

CIO registration number: CE018159
Charity registration number: 1184348

WE BELONG

(A charitable incorporated organisation)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR FROM 1 APRIL 2024 TO 31 MARCH 2025

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Colin Falconer - Chair until resignation 1 April 2024 Maheraj Ahmed Lian - Interim Chair from April 2024 to January 2025, resumed his role as Vice-Chair December 2024 Joel Carter – Interim Chair from January 2025 Sufina Ahmad Jamila Hinds-Brough Buddika Perera - Treasurer Stewart MacLachlan Keshon Devonte Smith
Chief Executive	Chrisann Jarrett MBE
Interim CEO	Raewyn Jones – to 4 July 2024
Charity Number Banker	1184348 Metro Bank One Southampton Row London, WC1B 5HA
Independent Examiner	Caroline Sharp FCA, DChA 55 Canberra Road London, SE7 8PF

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 31 March 2025. Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011 and Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS102) – updated 2019.

We Belong registered with the Charity Commission on 10 July 2019, becoming a new stand-alone organisation. We Belong builds on a project called Let Us Learn, which was previously hosted by Just for Kids Law. The project expanded beyond its initial remit of campaigning for equal access to higher education to fighting for the rights of young migrants in the UK, including higher education and tackling systemic barriers that prevent young migrants from living a fulfilled life.

We Belong works for the fair treatment of young migrants in the UK and for the removal of barriers preventing their full integration. Our three key objectives are to foster relationships with decision-makers and advocate for young migrants; to raise awareness of the hostile environment and issues around access to higher education; and to empower young migrants to become change agents.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal structure of the charity

The charity is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation and its governing document is a written constitution dated 10 July 2019, updated in September 2021.

Recruitment and induction of trustees

The Trustees are appointed by the charity trustees and are recruited with regard to their knowledge skills and experience. Trustees are appointed to a fixed 2-year term. Trustees may not serve more than three consecutive terms. There is a comprehensive pre-appointment briefing and a trustee induction process for new Trustees. Training is made available to Trustees as required.

Management and administration

We Belong is administered by the Chief Executive based on the strategic direction set by the trustees. The board of trustees meets four times a year and has four sub-committees and working groups including the Risk sub-committee, the Programmes and Safeguarding sub-committee, the HR working group and the Finance committee. The committees each have Terms of Reference approved by the board of trustees and meet quarterly or as required to support the CEO. The board Chair also meets regularly with the CEO to support delivery of the charity strategy and outcomes.

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The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Charity on a day-to-day basis. All Trustees give of their time freely and no Trustee received remuneration in the year, Details of Trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in notes 6 and 8 to the accounts. Remuneration of Management personnel was agreed and decided by the Board of Trustees and based on current market rates for charities.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives set out in the governing document

- ☐ to help young people advance in life through providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.
- ☐ to promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

Charity activities

We Belong works with and for young migrants, who are subject to a hostile environment in the country we and they call home. We fight to end the hostile environment around immigration, ensuring barriers preventing full integration for migrants are removed so that we can contribute to British society.

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

We Belong remains the only organisation in the migration sector dedicated solely to long-term young migrants, a group often overlooked due to misconceptions about their status and citizenship; despite the many years they have spent in the UK. We continue to champion the messages of belonging and social integration; however, these narratives have become increasingly difficult to uphold in a UK where migration has been deeply polarised, often at the expense of recognising the individual behind the status.

During the height of the general election, our community witnessed a wave of misinformation about migration, alongside the demonisation of migrant communities and proposals to prolong the routes to settlement. We saw a surge in far-right rhetoric and the notion that settlement is a privilege rather than a right, completely disregarding the countless young people and their families who have navigated complex legal processes and paid thousands of pounds to secure their status.

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The election results signal a demand for a politics that treads carefully on people's lives. To navigate the fragmentation and disillusionment in today's political landscape, the new Government must engage meaningfully with the electorate and deliver on its promises. The diversity of voters indicates a preference for incremental rather than dramatic shifts. Since politics shapes the very fabric of people's lives, the government must offer an alternative vision of belonging and national identity, one that prioritises inclusion and humanity.

The August 2024 riots had a profound impact on communities across the UK, including London. For the first time since the pandemic, we had to pause in person activity and prioritise the safety of our young migrant community. It also highlighted the ongoing connection between migration justice and immigration justice.

OUR ISSUES AND APPROACHES

The Challenge:

There is an ongoing demand for our services and the safe spaces we provide for young migrants. We continue to rely on the GLA Numbers research who states that there are over 332,000 children and young people growing up in the UK without any formal immigration status. As this research was conducted in 2019, we suspect that the numbers will be higher due to the increase in immigration fees and absence of legal aid, forcing people out of status and imposing a high burden on them to navigate a complex legalistic system.

Since 2022, we welcomed the changes to primary legislation enabling children and young people to gain settlement five years sooner as a result of our shorter more affordable route to settlement campaign (est. 2018-2022). We have focussed on implementing this rule change via our dedicated outreach services across London and Manchester, our Immigration Toolkit Trainings and through the hybrid legal advice clinics through our partnership with Coram.

Through building relationships and analysing the impact of this rule change, we have identified two main barriers to young people achieving their status rights and entitlements:

1. **Application Fee for Indefinite Leave to Remain (Settlement):** there is no fee waiver for settlement applications, the current cost is £2,885 (2024), without a fee waiver, young people and their families will not be able to apply for this status and be free from immigration control. Instead, they will be locked into the system and be forced to be on a continuous loop of leave to remain as they would be able to access a fee waiver.

Our response: 'Out of the Loop' Campaign has been launched to call for a fee waiver for settlement applications so that young people are not priced out.

2. **Absence of Early Intervention:** young people continue to come to our organisation post age 18 when their legal rights and entitlements change or become more complex

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to navigate. We continue to see young people who were completely unaware of their status and its implications up until they want to advance to Higher Education or gain Employment. The sooner they start the process for regularisation, the less barriers they will face.

Our Response: in September 2024 we launched our Hyperlocal Strategy. This focusses on a local partnership approach which will enable us to sustain and build upon our core activities and reach, engage and empower young people prior to age 18 through early intervention, working with multiple service providers that engage with young people.

WHAT WE OFFER

Our organisation advances three outcomes:

1. **WE ENGAGE:** Young people feel connected, informed, and supported; wellbeing is improved.
2. **WE EMPOWER:** Young people are empowered to take action for better outcomes for themselves as individuals, and to take action for systems change.
3. **WE BUILD:** Policy makers are influenced to remove barriers to equal and fair treatment.

These outcome pillars interact with our organisational goals:

1. **To ensure better opportunities and outcomes for individuals by directly engaging young migrants.**
2. **To remove barriers to equal and fair treatment through systemic change.**

Activities undertaken to help achieve our three outcomes:

We Engage:

- One-to-one meetings with young people: We build relationships with young people to understand their needs and ambitions.
- A safe space and community: We host monthly gatherings where young people come together through storytelling, food, and engaging activities.

We Empower:

- University Support: We support with university and scholarship applications, student finance cases, as well as workshops on personal statements and career guidance.
- Legal Advice Clinic: We provide support to young people with precarious status and help them understand their immigration situation.
- Trainings and Outreach: We provide interactive training for organisations that work with young migrants (schools, colleges and universities, community centres), as well as information and resources to better support young people with their immigration status. Our outreach model means that we embed ourselves into existing systems of support to ensure equal access.

