences, across the country we shared similar experiences and frustrations. We need to mobilise our collective thoughts and create change through action”

Unduly Harsh? Children with a Parent with a Deportation Order

We have continued to work with the European Children’s Rights Unit⁷ at the University of Liverpool, University of Birmingham, and Bail for Immigration Detainees⁸ and are preparing a report that reflects the findings of a pilot study about the impact of parental deportation.

We are focusing on deportation cases as a case study; understanding how to protect and promote children’s rights in deportation cases will deepen our understanding of how to enforce rights-related obligations in respect of all children subject to immigration and asylum law. We want to strengthen the procedural protections for children in relation to the duty to safeguard and promote children’s welfare in immigration matters.

⁷ [European Children's Rights Unit - Liverpool Law School - University of Liverpool](#)

⁸ [Bail for Immigration Detainees | Home \(biduk.org\)](#)

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Volunteers are vital and valued members of SWWB. Our volunteers work with the staff team and Trustees to deliver our objectives across all three strands of our work. Our Direct Work team is particularly dependent on the work of volunteers: every Independent Social Work Report requires a substantial amount of volunteer expertise and time, with a team, including a Case Coordinator, Lead Social Work Assessor and Supporting Social Work Assessor, all working in a voluntary capacity to complete the report.

In April 2023 Social Workers Without Borders gained our second member of staff, our Volunteer Coordinator, this has enabled us to have a renewed focus on our offer to our volunteer network. Our Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment, induction and ongoing support of our volunteers with a focus on **volunteer wellbeing and community**.

Development of Volunteer Support

This year our Volunteer Coordinator has implemented new volunteer management strategies, including:

- Creating a Volunteer Handbook so as volunteers have all their key documents and guidance in one place.
- Reviewing and implementing new volunteering policies and procedures, including an updated Volunteer Agreement.
- Overseeing a robust and proactive process for volunteer checks so as this is frontloaded. This has improved the speed at which new volunteers can take up their volunteer role.
- Designing and facilitating monthly online volunteer induction sessions.
- Increasing the quality and consistency of communication with our volunteer network.
- Initiating a process of volunteer feedback so we can learn about volunteers' experiences, enabling us to improve our service and build our community.

Impact

This increased resource to support our volunteers is having a significant impact on our delivery service, including:

- It has become a more efficient and streamlined process to identify and allocate volunteers to carry-out independent social work reports.
- Volunteers feel more supported in their roles.
- Volunteers feel more involved due to increased communications.
- There are increased opportunities for volunteers to get involved, for example our Volunteer Coordinator has on-boarded a new team of Educators, and continues to support them to develop and deliver our education objectives.
- Our volunteer network has grown. We currently have **142 registered volunteers**.

Wellbeing & Community

This year our Volunteer Coordinator sought feedback from our network specifically to learn about how we can support our wellbeing and sense of community. This was a helpful process, and this is what we learnt:

- Our volunteers want more training and development opportunities.
- When completing independent social work reports, our volunteers want to feel more prepared, have clear expectations, and a consistent approach from Case Coordinator support and input.
- Our volunteers want to be able to give feedback about their experiences after completing an independent social work report.
- Our volunteers want an online platform to connect with the organisation.
- Our volunteers want opportunities to meet each other in-person.
- Our volunteers want flexible opportunities for shorter pieces of work.
- Our volunteers are motivated by their commitment to social justice; they want more opportunities to meet at demonstrations and support campaigns.

What have we implemented since receiving this feedback?

- The induction process and ongoing support of volunteers has been improved.
- There is now a process for every volunteer to anonymously provide feedback after completing an independent social work report. There is also the opportunity for a debrief phone call.
- We have increased the consistency and quality of communications with our network: through our monthly email to all volunteers, as well as upcoming assessments, we share – events, training opportunities, ways to take action (e.g. petitions, campaigns), and resources. We also share a bi-monthly newsletter, communicating what SWWB community has been doing with the wider public, and sharing longer written pieces to share the organisation's position in relation to current affairs.
- Our campaigns group facilitate a monthly online group: 'Practice Discussion Space'. This is open to social workers and provides a space where people can access in peer-to-peer support and share experiences of social work at the intersection of immigration policy.

What else are we planning to do?

- Now we have Head of Direct Work we will be able to provide increased opportunities for training and development.
- Our new website will have a volunteer portal. This will mean volunteers can login to a section of the website and access resources, guidance and training to support them in their role.
- We would like to secure funding to have the resources to support volunteer rewards and retention, and more opportunities for in-person activities.

