

# SISTAH SPACE

**Accounts for period ending**

**31 March 2021**

Reference and Administrative Details

**Trustees**

Sonia Waterman (Chair)

Barbara Noel

Carrise Forde

**Principal Office**

c/o Bootstrap  
16-18 Ashwin Street  
London E8 3DL

**Bankers**

Barclays Bank  
1 Churchill Place  
London E14 5HP

The charity is incorporated in UK.  
Charity Registration Number 1179934

March 31<sup>st</sup> UPDATED TRUSTEE REPORT.

This financial year 2021 has proved to be our most challenging but equally our most successful year.

The impact of covid 19 pandemic has had a substantial effect on our charity and in particular our ability to secure regular financial meetings as our accounts officer was off for a very long time due to covid issues. It was difficult trying to find a replacement as for a while we were assured that he would be returning shortly. Finding a temporary replacement was also a massive issue as the charity deals with the delicate subject of domestic abuse and safeguarding is key.

Eventually the finance person had to retire and that caused a massive disruption in the organisations ability to record accounts in a timely manner. We were able to secure a replacement, but that also took significant time. Meanwhile it was left to Trustees and key workers to maintain records and manage a unique set of circumstances that affected people and business worldwide.

In October 2021 we opened a charity shop and that required a second account to be opened. We now have two accounts. With continual staff/volunteer shortages, it seemed like an uphill task to keep up with the unusually high volume of donations. The sudden increase meant we had to develop a new way of working to ensure we were current with financial regulations and reporting.

A number of projects, plus our core work of domestic abuse support meant that we had double the work with less than half the staff.

Various personal issues with all three Trustees meant we had to wait extended periods for responses. A lot of responsibilities were placed on the the CEO, the Operations Manager and the senior Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs). This at a time when the campaign for Valerie's Law was at it's peak and the Charity was struggling to get the required 100,000 signatures to enable the Valerie's Law campaign to be debated in Parliament. This successfully occurred on the 28<sup>th</sup> March and plans are being made to see how this can be implemented UK wide. We acknowledge that this could have quite an impact on our finances, and we are preparing for that.

Finally, we had problems with the Charities Commission's log-in as repeated requests for password updates, later finding that they had been sent to a different email address. We are pleased to say that has all now been resolved.

We have now engaged an independent accounting firm and are confident that any issues are a thing of the past.

Sistah Space was founded in 2015 after the tragic and avoidable murder of Valerie Forde and her 23- month-old daughter, RJ. It was their deaths that prompted the founding of Sistah space, the only African and Caribbean heritage domestic violence of its kind in the UK.

Since our establishment 6 years ago, we have managed to extend our reach to Greater London. This was achieved by working with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and being their lead organisation in relation to Victim Support. We have also joined forces with Independent and Witness Services (IVWS). Our recent collaboration with Black Liberation Movement UK has aided in the outreach across London. Alongside this, we continue our work with organisations such as Imkaan, Safe Lives and other organisations that provide Domestic Violence services.

### **Statement from Project Director**

Similar to last year, we have ended the year in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. As much of our outreach programme has been affected due to Government regulations, such as work from home and social distancing. Victims of domestic violence are less likely to interact with our services via telephone as opposed to in-person interaction. This has resulted in our agenda for 2020-2021 to be delayed. Nevertheless, Sistah Space continues to provide this in-demand and specialist service.

With our consistent campaign for change in policies and laws, Sistah Space has a growing influence in the way the Afro-Caribbean community view domestic abuse and their victims. Our training service has also aided in highlighting the cause and effects of domestic violence. Organisations such as Safe Lives (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) qualifiers), Hackney Council and a few others have benefitted from our specialist training service. We also plan on continuing working with Homerton University Hospital where we are on call to support their domestic violence and sexually assaulted victims.

Rosanna and Djanomi are two of our volunteers who donated their time in visits, food donations, organising workshops and events to victims of abuse, who through their dedication and countless hours of support, are now IDVA qualified. Their exemplary behaviour has led to many of our volunteers looking to follow suit. This pair is now an integral part of the day-to-day operation of Sistah Space. In the last quarter, we have expanded our team. This is to better delegate roles and responsibilities to specific individuals and to better cope our ever-increasing clientele midst the pandemic.

In the past 2 years we have faced a few issues in attaining a safe and discreet location for staff, volunteers and clients. We have previously highlighted the issues of our previous location in Lower Clapton; flickering and temperamental lighting, poor roofing, exposed wiring, easy entry to members of the public which would put staff and victims at risk. We are now pleased to report that Sistah Space has secured a safe place to work with the vulnerable. Our new location has allowed for our Pan London initiative thus increasing our staff and client base.

## **Special Thanks**

We would like to take this opportunity in recognising the dedication and efforts of staff, volunteers and organisations who have and continue to work alongside us in changing the policies, hearts and minds in a favourable direction towards victims of abuse. Special thanks to Rosanna, Senait, Djanomi, Cordell, Lloyd, Maxine and Hugh in putting in the greatest effort in keeping a needed yet undervalued service in operation. MOPAC, Safe Lives and the Black Liberation Movement have also played a pivotal role in our service. Our gratitude also extends to those who were not named but their involvement did not go unnoticed.

Thank you to the local community who have turned out to support our events, workshops and fundraising. A special thanks to Andrew Muhammed aka The Investigator, Auntie Jean of the African Market and Charmaine Simpson of Black History Studies in helping to highlight our cause on their platform, through fundraising and granting event spaces.