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- **Emerging Young Leaders Programme:** This six-week CPD-accredited course matches participants with experienced mentors based on their interests, motivations, and aspirations. Through weekly guided sessions, young people develop their leadership style, achieve their goals, and build confidence and resilience.
- **Co-Producers, Core Group Members, Policy and Parliamentary Working Group, and Volunteers:** We provide opportunities for young people to become advocates for young migrants in their community and gain hands-on work experience by assisting our Outreach and Community Engagement Team. We value their time and can accommodate their schedule.
- **DofE License:** We offer Bronze Award to 12 young people annually as a Duke of Edinburgh Licensee, young people can engage through, skills, volunteering and physical activity as well as a collective expedition.

We Build:

- We develop campaigns to respond to the needs of our community of young migrants, encouraging an open dialogue with key stakeholders and policy makers to ensure barriers to integration are removed.

OUR ANNUAL PLAN AND DATA COLLECTION TO TRACK PROGRESS

We Belong has an Annual Plan which is developed by leadership at the organisation in conjunction with staff members and approved by the board annually. The Annual Plan is a comprehensive roadmap articulating our strategic vision and delineating the course of action for the upcoming financial year. It highlights our Theory of Change which has a key focus on lived experience engagement, KPI's and a clear monitoring and evaluation framework to access our activities so that the organisation can create lasting impact. We have three key outcomes:

We monitor and evaluate our impact using the following tools for Data Collection:

- **Raw Data** from our CRM System Lamplight which tracks participation, case notes and records of activities. In addition, to Monday.com project management tracker, Eventbrite records of events and activities, media coverage, social media interactions as well as through interviews and creative methods.
- **Judgement:** Qualitative review of casework with our immigration caseworker and research reports.
- **Opinion:** The development of surveys, interviews, observations, feedback forms completed at our events, podcasts, blog posts and video.

OUR IMPACT: YOUNG PEOPLE AS LEADERS

We Belong's work has empowered young migrants to understand their rights and effectively engage with communities, schools, universities, government, and parliament to influence

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decisions. We provide a holistic support package for our young people. Campaigning is just one aspect of our work; we also support the educational aspirations of young people with the majority facing barriers to Higher Education.

We work with all our young changemakers on a long-term basis, developing relationships, identifying skills and gaps in knowledge. We then develop a curriculum of support to ensure young people have access to relevant resource and connections, empowering them to regain the ability to plan their lives regardless of their immigration status.

Our values and lived experiences are deeply woven into every aspect of our work. From strategy to community engagement, they guide all that we do. Many of our original 'Let Us Learn' campaigners continue to lead alongside our committed board of trustees, shaping our goals and ensuring that We Belong remains both strategic and rooted in the communities we serve.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

GOAL 1: To ensure better opportunities and outcomes for individuals by directly engaging young migrants.

Our Services: Empowering Young People to Reach Their Full Potential

We Belong has built its services to support and empower young migrants to pursue opportunities and move on with their lives whilst we also assist them with their immigration status. We provide a safe environment for young people to build a community, receive leadership training, university and career support, work placements, and opportunities to engage with other young migrants.

New Client Enquiries

Between Q1 and Q4 of 2024–2025, We Belong supported a total of 193 new case engagements (NCEs), reflecting a broad and balanced impact across our core areas of work. Education remained the largest area of engagement, making up 31.6% of all NCEs, as we continued to provide critical support to young people navigating access to higher education and educational rights. Immigration followed closely, accounting for 27.5% of NCEs, underscoring our continued role in offering guidance and advocacy around complex immigration issues. Opportunities represented 24.9% of the total, with a notable spike in Q4 as young people increasingly accessed personal and professional development pathways. Participation, while smaller at 16.1%, still reflects a strong commitment to youth-led advocacy and civic engagement.

Together, these figures demonstrate the wide-ranging and responsive nature of our support, ensuring young people with precarious status are equipped, informed, and empowered throughout the year.

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1:1 Support

We engage in 1-1's to build trusting relationships with young people, this enables us to understand their needs, goals and support they need from us.

In the past year, We Belong has made significant strides in empowering young migrants, our Outreach team is now complete with four members who work alongside our Policy and Public Affairs Lead to ensure that young people young people are holistically cared for when onboarded as clients of We Belong.

During this reporting period, there were 510 sessions attended by 262 individual young people. The sessions range from one-to-one meetings, case work, advice sessions, personal statement development, student finance discussions, to mental health and wellbeing support across both the London and Manchester chapters.

In the last year we have increased our 1-1's related to the development of immigration enquiries, **during this period 83 individual 1-1 sessions were held with young people** who also went on to receiving specialised immigration advice and information through our legal advice clinics.

Educational Support

14 young people individually supported through educational casework to apply for scholarships, student finance. Some of these young people also required We Belong to intervene after they were wrongfully classified as international students due to the evidential burden from the Student Loans Company.

Case Study: SR

SR was initially awarded a scholarship to study at Birkbeck, University of London, with support from We Belong. However, just 24 hours after the offer was made, the university rescinded it due to a sudden change in their interpretation of the term "forced migration." In response, We Belong contacted Birkbeck's Widening Participation team to express our deep concern and disappointment. We highlighted precedents from similar cases at other universities and demonstrated how Birkbeck had misapplied their own guidance. Within less than 24 hours, following our advocacy, the university fully reinstated SR's scholarship offer. As a result, he was able to begin his studies and is now in his first year of a Law degree at Birkbeck.

Case Study: AN

AN first connected with We Belong through her tutor at Bolton Sixth Form College. She had achieved outstanding A-Level results and was excited to begin university in September 2023 to study Mathematics. However, due to her immigration status, she was ineligible for Student Finance England (SFE), and by the time she reached out, most scholarship deadlines had already passed.

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Over the following year, we supported AN through a range of opportunities. We helped her enrol in a Language Interpreting course, involved her in the EYL (Emerging Young Leaders) programme, and provided regular wellbeing check-ins. We also guided her through the process of applying for scholarships for the following academic year.

This included helping her draft and refine a strong personal statement, as well as preparing her for interviews through multiple mock sessions. Thanks to her hard work and determination, and with our continued support, AN was awarded an Article 26 Sanctuary Scholarship to study Mathematics at the University of Salford, starting in September 2024.

Work Experience Students and Volunteers

We welcomed **5 volunteers and 6 students completed work experience** within our London Office through our relationships with Aspire who facilitate placements between schools and organisations.

Feedback

July 2024 Work Experience Student

"The staff members were also very welcoming and kind. This was very positive because it created a positive work environment, boosted morale, and enhanced team dynamics. The staff members being respectful also led to an increase in my productivity and satisfaction with the work placement. A nice atmosphere was created, as it made me feel valued and motivated to perform."

February 2025 Work Experience Student

"Before I had my work experience at We Belong, my confidence when it came to presenting my ideas wasn't that great. But the members of staff helped me build my confidence, and I was able to create a presentation on topics that I am passionate about. All of the staff members were really nice, but I especially enjoyed talking to Gio, Lizzie, and Andrew. These are the staff members who were sat close to me, and they taught me a lot of things that I didn't know beforehand."

Gatherings

Every month an average of 10 to 15 young people attend our social group to meet others with similar experiences. This year we delivered **20 gatherings engaging 138** young people through interactive, educational and community building sessions across London and Manchester. We also engaged with partners to deliver joint sessions.