VOLUNTEERS

Steering Group



The Steering Group consists of 16 social workers practitioners, all of whom have a specific interest and commitment to this area of work and are active volunteers in one of the strands of our work. The Steering Group give hundreds of hours of practical support across a range of tasks. This includes acting as a Case Coordinator to support volunteer social workers to complete assessments, delivering workshops and lectures as part of our Education team, writing content for our newsletter, and contributing to our social media.

The Steering Group is made up of social workers who have extensive experience and expertise across all areas of statutory social care, and in specialist third sector organisations working with refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants.

National Volunteer Network

All volunteers undertaking assessments must complete an agreement form, have a current DBS check and provide two references before commencing work with the charity. There are always two practitioners for every assessment, the Lead Social Work Assessor must be a registered social worker with Social Work England. The Second Social Work Assessor can be a social work student or newly qualified social worker.

Volunteer feedback:

“Working on joint assessments with SWWB colleagues with time to think, write and reflect together has really reconnected me with what I love most about social work and why I became a social worker in the first place”

STAFF

Managing Director, Naomi Jackson



Naomi is a registered social worker. Naomi joined Social Workers Without Borders as a volunteer in 2017, undertaking multiple independent social work reports. In 2020, Naomi became the charity's first member of staff, taking up the role of Development Lead. In September 2023, Naomi became the

Managing Director. Naomi is responsible for leading the organisation in delivering its strategic goals and ensuring the charity operates to the highest standards.

Prior to joining Social Workers Without Borders, Naomi worked in statutory children and families social work roles, and as a family support worker in a SureStart Children's Centre where she was the lead professional working with families with English as an Additional Language.

In October 2023 Naomi also began a PhD in Law at the University of Liverpool. Naomi's research focus is about children's rights in the context of parental deportation.

Volunteer Coordinator, Vicky Shenton



Vicky joined Social Workers Without Borders in April 2023 after moving back from Germany where she was studying for a MA in 'International Social Work with Refugees and Migrants'. Vicky has worked for charities with

people experiencing homelessness, and people impacted by asylum policies (asylum seekers & refugees). In addition to work, she is part of a Greater Manchester network working to tackle enforced destitution due to immigration status.

Vicky is responsible for supporting our volunteer network and has made the induction and ongoing support to our volunteers more robust, as well as valuable improvements to the quality of communication with our network.

Head of Direct Work, Ben Feder

During this period we have secured funding to enable us to employ a Head of Direct Work. Following a successful recruitment process, Ben started his employment in June 2024.

Ben is a registered social worker with over 15 years' experience working alongside marginalised children and young people, including as a statutory social worker, a children's rights advocate and a specialist caseworker with separated young people seeking asylum. He has experience of providing expert social work evidence in immigration and family proceedings. He was also the legal services coordinator for an organisation providing specialist psychological

expert witness reports addressing the impacts of domestic abuse and trafficking. Ben previously conducted independent social work assessments as a volunteer for Social Worker Without Borders in the UK and Northern France, and has been a long-term volunteer with young people on the move in Greece. Alongside his role with Social Workers Without Borders, Ben continues to work part-time as the asylum and immigration practice lead within a local authority leaving care service. He delivers training on responding to the needs and rights of care experienced young people with unresolved immigration status and is a guest lecturer on the Goldsmiths College social work programme.

TRUSTEES

Phillida Miles, Chair



Phillida has been a director of two successful consultancy companies over the last 19 years, and has experience of tendering, contract and financial management, and business sustainability.

Her commissions have spanned organisational change, project management, interim management, service reviews, practice auditing and consultation processes. Phillida also designs and delivers a regular programme of training courses to health and social care

staff. Additionally, she creates and facilitates team and business development events and is a qualified coach (level 7 certificate in executive coaching and mentoring). Phillida is a registered social worker with over 30 years' experience. She specialises in adult safeguarding and has supported a number of statutory and charitable organisations to review their approach and policies as well as completing audits of practice and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

Her connection with Social Workers Without Borders started in April 2016 when she joined founder members volunteering in Calais to support refugees particularly unaccompanied minors. She became a trustee in 2017 when SWWB became a registered charity,

Clare Cowie, Treasurer



Clare is a city lawyer with broad legal experience in the financial services sector. Clare has a passion for humanitarian work and

has volunteered extensively with people with insecure immigration status. She delivers legal confidence sessions to members of the refugee community with Lawyers Against Poverty.