## **Trustees 'Report**

Sistah Space Charity present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st march 2021 and confirm they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the trust deed and the Charities SORP (FRS102)

## **Public Benefit Statement**

The charities services operate for public benefit. The trustees confirm that they complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, "Charities and Public Benefit".

## **Equality and Diversity Statement**

The charity values diversity and works to improve services to grassroots African heritage communities. In line with this, we have developed programmes, policies and procedures to ensure that services meet our equality and diversity principles. Sistah Space will make reasonable adjustments to service provision in order to accommodate any client who would otherwise have difficulty accessing the services.

## **Strategic Report**

Following last year's strategic report, Sistah Space is still on target, regardless of a pandemic, in its goals. Previously mentioned, Sistah Space planned more structured facilities (venue, processes and policies) to effectively exercise developing, monitoring and evaluating our agendas. Sistah Space has achieved this and are continuing to do so through recruitment of specialist advisors and trainers. The continuous effort is to broaden our range and enlighten the public on easily recognising victims, highlight preventative methods, support those already made victims and provide aftercare facilities.

A short term yet effective initiative in achieving this is to establish a retail store. This will aid in the outreach, fundraising and create another point of contact for clientele. Sistah Space is aware of the work ethic needed to fulfil our agenda.

More staff, volunteers and in particular Domestic Violence specialists are essential to achieve our goal as we aim to become an organisation with a national rather than a regional reach.

## FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Income	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2021	Total 2020	Total 2019						
Grants			41000	95298	19000						
Project funding			200	-	-						
Contracts/Commission			52346.29	31172	22835						
Donations/Fundraising			263461.84	104729	8892						
Transfer from Unrestricted Fund			-	-	-						
Investment and other Income			-	-	-						
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>357008.13</b>	<b>231199</b>	<b>50727</b>						
Expense											
Salaries/ENIC			26950								
Project Costs			17126								
Operational Costs			19500								
Utility Costs			1539.58								
Maintenance			1124.1								
Repairs			-								
Supplies(equipment)			24407.12								
Administration			47467.29								
Transfer to Restricted Fund			-								
Depreciation			-								
<b>Total</b>			<b>138114.09</b>								
<b>Net Income</b>			<b>218894.04</b>								
Balance B/F											
Balance C/F											

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

Signed on behalf of Trustees

*Ngozi Fulani*



Financial Statement			
	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted
Income			
Grants			£41,000.00
Project funding			£62,518.74
Contracts/Commission		£52,346.29	
Donations/Fundraising		£200,943.10	
Transfer from Unrestricted Fund		£0.00	£0.00
Investment and other Income		£0.00	
Total		£253,289.39	£103,518.74
Expense			
Salaries/ENIC		£0.00	£0.00
Project Costs		£0.00	£89,468.74
Operational Costs		£19,500.00	£0.00
Administration		£54,330.16	£0.00
Transfer to Restricted Fund		£0.00	£0.00
Depreciation		£0.00	£0.00
Total		£73,830.16	£89,468.74
Net Income		£179,459.23	£14,050.00
Balance B/F			
Balance C/F			

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2021	2020	2019	2018
£41,000.00	£95,298.00	£19,000.00	£4,000.00
£62,518.74	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
£52,346.29	£31,172.00	£22,835.00	£8,000.00
£200,943.10	£104,729.00	£8,892.00	£2,708.00
£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>£356,808.13</b>	<b>£231,199.00</b>	<b>£50,727.00</b>	<b>£14,708.00</b>
£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
£89,468.74	£50,820.00	£21,650.00	£11,472.00
£19,500.00	£18,802.00	£17,464.00	£6,126.00
£54,330.16	£1,131.00	£2,487.00	£1,256.00
£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>£163,298.90</b>	<b>£70,753.00</b>	<b>£41,601.00</b>	<b>£18,854.00</b>
<b>£193,509.23</b>	<b>£160,446.00</b>	<b>£9,126.00</b>	<b>-£4,146.00</b>
£169,997.00	£9,551.00	£425.00	£4,571.00
£363,506.23	£169,997.00	£9,551.00	£425.00

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2021**

### **Emergency Financial Management Meeting**

Our financial journey has been an incredibly swift and complex one, especially at the height of the covid-19 academic.

Sistah Space have acquired a sudden influx of donations from the community and business meant that our finances suddenly more than tripled.

We acquired an additional expense of a charity shop and we were still maintaining an office in the same building. We had been given a reduction on the rent and were told that at some point the rent might have to increase. We were approached in this regard and the rent was almost doubled. We managed to negotiate a delay in the increase, but we expect that this will be almost imminent.

We are looking to purchase a Respite house/refuge with donations raised thus far. We have not identified an amount, but do have set funds ringfenced for this purpose. We expect to spend a minimum of about £450,000 on a property.

Sistah Space had a Virgin Just Giving account that was held for us by another charity as we did not have charity status at the time we joined. The Go Fund Me account closed this financial year and we received the balance of donations.

We successfully debated Valerie's Law in Parliament on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and if this law is made compulsory as per our request, it will have a significant effect on our income. This will be reflected in our finances for the coming year.

Covid-19 Pandemic meant that we had many periods where the majority of staff were on extended leave, including our Trustees. This included our finance officer who was off for a lengthy period and was unable to confirm when he would be able to return. It took a while before he confirmed that he was unlikely to be able to return. We engaged a finance officer who was overwhelmed by the sudden increase in our accounts and unfamiliar with procedures for charities and income over a specified amount. It took a long while before we were able to catch back up as the finance officer had certain information and we were obliged to wait until we could contact him.

We have engaged a government recommended auditing company and are confident of timely reports going forward.