Key highlights:

May London Gathering - 9 young people took part in a financial literacy workshop entitled 'Let's Talk About Money' facilitated by an external facilitator, Find My Gold. Young people had the opportunity to have an open discussion about finances and how it impacts their lives. All attendees gained valuable insights on financial management and budgeting.

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June Manchester Gathering - 10 young people went to the Safar Film Festival. The Safar Film Festival is the largest festival in the UK dedicated to cinema from the Arab world. The experience offered our Manchester-based young people a unique opportunity to explore and celebrate the diversity of Arab cinema past, present and future.

Legal Advice Clinic

The legal advice clinics were launched two years ago and are delivered in person at our London premises or hybrid to ensure that young people can access legal advice, information and support regardless of geography. In October 2024, we expanded our legal advice clinics from one to two days a week offering an additional 4 sessions to young people and their families. **Between April 2024 to March 2025, 85 clinics were held supporting 67 individual young people.**

We continue to improve our feedback collation from the clinics which continues to see **5-star ratings**. 100% of those receiving advice stated they felt empowered after receiving information with 80% stating the information was extremely clear making them better informed of their next steps, rights and entitlements.

Emerging Young Leaders (EYL) Programme

We delivered four EYL programmes across London and Manchester with **20 young people** receiving their CPD Accreditation after completing the 6-week course. Throughout this time we **engaged with 20 mentors** (11 in LDN and 9 in MCR) with from a variety of industries which included Economics, Engineering, Social Media, Law, Policy and Public Affairs, Fashion and Branding.

Feedback:

100% of participants stated that they would recommend the programme and 67% noting an increase in their confidence and ability to plan and work towards their goals.

"I can't recommend this programme enough for anyone looking to boost their leadership skills and figure out their next steps, both personally and professionally. It's been a game-changer for me. I've gained so much confidence and learned a lot about myself and what I'm capable of. The skills I've picked up have already made a huge difference in my growth and I've learnt things I can use to my advantage when I graduate and apply for jobs."

Educational Outreach

As part of our outreach and awareness-raising work, **we conducted six school and college visits over the year, engaging a total of 281 young people.** These sessions provided vital information on immigration status, access to higher education, and young people's rights in the UK. Notable visits included Ark All Saints Academy in March 2024 (86 students), Burnage Academy in February 2025 (40 students), and Mulberry School for Girls in March 2025 (100 students). We also delivered sessions at Woodhouse College (12 students), City & Islington College (15 students), and Christ The King Emmanuel (28 students).

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Through these visits, we created safe spaces for students to ask questions, share concerns, and connect with support and advocacy opportunities. Feedback from students and staff highlighted the importance of this work in raising awareness and building confidence among young people navigating complex immigration systems.

University Staff Training

We deliver staff training to Widening Participation Officers at universities across the UK so that admission staff are better equipped to develop or expand Sanctuary Scholarships and understand and apply student finance rules as it pertains to migrant students with limited or precarious immigration statuses. **This year we empowered 122 staff across three universities which includes the University of Reading, University of Gloucester, University of York and University of Reading and one Museum, the Museum of Rural Life.** This year we were able to deepen our engagement with staff teams recommending the training to department across the university which led to increase demand for training.

Feedback

We received 9.1 out of 10 rating

"The term "sanctuary" was new to some, indicating the importance and relevance of continued awareness work in this area. There was strong appreciation for how the training brought both emotional depth and practical knowledge together."

"You put us in the shoes of a sanctuary seeker – that was very beneficial for the team."

"The training was comprehensive and gave me a lot to reflect on."

"It was very informative about the legal side and the emphasis on lived experience."

Toolkit Trainings

5 Toolkit training sessions delivered with **164** attendees

- **Empowering 63 stakeholder** across 4 Organisations working in the corporate field to civil society organisations working with vulnerable young people.
- **Empowering 101 stakeholders** via an adapted toolkit training to a range of migrant led organisations.

Migrant Mood Project

Migrant Moods is a podcast produced by We Belong's Core Group, a team made up of lived experience young migrants who assist our outreach efforts and lead our organisation.

Since April 2024, **4 episodes were produced with 446 listeners across our social media accounts** with special guests such as Samuel Remi-Akinwale CEO of Young Manchester and We Belong Trustee and law student Keshon Smith. Key topics included:

- Navigating Challenging Conversations
- A Place for Us: Conversations on Belonging following the riots
- Navigating the Barrister Profession

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Feedback

From Milana, former Co-Producer and current Podcast Host of Migrant Moods:

"Martin has elevated our comms work, ensuring young voices are authentically represented while making our projects more efficient. Since the beginning of his work at We Belong, the comms and all the media work has been organised professionally, and all the projects have become more efficient thanks to his hard work and expertise. As a clear example of this, the Migrant Moods podcast has been able to grow professionally, building a partnership with Transmission Roundhouse to record the episodes in a real studio space. Along with equipping the young people with the essential skills to create interesting scripts and enhance the process of production."

Annual Youth Summit:

Our Annual Youth Summit, *Shaping Our Future*, marked a powerful moment of reflection, celebration, and youth-led visioning as we celebrated **We Belong's fifth anniversary** and **three years of our Manchester Chapter**. More than just an event, the summit was a bold expression of young migrant leadership in action, **bringing together 65 young people (from 108 sign-ups)** to shape conversations about their futures, their rights, and the kind of society they want to help build.

Designed by and for young people, the summit centred youth voice at every stage, from planning and facilitation to performances and policy workshops. It provided a space for young migrants to speak with power, connect with peers, and co-create solutions with allies and stakeholders.

Feedback

Summary (based on 32 responses):

- **94%** said they would recommend the event to others.
- **93.8%** rated the workshops very highly.
- **93.8%** were very satisfied with the materials provided.
- **96.9%** gave top marks for the youth-led performances.

GOAL 2: To remove barriers to equal and fair treatment through systemic change

We Belong's Mandate and Approach - Created in partnership with our young changemakers August 2024

We Belong advocates for reform to the immigration system, to create material change to the lives of young migrants who have grown up in the UK and have a strong case for belonging which is undermined by home office bureaucracy. We are engaging and building power amongst young people who face incredible barriers to their social integration. We want young people to be able to develop their hopes, dreams and careers away from the gaze and hold of immigration control. We will centre lived experiences and identify trends in data, tracking where immigration policies depart from their original intention or are badly implemented.

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We want to close the distance between decision-makers and young people. We need politics which respects and responds to the ordinary experiences of people in society and through our constituent-led model of advocacy we connect young people through the local and national political frameworks. We work with MP's and provide impact stories and parliamentary briefings so that coalitions of MP's can confidently raise the concerns of their young constituents in parliament and campaign for changes to the immigration system.

We need immigration rules to be fair and accessible; application costs must be reasonable and that delays in application decision-making must be reduced. We will work with the government and the Home Office to inform policies, improve culture, practices and enhance administrative efficiency. Our young people need their representatives to be accountable to them and so we will be bold in our approach and speak truth to power.

"Out of the Loop" Campaign

The development of our Campaigns:

In 2017, We Belong launched the **"Chasing Status"** campaign to advocate for a shorter and more equitable path to settlement.

This led to significant a win in 2022 halving the 10-year route to settlement for young migrants who have spent most of their lives in the UK. This concession means this cohort of young migrants can apply for settlement and it removes the barriers to education and employment, allowing them to move on with their lives much sooner. However, We Belong soon noticed that young people were often caught in a loop of high fees and precarious status. On Wednesday, 19th of April 2023, We Belong publicly launched its campaign called **"Out of the Loop"** calling on the immigration minister to take urgent action to ensure all young migrants can secure their permanent status in the UK. We Belong's primary ask is for the Home Office to introduce a fee waiver scheme for indefinite leave to remain (ILR).