Dr Lauren Wroe



Lauren is an Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Durham University where she is in the management team for the Contextual Safeguarding research programme. Lauren is a founding member of Social Workers Without Borders, the Safeguarding and Health and Safety lead on the Board, and a Case Coordinator for the Direct Work team. Lauren is a registered social worker and has worked specifically with young people impacted by exploitation, and adults who have been trafficked. Lauren is co-editor of the book *Social Work with Refugees*,

Asylum Seekers and Migrants: Theory and Skills for Practice (Jessica Kingsley).

Lauren leads social care research in the UK and internationally specifically in relation to safeguarding and inequalities. As part of this role Lauren oversees large research grants, manages research staff and develops bids and strategies for the research programme. Lauren is an activist-scholar and uses her work to inform policy changes as well as to support those most impacted by inequalities in safeguarding, and wider society.

Lauren was awarded a PhD from the University of Manchester in 2013, where her thesis critically analysed the language of refugee advocacy organisations. Lauren has over 15 years' experience supporting families impacted by immigration control in the voluntary and statutory sector, and as a campaigner.

Molly Abraham



Molly is a UK registered social worker with experience in leaving care teams, working predominantly with separated children. She has worked in the forced migration field since

2010 and currently works as Head of Casework at CARAS, an organisation based in London working with people seeking asylum. Previously Molly has worked at a social work centre in Southern Morocco and has spent time volunteering in both Greece and Calais.

Dr Bridget Ng'andu



Bridget has nearly 25 years of experience in social work practice and education. She has practised social work in a range of settings including in a primary school in Botswana, Southern Africa, and as a frontline Social Worker in Children and Families in the UK.

Bridget is currently a Senior Lecturer and Head of Social Work at the University of Kent. She is also Co-Chair of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network at the University. Her

research interest includes race and ethnic studies, anti-racist social work (including exploring the relevance of whiteness and privilege in social work education); decolonising social work education (promoting the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and research); radical social work practice and activism; migration, refugees and asylum seekers; and exploring social work practice in the voluntary sector.

Her involvement with Social Workers Without Borders started in 2016, when she started volunteering in Calais, to support children, young people, and adults in the camp. Bridget was also involved in undertaking Best Interest Assessments in the camp to support unaccompanied minors and families applying for immigration status in the UK.

Erfan Alaei



Erfan is a UK registered social worker. While studying for his Bachelor of Social Work in Iran

he voluntarily worked with refugees and people with disabilities there. Erfan holds a Masters in Human Resource Management from the University of Lancaster. He is currently working in Human Resources as a Human Resources Coordinator. Moreover, he is a person with lived experience of the UK's asylum system and offers invaluable insight into the challenges facing people seeking safety in the UK. In response to his experiences of the 'hostile environment' policy context, Erfan is a political organiser and campaigner.

Jamie Bell



Jamie is a Solicitor in the Public Law and Immigration Department at Duncan Lewis Solicitors. Jamie brings extensive knowledge and skills in immigration and asylum law to the Board. He has significant experience in a wide variety of complex and high profile cases, including: litigation that has prevented the

detention and removal of hundreds of Afghan nationals; extensive experience dealing with vulnerable clients, including those in detention, those suffering from complex psychological issues and victims of torture and trafficking; and giving advice and support to unaccompanied refugee children in their applications to come to the UK under the 'Dubs Amendment', playing a leading role in the second visit in organising the taking of instructions and liaising with social workers. Jamie is a Recommended Individual in the 2019, 2020 and 2021, 2024 editions of The Legal 500 for his work involving civil liberties and human rights. He was nominated for Public Lawyer of the Year at the LALYS in 2022.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT

Social Workers Without Borders is a Charitable Incorporated Institution, whose only voting members are its charity trustees. It has a 'foundation model' constitution dated 28 July 2017.

None of the trustees hold any property on behalf of the charity.

The trustees are ultimately responsible in law for the financial and strategic management of the charity. They are supported by the Managing Director. Trustees are expected to attend general meetings, all monthly Board Meetings and contribute purposefully to decision making. Policy decisions are made with the Managing Director. Our model of having a Trustee and the Managing Director in each of our working groups allows for decisions to be made collectively and for power to be delegated across our organisation. Trustees draw upon the expertise of our volunteers, who are experienced practicing or academic social workers. This enables them to further our objectives to promote excellent social work services and develop new models of social work best practice for social workers and others working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (our beneficiaries).