The landscape shifted on 13th July 2023 with the Government's announcement of plans to increase the immigration health surcharge by a staggering 66% and raise visa application costs by at least 20%. Limited Leave to Remain (LLR) application will surge by an alarming 540% since 2014. Young migrants applying for limited leave to remain will bear the weight of a hefty £3,845 per applicant. Furthermore, the cost of applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain skyrocketed to £3,085, a 20% increase from the previous £2,404. Given the current cost-of-living crisis, these spikes could force many young individuals and families into financial difficulties, potentially being pushed out their lawful status due to unaffordability. In response, in addition to the ILR fee waiver, We Belong expanded the campaign ask to include a comprehensive review of the current Home Office fees, including the impact on the lives of young migrants who have grown up in the UK, to inform a new, fairer route to settlement.

Why our advocacy is needed: IMPACT STORY

Amber's Story: The complexity of the immigration system still holds young people in a legal limbo.

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Amber, now 24, arrived in the UK at the age of 2 and has lived here ever since. She only became aware of her immigration status at 17. After being granted Limited Leave to Remain (LLR), she successfully renewed it once. But when her next renewal approached in August 2023, financial hardship meant she couldn't afford the application fees.

A solicitor advised her to apply for a fee waiver, which had to be submitted separately from her LLR renewal. Estranged from her family and without support, Amber struggled to manage the process on her own. Many essential documents were withheld by her parents, and the Home Office requested further information. Feeling overwhelmed and under pressure, she missed the response deadline, and her fee waiver was rejected.

As a result, Amber missed her LLR renewal deadline, and her time on the 10-year route to settlement was reset. A year later, still without status but determined to resolve her situation, she reached out to We Belong. In our initial conversations with Mariam (Policy and Public Affairs Lead), Amber learned she might be eligible to apply for LLR under the private life route, a recent change she hadn't known about.

Amber was referred to our legal advice clinic, where she received expert guidance on her options. Given the complexity of her case and her lack of financial support, our Senior Outreach Solicitor took on her case to help with both the fee waiver and renewal.

Though Amber had saved some money, it wasn't enough. A discretionary request to the We Belong Support Fund was approved, enabling her to submit her application. While she awaits the outcome, she continues to receive support for essentials through our fund.

Amber's story shows how vital access to legal and financial support is for young people navigating complex, life-altering immigration processes.

Key highlights

Young Engagement in Campaigning and Advocacy

Our **Policy and Parliamentary Working Group** has grown to **10 members**, all young people with lived experience of the UK immigration system. Created to centre youth voice in policymaking, the group meets monthly to shape our advocacy, contribute to campaign strategy, and build leadership skills in a supportive environment.

Members played a key role in developing the focus and messaging of our Out of the Loop campaign through regular meetings with our CEO and policy team. Their insights ensured our work stayed grounded in real-life experiences.

A major milestone was the creation of **We Belong's first-ever Manifesto for Change**, a youth-led policy platform calling for urgent reforms to support young migrants in the UK. Launched in Parliament in May, the manifesto has become a cornerstone of our advocacy with MPs, civil servants, and sector partners.

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40 changemakers signed up to our Action Network online campaigning platform which includes toolkits of how to engage with MP's and specific actions our online community can engage in.

IMPACT

Reflections from SG a member of the Working Group

"As we continue going through an enormously complicated time for the migrant community within the UK, especially young people like me that have grown up in the UK - the parliamentary and policy working group had been a space where we have been able to take ownership of migrant justice and activism directly translating lived experience into what we believe must be done to allow us to reach our potential and access our rights.

The group has allowed us to focus on ambitious tasks to try and change national policy to change the lives of all young people within these circumstances, not just us. The only real challenge has been trying to stay hopeful within a sector where things constantly feel like they are getting worse, though the We Belong team is always there to be a friend when needed"

Annual Parliamentary Event

We engaged 8 cross-party MP's and 120 young changemakers through our 'Our Democracy, Our Say' parliamentary event which was co-hosted by Tim Loughton, Meg Hillier and Tim Farron in May 2024. 120 young people signed pledged committing to social change to advance a fairer and more just immigration system.

Meetings with MPs' and Policy Makers:

- 1. MP Meetings:** In this reporting period **8 young people have engaged with their MPs** to raise awareness of the barriers they face and our **We Belong have had 6 meetings with cross-party MPs.**
- 2. Policy Makers:** The final quarter of this reporting period saw an increase in Home Officer reengagement with Civil Servants and Policy Leads.

We Belong was invited by the Home Office to present at its annual Away Day on 3rd December, reflecting on the relationship between civil society and government. The presentation drew on our 2022 *Lessons Learned* paper and campaign evaluation and engaged around 20 civil servants working on immigration policy areas such as Appendix FM, eVisas, and leave outside the rules. Key issues raised included high immigration fees, limited access to fee waivers, and proposals from our *Out of the Loop* campaign and manifesto.

Following this, We Belong was invited to join a formal meeting to explore potential reforms to the private life route and fee structures. A new multi-disciplinary Home Office team has been set up to consider options, including five-year grants of leave, expanded fee waivers, and payment instalments. While this signals a shift in approach, we remain aware of budget constraints and will keep the Board updated.

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Engagement with the Immigration Dialogue:

We submitted evidence to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) enquiry into the effectiveness, and consistency of Home Office's management of fee waivers utilizing 33 impact stories on fees as well as trends identified from the 81 cases brought through our legal advice clinic.

Community Engagement and Partnerships: Hyperlocal Approach

In September 2024, we launched our Hyperlocal Strategy with the view to engage with the following borough/wards:

- London: Islington, Hackney, Barking and Dagenham, Southwark and Newham.
- Manchester: Greater Manchester, Rochdale, Oldham, Salford, Bolton.

Most of the young people we support approach us around age 18, having already spent most of their lives in the UK. By this time, they want to enter university or employment, but their lack of permanent status becomes a barrier. We believe this challenge could be mitigated earlier, if key figures in their lives were more aware of the issues. Our Community Engagement Officers have been focussing on establishing and deepening relationships with key stakeholders and adults who engage with young migrants at critical points.

By collaborating with existing services, we hope to develop trust between providers, upskilling them with the necessary information and training to improve support and outcomes for young migrants accessing services. We also hope to develop support for our ongoing campaigns with the help of local allies and building a case for broader national reforms to policies which create further barriers to integration.

In this reporting period we have recorded engagements with **44 professionals, 16 of which were Local Councillors**. This led to 15 meetings to explore partnerships, collaborations and to share the work of We Belong and to understand how to connect young people from the locality with our support services. We have managed to develop strong relationships with Manchester City Council and Hackney Council which we will build upon in 2025/26.

Coram Partnerships Learning

Our partnership with Coram to provide Immigration Advice entered its third year. The success of this partnership has led to conversations for renewal to ensure that we sustain this valuable resource for young people as they navigate a complex immigration system.

For this final quarter of this reporting year we started to collate location-based evidence to see where there is the most need. Of the 21 locations shared, **7 unique London boroughs were** represented, including Waltham Forest, Southwark, Croydon, and Greenwich - it's clear that the clinic has deep penetration across diverse areas of Greater London.

The presence of **10 unique locations outside of London** - including **Manchester, Liverpool, Milton Keynes, Kent, Essex, Hull, and Darlington** - shows that We Belong's legal advice clinic has extended its reach well beyond the capital, supporting young people across

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

multiple regions in England, including the North West, North East, East of England, and South East.

This highlights the growing national demand for specialist legal support among young migrants and the trust that We Belong has built across the country through its hybrid delivery model.

Key themes identified through the clinics:

1. Anticipated Barriers with the eVisa Rollout

As the Home Office moves to a digital-only immigration system, we foresee serious access issues for young people, particularly those with complex immigration statuses:

- **Young People on 3C Leave:** Individuals with pending applications may struggle to register for eVisas, leaving them unable to prove their right to work, rent, or study, despite being legally protected under 3C leave.
- **Delays in Document Return:** Young people newly granted Limited Leave to Remain are often unable to register for an eVisa because their passports are still with the Home Office, a key requirement for account creation.
- **Limited Access to the Resolution Centre:** Long queues and minimal support from the Home Office have hindered young people from resolving eVisa issues. One case involved a wait behind 134 callers. As the eVisa deadline approaches, these delays are likely to worsen.

In response, We Belong is actively supporting members to create their eVisa accounts early and flagging systemic barriers to policymakers.

2. Fee Waiver Processing Times Improving

We have seen a positive development in the faster turnaround of fee waiver applications, now typically processed within 2–3 months, easing some of the financial strain on applicants.

3. Identifying Eligibility for British Citizenship

Our legal clinics have uncovered cases where young people—initially seeking to regularise their status—were actually eligible for British citizenship. We are currently supporting two such applications. This highlights the value of comprehensive legal assessments, ensuring that young people are fully aware of their entitlements.

Feedback from young people and supporting adults who have attended a clinic:

AT aged 27, holds British citizenship.

She was initially supported with guidance on the ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain) application process, which she successfully obtained. A year later, AT sought further advice regarding the British citizenship application. With support from a legal advice clinic, she submitted her application, which was subsequently approved.

"I just wanted to share an update with you both that I am now officially a British Citizen! My application was recently approved, and my passport came through the post."

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I just wanted to say a massive thank you for all your help and support during this process- this has been a massive help. The updates and the free advice clinics were very informative and definitely provided much needed clarity in this process.

I also want to thank We Belong and the incredible work carried out by everyone in supporting young people like myself who are in this situation.” - AT

Advocacy and Empowerment Officer - *“I must say that the clinic really helped one of our service users. She was an asylum seeker who was trying to get residency status for her daughter who had been here for seven years. Through the clinic, Coram helped her child gain citizenship and helped the woman apply for Leave to Remain in the country. Her life changed for the better!! In fact, it was a complete turnaround.”*

Anonymised feedback from our survey- *“I am grateful to Mariam and the team for arranging this. The clinic was helpful, and it helped in understanding the different options that are available and which I can take.”*

GOAL 3: To build a strong and resilient team and organisation

During the period We Belong has focussed on streamlining processes, integrating Wellbeing and Mental Health provision and improving HR processes to respond to a growing team. Key developments included:

- Delivery of a team wide Wholesome Week focussing on developing the vision and mission and strong values of lived experience and refining the strategy of the organisation.
- Consultation on the organisational Annual Plan and KPI's to ensure core objectives are identified and agreed by the team.
- Conducting a review of the Manchester Chapter and key learning and future plans.
- Extensive development of the organisational fundraising pipeline to ensure sustainability.
- Building internal systems for project management, tracking and evaluation of projects.
- Return of the CEO Chrisann Jarrett from Maternity Leave in June 2024.

FUNDING PROCESS

We Belong submits funding applications either by open grant processes or by invitation from Grantmakers. The executive team undertakes a scoping exercise to identify and assess prospective funders ensuring alignment with our work before adding them to our fundraising pipeline. Once a prospective grant is on the fundraising pipeline it is then tracked from submission to assessment and finally through to decision. We Belong has been implementing an 18-month Fundraising Strategy which further documents grants on the organisational radar, potential revenue, expenditure and approximate reserves.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

FUNDRAISING

The 2024/25 financial year saw a renewal of some of our multi-year grants from trusts and foundations as well as core unrestricted grants enabling the organisation to focus on sustaining projects and staff roles. We raised £628,226 (2024: £641,570) in total income. This year we saw income from workshops and conferences amounting to £1,539 (2024: £3,770).

We have seen an increased demand for basic and essential needs due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, as well as a growing need for immigration application support following the 20% rise in Home Office immigration fees and a 60% increase in the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). In response, our **Support Fund** was crucial in addressing the urgent needs of young migrants who are navigating both financial hardship and the escalating costs of securing their immigration status.

Throughout 2024/25, we delivered **60 grants to 22 individuals**, totalling **£13,986** (2024: **35 grants to 18 individuals**, totalling **£6,930**). We are deeply grateful to all our supporters, without their generosity and commitment, this purpose-driven work would not be possible.

Key Challenges and Learning:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the key challenges We Belong has faced this year is around monitoring and evaluation. As an organisation that works with a large and diverse group of young people, many of whom have precarious immigration statuses, we engage through multiple streams, including advocacy, peer support, outreach, and direct services. This makes it difficult to capture consistent and meaningful data across programmes, while also remaining sensitive to the varying levels of trust and disclosure comfort among those we support.

Additionally, our team is geographically split between London and Manchester, which, while helping us increase our reach and presence, presents coordination challenges in streamlining systems, standardising data collection, and sharing learnings in real time. Ensuring coherence in our approach and consistency in how we measure outcomes across locations remains a work in progress.

We have recognised that embedding reflection and learning into our culture is essential for both impact and team cohesion, but it must be done in ways that are conducive to our ways of working, without relying on excessive meetings or rigid structures. To address this, we are exploring integrated approaches to learning, such as short reflective prompts in team communications, peer learning and casework sessions, and integrating a team wide bi-weekly data entry session across our CRM system and project plans on Monday.com including the development of a KPI tracker.

These improvements will help us deepen our understanding of what's working, identify gaps, celebrate individual and collective wins and ensure we remain accountable to the communities we serve.

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2. Navigating Data Requests Amidst a Changing Political Landscape

With the recent change of government, We Belong has experienced an increasing demand for detailed evidence to demonstrate the impact of the hostile environment on young people who arrived in the UK as children. While we understand the importance of providing robust data to inform policy, the constant and escalating requests for information place significant pressure on our team and resources.

This ongoing demand creates a dual challenge: not only must we ensure that the data we provide is accurate and reflective of lived experiences, but we also remain mindful that repeated calls for evidence should not become a substitute for urgent policy and administrative reforms. There is a risk that government may rely on data collection as a delaying tactic rather than a prompt for meaningful change.

From this, we have learned the importance of balancing responsiveness to evidence requests with strategic advocacy, using data not only to highlight challenges but also to push for concrete improvements in the system. We continue to seek ways to streamline our data collection processes, protect our limited resources, and amplify the voices of young migrants, ensuring their stories lead to real-world impact beyond the numbers.

GOVERNANCE

Following the departure of our former Chair in April 2024, Maheraj Lian, Vice Chair, stepped in as Interim Chair. In January 2025, Joel Carter assumed the Interim Chair role due to ongoing recruitment challenges. Together, Joel and Maheraj have provided strong support to the CEO, maintained representation across board committees, and ensured the continuity of governance responsibilities. To secure a permanent Chair, the Nominations Committee has engaged a professional recruitment firm.