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Charity has an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise. The Board maintains a comprehensive risk register and each trustee has a key area of responsibility covering areas such as finance and legal, human resources, safeguarding and health and safety, data protection, campaigns and social media, public and immigration law.

We work in subgroups that are comprised of a mixture of different roles. The subgroups reflect the three main strands of our work. Each subgroup reports to the 'whole team' meeting and is responsible for delivering and developing our aims.

Risk Management

Social Workers Without Borders understand the importance of recognising and managing risk. The Board of trustees has established a risk register which it maintains to identify, evaluate and manage risk. Any issues of concern are discussed at the monthly trustee meetings.

There are systems and procedures in place to mitigate the risks faced by the charity and these are reviewed periodically.

Volunteers and staff conducting social work assessments are all registered social workers and robust safeguarding and supervision procedures are in place. Our safeguarding policy is reviewed annually. Particular care is taken over confidential information, and we use a secure database (Lamplight) for our client information. Trustees, staff, and volunteers carrying out our social work assessments and

training sessions are covered by our professional indemnity insurance. We also have public liability and employer's liability insurance in place.

There are procedures in place for the authorisation of all financial transactions to minimise our internal risks. Our payroll is managed externally by a payroll provider, and we have commissioned the support of a professional bookkeeper.

Strategic Plans

Strategic Goals:

- 1. Stabilise and strengthen:** A focus on risk management and compliance.
- 2. Sustain:** Diversify funding and recruit financial expertise.
- 3. Solidify and increase our role as leaders in this area of social work practice (ISWR):** Raise our profile and role as sector leaders.
- 4. Systemic change:** Campaign for changes to procedural protection for children and young people in immigration and asylum decision-making. Be strategic about cases that we provide expert evidence for.
- 5. Embed antiracist practice:** Review every aspect of our workings and embed an antiracist approach in all aspects of the charity.

During this year we have continued to work in accordance with the 3-year plan we developed in 2022. The strategic plan is informed by the goals we set as a whole team and with the support of an external consultant.

Notable achievements that speak to these strategic goals include:

1. Organisational structure and leadership:

Our first member of staff, Naomi Jackson, was initially employed as a Development Lead. Since September 2023, Naomi has changed role and is now SWWB's Managing Director (60% FTE). This change of role has meant that we now have a staff member with strategic and operational leadership responsibility, and this has allowed the Trustees to step-back from some of the operational charity tasks and consolidate their roles as trustees. The board have progressed areas of governance related

to the specific roles including, Chair, Treasurer, Safeguarding Lead, Health and Safety Lead, Data Protection Lead, HR Lead, Legal leads, Immigration Policy lead.

Funding from PHF has meant we can continue to employ Vicky Shenton as our Volunteer Coordinator (60% FTE), and we have been able to employ a new member of staff, Ben Feder, as our Head of Direct Work (60% FTE). This increased staffing resource is having three key impacts:

- The work completed in the Direct Work Team (Independent Social Work Reports) harnesses an incredible amount of volunteer time and is at the heart of our charitable activities. Working with volunteers to the extent that we do is both a strength and a weakness. Our Volunteer Coordinator and Head of Direct Work roles enable us to have an increased focus on the quality and quantity of work in our Direct Work Team, with a particular focus on the training and support provided to our network of volunteers. This is vital for us achieving our strategic goal to ‘Solidify and increase our role as leaders in this area of social work practice’.
- Our Managing Director now has more time to focus on things outside of the Direct Work team, meaning she can focus on the overall management of the charity.
- We have become a small team! Expanding to a staff team of three people has made SWWB more dynamic, broadening the skills, knowledge and perspectives in the team. This feels like a healthy development for the charity, and we look forward to continuing this journey of growing our staff team.