The Board has made meaningful progress in strengthening governance, adopting updated finance, HR, safeguarding, and programme policies. The risk register has been expanded and is reviewed quarterly.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE PLANS

Last year, we committed to a hyperlocal engagement strategy, aimed at deepening our work with MPs while also expanding our networks to include local councils and grassroots organisations. This approach focuses on early intervention and improved access to rights by working closely with local groups to engage young people at an earlier stage in their journeys. We will continue to operationalise this strategy through deeper partnerships and targeted outreach. A key part of this will be the development of bespoke training for partners, equipping them to better identify immigration status issues among young people. We also plan to introduce regular check-ins with partners to monitor service improvements and ensure systems are accessible and responsive to young migrants' needs. Additionally,

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we are working to strengthen referral pathways, enabling quicker identification of unresolved status issues and helping prevent unnecessary disruptions to the lives and future plans of young people across the UK.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Trustees reported net expenditure of £103,675, (2024: £45,034 net income) on all operations for the period under review. The income for the year was £628,226 (2024: £641,570) and expenditure was £731,901 (2024: £596,536). The fund balance at the end of the period of £347,231 (2024: £450,906) comprised unrestricted funds of £320,216 (2024: £449,028) and restricted funds of £27,015 (2024: £1,878).

Further details of grant income can be found within notes 2 and 3 to the accounts. All expenditure supports the key objectives of the charity as described above. As stated within the Reserves Policy below, the nature and quantity of reserves will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted to reflect any changes in the Charity's financial position. The trustees and senior staff consider it a priority to secure sufficient income to ensure the long-term future of the Charity.

During the year, the charity navigated a challenging external environment that has impacted its financial position. The ongoing economic pressures in the UK have made securing new funding increasingly difficult, as many funders face competing demands and tighter budgets. Despite these challenges, the charity has maintained prudent financial oversight, ensuring continued delivery of its programmes. Careful planning and risk management remain essential to sustaining operations and supporting long-term financial resilience. No significant unforeseen financial risks materialised during the period, but the outlook remains cautious in light of external uncertainties.

RESERVES POLICY

A reserves policy has been established to provide guidelines and principles for maintaining an appropriate level of reserves to ensure the financial stability and sustainability of We Belong. The reserves policy is reviewed annually or as required, and compliance with the policy is reviewed on a quarterly basis with the board and finance subcommittee considering the fundraising strategy, risks, and any operational adjustments needed.

Our reserves policy requires We Belong:

- To have sufficient free reserves to cover the budgeted operating costs for a minimum of 4 (minimum) to 6 (maximum) months, as a measure of financial preparedness for unforeseen circumstances and short-term operational challenges.
- To align with the expectations and requirements of potential funders, including grantors and donors, while considering the impact of reserve levels on grant applications.
- To enable and accelerate the delivery of We Belong's three-year strategic plan.

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Reserve Calculation Method

Our reserves policy requires that we retain free reserves in unrestricted funds sufficient to cover six months of normal expenditure. The following items should be excluded from reserves:

- Tangible fixed assets used to carry out the charity's activities.
- Programme-related investments, held solely to further the charity's purpose.
- Designated funds set aside to meet essential future spending, such as funding a project that could not be met from future income.
- Commitments that have not been provided for as a liability in the accounts.

The total reserves of the charity at 31 March 2025 were £347,231 (2024: £450,906), of which £27,015 (2024: £1,878) were held in restricted funds. The unrestricted funds totalled £320,216 (2024: £449,028). In the previous financial year, the Board approved a designated fund of £150,000 (current year balance £136,014) to support the continuation of the critical Support Fund provided by We Belong. This fund supports young migrants and staff navigating the complexities of the immigration system. The remaining general free reserves are £184,202 (2024: £299,028). To ensure financial preparedness for unforeseen circumstances and short-term operational challenges, the charity aims to maintain sufficient free reserves to cover budgeted operating costs for the following financial year between a period of 4 (minimum £251,000) to 6 (maximum £377,000) months. Level of reserves held by the Charity is below the desired range with plans to increase the level of reserves through fundraising.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees actively review the major risks which face the charity on a regular basis, with a risk assessment report available online and highlighted at every Trustee meeting. Financially the Trustees believe that maintaining reserves at adequate levels, combined with an annual review of the controls over key financial systems will provide sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions. The Trustees have also examined other operational and business risks faced by the charity and believe that the systems in place to mitigate significant risks offers the charity adequate protection.

Risks identified and action taken to mitigate the risk:

1. **Governance risk:** related to loss of a key board post holder; Immediate action is being taken. Interim Chair and support person are in place and Inclusive Boards are conducting Candidate Search only for prospective candidates.
2. **HR risk:** risk mitigations in place, new staff have been trained, and an enhanced wellbeing package proposed in the Annual Plan as well as series of group trainings to foster trauma-informed approaches and collective care.
3. **HR loss of lived experience:** the organisation is conducting a review of this area for consideration by the Board.
4. **Finance and Fundraising Risk:** as we enter a new budget and planning period. Appointment of Finance Lead to help reduce the risk. Board and senior staff consider long term strategic direction for WB growth, including implications for the reserves policy.

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5. **Reputational damage, negative media risk:** we are mitigating risk by reviewing communication channels when campaigning materials are developed. Trustees and Contractors Code of Conduct have been approved and signed by the relevant parties.

GOING CONCERN:

The Trustees have examined the operational and business risks faced by the charity and believe that confirmed income for the next 12 months together with the reserves in place offer the charity adequate protection to ensure its continuance as a going concern. The Charity has in place a three-year budget to ensure future planning is secure.

PUBLIC BENEFIT:

When planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. Trustees are clear that there are identifiable benefits to the work that we do - some of these are identified below;

- Trustees are clear that these benefits are for a wide cross-section of the public;
- Trustees are clear that those benefits relate to our aims.
- Trustees are clear that those benefits outweigh any potential risks.

STATEMENT OF THE TRUSTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the CIO's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view the trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 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; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

The Trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that to the best of their knowledge there is no information relevant to the Independent Examination of which the Examiner is unaware.

The Trustees also confirm that they have taken all necessary steps to ensure that they themselves are aware of all relevant financial information and that this information has been communicated to the Examiner.

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The Trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 2 October 25 and signed on their behalf by:

Joel Carter Trustee and Interim Chair

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REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER TO THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of We Belong for the period ended 31 March 2025.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not considered part of an independent examination.
4. The accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities.

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

Caroline Sharp FCA, DChA
London SE7 8PF

Date: 6 October 2025

We Belong

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	346,854	-	346,854	383,713	-	383,713
Charitable activities							
We Engage	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
We Empower	3	-	201,546	201,546	-	190,287	190,287
We Build	3	1,539	77,580	79,119	3,770	63,800	67,570
Bank interest		707	-	707	-	-	-
Total income		349,100	279,126	628,226	387,483	254,087	641,570
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4	60,413	-	60,413	27,430	-	27,430
Charitable activities							
We Engage	4	122,185	-	122,185	109,412	-	109,412
We Empower	4	208,017	179,051	387,068	113,455	234,865	348,320
We Build	4	87,297	74,938	162,235	32,694	78,681	111,375
Total expenditure		477,912	253,989	731,901	282,990	313,546	596,536
Net (expenditure) / income for the year	5	(128,812)	25,137	(103,675)	104,493	(59,459)	45,034
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(128,812)	25,137	(103,675)	104,493	(59,459)	45,034
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought		449,028	1,878	450,906	344,535	61,337	405,872
Total funds carried		320,216	27,015	347,231	449,028	1,878	450,906

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 14a to the financial statements.

We Belong

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2025

			2025	2024
	Note	£	£	£
Current assets:				
Debtors				
Cash at bank and in hand	10	89,580	53,952	
		307,669	427,063	
		397,249	481,015	
Liabilities:				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(50,018)	(30,109)	
Net current assets			347,231	450,906
Total assets less current liabilities			347,231	450,906
Total net assets			347,231	450,906
The funds of the charity:	14a			
Restricted income funds			27,015	1,878
Unrestricted Income funds				
Designated funds		136,014	150,000	
General funds		184,202	299,028	
Total unrestricted funds			320,216	449,028
Total charity funds			347,231	450,906

Approved by the trustees on 2 October 25 and signed on their behalf by

Joel Carter Trustee and Interim Chair

We Belong

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities				
Net income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(103,675)		45,034	
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(35,628)		520	
Increase in creditors	19,909		18,293	
Net cash provided by operating activities	(119,394)			63,847
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	(119,394)			63,847
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	427,063			363,216
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	307,669			427,063

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt

	At 1 April 2024 £	Cash flows £	Other non- cash changes £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	427,063	(119,394)	-	307,669
Total cash and cash equivalents	427,063	(119,394)	-	307,669

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies

a) Statutory information

We Belong is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

The registered office and operational address is EC1 Offices, 338 City Road, London EC1V 2PY.

b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) - (Charities SORP FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

In applying the financial reporting framework, the trustees have made a number of subjective judgements, for example in respect of significant accounting estimates. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of the estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. Any significant estimates and judgements affecting these financial statements are detailed within the relevant accounting policy below.

The financial statements are presented in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and are rounded to the nearest £1.

c) Public benefit entity

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

d) Going concern

The Trustees have assessed the charity's financial position and are satisfied that it has sufficient income, committed funding, and reserves to continue operating for at least the next 12 months. A three-year financial plan is in place to support long-term sustainability, and no material uncertainties have been identified. The Trustees therefore consider the charity to be a going concern.

e) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income subject to terms and conditions which must be met before the charity is entitled to the resources is not recognised until the conditions have been met.

Where terms and conditions relating to income have not been met or uncertainty exists as to whether the charity can meet any terms or conditions otherwise within its control, income is not recognised but is deferred as a liability until it is probable that the terms or conditions imposed can be met.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

f) Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution. On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

g) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

h) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor or through the terms of an appeal. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

i) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charity in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose. Expenditure on charitable activities includes the direct delivery of programmatic work and initiatives as well as undertaken to further the charity's purposes. These costs include both direct expenses and associated support costs necessary to enable the effective delivery and management of these activities.

Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Governance costs include the management of the charity's assets, organisational management and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

j) Allocation of expenditure and support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, support costs which are the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, are apportioned to each activity on the basis detailed below.

Where information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is provided to potential beneficiaries, the costs associated with this publicity are allocated to charitable expenditure.

Where such information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is also provided to potential donors, activity costs are apportioned between fundraising and charitable activities on the basis of area of literature occupied by each activity.

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Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1 Accounting policies (continued)

j) Allocation of expenditure and support costs (continued)

Support and governance costs are re-allocated to each of the activities on the following basis which is an estimate, based on staff time and direct costs, of the amount attributable to each activity

Raising	10%
We Engage	20%
We Empower	50%
We Build	20%

Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity. These costs are associated with constitutional and statutory requirements and include any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities.

k) Operating leases

Rental charges are charged on a straight line basis over the term of the lease. No leases of more than 12 months are held.

l) Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and

m) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

n) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

o) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

p) Average number of employees

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was 11 (2024: 8.9).

q) Pensions

The charity participates in a defined contribution pension scheme available to all employees. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable under the scheme by the charity to the fund. The charity has no liability under the scheme other than for the payment of those contributions.

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2025 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £
General donations from individual	25,854	-	25,854	14,713	-	14,713
Grants from Trusts and Foundations						
Sigrid Rausing Trust	75,000	-	75,000	75,000	-	75,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	66,000	-	66,000	66,000	-	66,000
Esmée Fairbairn	65,000	-	65,000	65,000	-	65,000
* Anonymous	50,000	-	50,000	90,000	-	90,000
AB Charitable Trust	30,000	-	30,000	-	-	-
Garfield Weston	25,000	-	25,000	-	-	-
Civic Power Fund	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	-	10,000
Tudor Trust	-	-	-	63,000	-	63,000
	346,854	-	346,854	383,713	-	383,713

* Donations were received from two (2024: three) funders who are known to We Belong but wish to remain anonymous.

3 Income from charitable activities

	We Empower £	We Build £	2025 Total £	We Empower £	We Build £	2024 Total £
Restricted grants						
National Lottery Community	75,407	-	75,407	75,587	-	75,587
Unbound Philanthropy	30,000	30,000	60,000	30,000	30,000	60,000
Blagrove Trust	-	31,000	31,000	-	33,000	33,000
Trust for London	30,000	-	30,000	30,000	-	30,000
Barrow Cadbury Trust	25,000	-	25,000	23,500	-	23,500
The Oglesby Charitable Trust	11,500	11,500	23,000	-	-	-
City Bridge	6,000	4,000	10,000	-	-	-
Allen & Overy Shearman Foundat	10,000	-	10,000	-	-	-
Duke of Edinburgh Award	6,640	-	6,640	-	-	-
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	-
Civic Power Fund	1,000	1,000	2,000	-	-	-
Tudor Trust	-	-	-	1,200	800	2,000
John Ellerman Foundation	1,000	-	1,000	30,000	-	30,000
Other small grants and	-	80	80	-	-	-
Total Restricted	201,547	77,580	279,127	190,287	63,800	254,087
Unrestricted						
Workshops and conferences	-	1,539	1,539	-	3,770	3,770
Total income from charitable activities	201,547	79,119	280,666	190,287	67,570	257,857

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

4a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities			Governance costs £	Support costs £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
		We Engage £	We Empower £	We Build £				
Staff costs (Note 6 ,7)	44,645	68,987	213,827	85,595	-	42,359	455,413	342,986
Training, recruitment and other staff costs	-	2,299	7,495	2,642	-	7,249	19,685	24,529
Legal supervision for immigration caseworker	-	-	47,861	-	-	-	47,861	37,190
Other programme costs	-	7,061	26,743	20,925	-	-	54,729	32,930
Communications	-	9,499	9,498	4,749	-	-	23,746	30,799
Support Fund/Emergency grants (see below)	-	-	-	13,986	-	-	13,986	6,930
Travel, accommodation and subsistence	-	2,804	2,804	2,804	-	506	8,918	15,193
Trustee travel and meeting expenses	-	-	-	-	434	-	434	667
Trustee recruitment	-	-	-	-	633	-	633	-
Printing, post and stationery	-	-	-	-	-	1,231	1,231	1,571
Telephone and internet	-	-	-	-	-	1,831	1,831	2,463
Office rent and rates	-	-	-	-	-	91,835	91,835	69,253
Equipment costs	-	-	-	-	-	901	901	4,562
IT support and software	-	-	-	-	-	1,632	1,632	1,789
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-	1,232	1,232	1,102
Accountancy and independent examination	-	-	-	-	1,875	4,804	6,679	12,294
Bank and merchant charges	-	-	-	-	-	725	725	-
Sundry	-	-	-	-	-	430	430	12,278
	44,645	90,650	308,228	130,701	2,942	154,735	731,901	596,536
Support costs	15,474	30,947	77,368	30,946	-	(154,735)	-	-
Governance costs	294	588	1,472	588	(2,942)	-	-	-
Total expenditure 2025	60,413	122,185	387,068	162,235	-	-	731,901	