2. Financial Management

In the last year we have made significant strides in the management of our finances. Our Treasurer and Managing Director have completed charity finance training and engaged in consultation with Embrace Finance.⁹ An outcome of this consultation was clarity about how we could use our resources most efficiently to robustly meet our financial management needs. This resulted in us commissioning a new bookkeeper with expertise in charity finance and who could take a more hands-on role in supporting us with our financial management. As a result, we commissioned Jane Roche of Lavendar Bookkeeping.¹⁰ Jane brings a wealth of charity bookkeeping experience, and the increased costs associated with her service compared to our previous bookkeeper, are a vital investment in the sustainability of the charity. This has enabled us to improve the administration, management and

⁹ [Working with small charities to build financial confidence](#)

¹⁰ [Lavender Virtual Bookkeeping | bookkeeper](#)

strategic approach to our finances, and take a more dynamic, forward-looking approach to our financial position.

3. Human Resources

Growing our staff team has meant we have more complex HR arrangements to manage, as such we have commissioned HR support from WorkNest.¹¹ We now have a full remit of HR policies and procedures; we have a HR portal, and staff can access essential workplace e-learning modules via WorkNest's training portal.

4. Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Trustee Lead and Managing Director have overhauled our safeguarding policy and procedure. Whilst the Safeguarding Policy applies to every area of our work, it is of particular relevance to our Direct Work Team, because this is the main area of contact between our beneficiaries, staff, and volunteers. This piece of work is a response to our need to ensure our compliance and risk management is robust, but it also relates to our strategic goal to embed anti-racist practice in all areas of our work. Our new Safeguarding Policy draws on *Contextual Safeguarding*¹² and the *Radical Safeguarding Handbook*.¹³ Our beneficiaries are people subject to immigration controls, who are frequently marginalised and racialised, it was vital for us to critically appraise our approach to safeguarding and ensure our practice recognises the systemic harm of hostile immigration policy, and that we do not replicate systems of surveillance, power and control, and gatekeeping, that so frequently impact migrant communities under the guise of “safeguarding”. Our new safeguarding approach emphasises taking a collective response, centring the views, needs and relationship with the affected person/s. We have checks and balances in our procedure that ensure as an organisation we prioritise care and humanity in our response to meeting people's safety and wellbeing needs and avoid veering towards responses that prioritise the organisation's risk management needs.

¹¹ [Brilliant Employment Law, HR and H&S Support](#)

¹² [About us | Contextual Safeguarding](#)

¹³ [Radical safeguarding](#)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's income has grown substantially over the past year. We have been re-funded by the Tudor Trust for a further 3-year period and have secured two new 3-year grants from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Alan Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund. Our total income in 2023-2024 increased from £77,088 to £125,250. The Tudor Trust main grant will be used to fund Naomi's role as Managing Director until August 2026 and will also cover other core costs and admin support. A second £2,000 grant will be used to improve our volunteer wellness offer. The Paul Hamlyn grant will fund Ben's role as Head of Direct Work and Vicky's role as volunteer co-ordinator for the next 3 years.

Our donations increased over the period from £1,774 to £3,942. This is largely due to a grant from the Barrow Cadbury Trust for which we are very grateful. Income from Social Work Assessments rose from £2,283 last year to £3,172. Teaching and authoring income also rose from £250 to £816. This was due to book royalties which were donated to the charity by the authors of '*The Anti-Racist Social Worker: stories of activism by social care and allied health professionals*'²⁶ and '*The Future of Children's Care: Critical Perspectives on Children's Services Reform*'.²⁷

Staff salaries increased due to the appointment of a second member of staff and Naomi's promotion. Employers' pension contributions were increased following a pay review. A freelance social work consultant provided services to the charity at the beginning of the year to cover some of the Direct Work prior to Ben's appointment. Staff travel and volunteer expenses increased over the period. This was due to an increase in face-to-face meetings for which the Charity hired meeting rooms and incurred venue costs. Two trustees claimed travel expenses. Dr Lauren Wroe claimed £105.89 and Bridget Ng'andu claimed £40.59.

Insurance costs decreased slightly due to improvements made in risk management.

Bookkeeping and payroll costs have risen as both these functions are now fully outsourced to professionals and headcount has increased.

Staff training and supervision costs increased due to a trustee commitment to develop our staff. Naomi Jackson was promoted to Managing Director on 1 September 2023 and as part of her new role we will implement an ambitious three-year strategy which has been set by the Board of Trustees to

grow our charity. We also enrolled with Worknest to provide HR support for our growing team at a cost of £1,920.

At the end of this financial year, we had £78,502 in unrestricted funds. This comprised unrestricted funding from the Tudor Trust and The Alan Babette Sainsbury Charitable fund together with other income and free reserves.

The charity is funded on a 12-month funding cycle. We designate 6 months of unrestricted funds to cover core costs until the next funding event. In March 2024 this was estimated at £24,555.

This leaves our reserves at £53,947.

Our target reserves level is based on a risk-based approach. This figure covers winding up costs including contractual obligations and professional fees (estimated at £33,085), plus one month of total running costs to cover unforeseen circumstances (£9,187 in March budget), therefore our target reserve level in March 2024 was £42,272. Our reserves level in March (£53,947) was higher than necessary under the policy. As we are currently running at a slight surplus to income, we intend to hire a business coordinator to support core operations and expect to see our excess reserves decrease to the target level over the next two reporting cycles.

DECLARATION

REFERENCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS Charity name: Social Workers Without Borders (not known by any other names) Trustee Annual Report dates: 1st April 2023-31st March 2024 Registered Charity No: 1174000 Address: Unit 13249, PO BOX 6945, London, W1A 6US Email: Trustees@socialworkerswithoutborders.org Website: www.socialworkerswithoutborders.org


Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature	<i>Phillida Miles</i>	<i>Clare Cowie</i>
Full Name	Phillida Miles	Clare Cowie
Position	Chair	Treasurer
Date	22.01.25	22.01.25

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

 CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES	SOCIAL WORKERS WITHOUT BORDERS		1174000	
	Charity Name			
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date	
	01/04/2023		31/03/2024	

Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	3,942		-	3,942	1,774
Grant - Network for Social Change	-	-	-	-	22,100
Grant - Paul Hamlyn		50,243		50,243	
Grant - Alan & Babette	15,000			15,000	
Grant- Tudor Trust	50,000	2,000	-	52,000	47,667
Articles and authoring income	817	-	-	817	250
Assessment Income	3,172	-	-	3,172	2,283
Research Income	-	-	-	-	3,000
Training income	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Interest	76	-	-	76	14
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	73,007	52,243	-	125,250	77,088
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	73,007	52,243	-	125,250	77,088
A3 Payments					
Staffing:					
Salary Payment	19,792	15,899	-	35,691	24,384
Pension Contributions	1,171	760	-	1,931	751
NI - Employers Contribution	-	-	-	-	0
Staff Internet and Telephone	240	240	-	480	240
Staff Training and Development	838	10	-	848	547
Refreshments /Catering	46	-	-	46	-
Consultant Fees	4,875	-	-	4,875	9,925
Supervision	1,485	-	-	1,485	805
Staff Travel	284	138	-	422	204
Staffing Total	28,731	17,047	-	45,778	36,856
Running Costs Total:					
Volunteer Expenses	1,370	-	-	1,370	1,064
Trustee Expenses	147	-	-	147	140
ICO registration	35	-	-	35	35
DBS Checks	30	-	-	30	46
IT software, consumables,Website & Zoom	2,721	-	-	2,721	1,964
Team meeting catering & venue hire	440	-	-	440	0
Insurance	1,689	-	-	1,689	1,793
Postage,Freight & Courier	20	-	-	20	40
Advertising & Marketing	-	-	-	-	248
Accountancy & Examination fee	690	-	-	690	600
Bookkeeping & Payroll cost	600	-	-	600	462
Interpreter fees	606	-	-	606	863
Consulting	-	-	-	-	1,800
HR Costs	1,920	-	-	1,920	-
Charitable & Political Donations	-	-	-	-	125
Running Costs Total	10,268	-	-	10,268	9,180
Sub total	38,999	17,047	-	56,046	46,036
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	38,999	17,047	-	56,046	46,036
Net of receipts/(payments)	34,008	35,196	-	69,204	31,052
A5 Transfers between funds	(6,407)	6,407	-	0	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	50,901	22,100	-	73,001	41,949
Cash funds this year end	78,502	63,703	-	142,205	73,001

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Category name	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at banks	78,502	63,703	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	78,502	63,703	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments accounts)

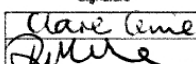
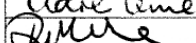
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Creditors	2,434	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Clare Cowie	22/11/24
	Phyllis Miles	23/12/24

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's
report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

SOCIAL WORKERS WITHOUT BORDERS

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1174000

Set out on page

1-2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2023.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Independent
examiner's statement

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:

Date:

18 January 2024

Name:

Chaweevan Williams FCCA

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body :

Chartered Certified Accountants

Address:

Verdant Accountants Limited

20-22 Wenlock Road, London N1 7GU