60 Support grants were made to 22 individuals totalling £13,986 (2024: 35 grants to 18 individuals totalling £6,930).

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

4b Analysis of expenditure (previous year)

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities			Governance costs £	Support costs £	2024 Total £
		We Engage £	We Empower £	We Build £			
Staff costs (Note 6)	19,449	58,328	192,532	57,929	-	14,747	342,986
Training, recruitment and other staff costs	-	5,320	13,105	2,660	-	3,444	24,529
Legal supervision for immigration caseworker	-	-	37,190	-	-	-	37,190
Other programme costs	-	8,536	11,946	12,448	-	-	32,930
Communications	770	12,012	12,011	6,006	-	-	30,799
Support Fund/Emergency grants (see below)	-	-	-	6,930	-	-	6,930
Travel, accommodation and subsistence	-	-	-	-	-	15,193	15,193
Trustee travel and meeting expenses	-	-	-	-	667	-	667
Printing, post and stationery	-	-	-	-	-	1,571	1,571
Telephone and internet	-	-	-	-	-	2,463	2,463
Office rent and rates	-	-	-	-	-	69,253	69,253
Equipment costs	-	-	-	-	-	4,562	4,562
IT support and software	-	-	-	-	-	1,789	1,789
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-	1,102	1,102
Accountancy and independent examination	-	-	-	-	954	11,340	12,294
Sundry	-	-	-	-	-	12,278	12,278
	20,219	84,196	266,784	85,973	1,621	137,742	596,536
Support costs	7,127	24,922	80,587	25,106	-	(137,742)	-
Governance costs	84	293	948	295	(1,621)	-	-
Total expenditure 2024	27,430	109,412	348,320	111,375	-	-	596,536

35 Support grants were made to 18 individuals totalling £6,930 (2023: 22 grants totalling £6,754).

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

5 Net (expenditure) / income for the year

This is stated after charging / (crediting):

	2025 £	2024 £
Operating lease rentals payable:		
Property	-	-
Other	-	-
Independent examiner's fee (excluding VAT):	1,875	954

6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management

Staff costs were as follows:	2025 £	2024 £
Salaries and wages	404,106	306,453
Social security costs	37,071	27,237
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	11,236	9,296
Other staff costs	3,000	-
	455,413	342,986

No employee earned over £60,000 (excluding employer pension costs and employer's national insurance) in either year.

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel was £184,988 (2024: £177,469).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2024: £nil). No trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2024: Nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs relating to attendance at meetings of the Board of trustees. One trustee was reimbursed £418 for travel expenses related to attendance at Board meetings in 2025 (2024: One trustee received £245).

7 Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was 11 (2024: 8.9).

Staff are split across the activities of the charity as follows:

	Headcount		Full-time equivalent	
	2025 No.	2024 No.	2025 No.	2024 No.
Raising funds	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4
We Engage	2.3	1.7	2.3	1.6
We Empower	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9
We Build	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.6
Support and Governance	1.3	0.3	0.9	0.3
	11.0	8.9	10.6	8.8

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

8 Related party transactions

Other than trustee expenses as disclosed in note 6 no payments were made to related parties.

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

9 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

10 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	720	2,431
Prepayments	23,334	13,728
Accrued income	65,526	37,793
	89,580	53,952

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	21,027	22
Taxation and social security	9,867	9,764
Other creditors	2,124	2,463
Accruals	5,000	4,860
Deferred income (note 12)	12,000	13,000
	50,018	30,109

12 Deferred income

Deferred income comprises grants received in advance specifically for use in the next financial year.

	2025 £	2024 £
Balance at the beginning of the year	13,000	-
Amount released to income in the year	(13,000)	-
Amount deferred in the year	12,000	13,000
	12,000	13,000

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

13a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Current assets	222,220	136,014	39,015	397,249
Current liabilities	(38,018)	-	(12,000)	(50,018)
Net assets at 31 March 2025	184,202	136,014	27,015	347,231

13b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	General unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Current assets	316,137	150,000	14,878	481,015
Current liabilities	(17,109)	-	(13,000)	(30,109)
Net assets at 31 March 2024	299,028	150,000	1,878	450,906

14a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds:					
National Lottery Community Fund	-	75,407	(75,407)	-	-
Unbound Philanthropy	-	60,000	(60,000)	-	-
Blagrave Trust	1,878	31,000	(32,878)	-	-
Trust for London	-	30,000	(30,000)	-	-
Barrow Cadbury Trust	-	25,000	(25,000)	-	-
The Oglesby Charitable Trust	-	23,000	(23,000)	-	-
Allen & Overy Shearman Foundation	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
City Bridge	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Duke of Edinburgh Award	-	6,640	(145)	-	6,495
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Civic Power Fund	-	2,000	(1,480)	-	520
John Ellerman Foundation	-	1,000	(1,000)	-	-
Other small grants and donations	-	80	(80)	-	-
Total restricted funds	1,878	279,127	(253,990)	-	27,015
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Support fund	150,000	-	(13,986)	-	136,014
Total designated funds	150,000	-	(13,986)	-	136,014
General funds	299,028	349,100	(463,926)	-	184,202
Total unrestricted funds	449,028	349,100	(477,912)	-	320,216
Total funds	450,906	628,227	(731,902)	-	347,231

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Purposes of restricted funds

National Lottery Community Fund – Supports the We Belong Youth Voice Partnerships, specifically covering the development and activities of the Manchester Chapter.

Unbound Philanthropy – Funds the Organising and Mobilising Immigrant Youth initiative, focusing on leadership and empowerment.

Blagrove Trust – Supports the implementation of the policy win from the Chasing Status campaign and funds the Policy and Public Affairs Officer role.

Trust for London – Funds the We Belong Chasing Status Project – Pathways to Settlement, focusing on advocacy and systemic change for young people with insecure immigration status.

Barrow Cadbury Trust – Supports campaigning efforts on key issues including immigration, citizenship, and access to higher education, as well as youth leadership and development.

The Oglesby Charitable Trust - Supports We Belong towards core costs of delivering Chasing Status for the benefit of young people in Greater Manchester.

Allen & Overy Shearman Foundation- Supports We belong with Let us Learn projects educational outreach for London.

City Bridge Foundation - Supports We Belong to empower young people with precarious immigration status in London through a targeted programme of advocacy, campaigning and youth development.

Duke of Edinburgh Award – Supports We Belong to deliver the Bronze Award to 12 young people.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - Amount granted to support We Belong with wellbeing cost.

Civic Power Fund – Supports the development and training of We Belong's governance structures and promotes the wellbeing of both staff and young people.

John Ellerman Foundation – A responsive grant awarded in the context of the recent riots to support organisational resilience and capacity.

Purpose of designated fund

The board have approved the creation of an Support Fund (Designated) allocating £150,000 from the current free reserves to a fixed term designated fund. This strategic move will sustain the critical support provided by We Belong to young migrants and staff navigating the complexities of the immigration system and enhance our fundraising efforts by demonstrating efficient use of surplus funds.

We Belong

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2025

14b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds:					
Barrow Cadbury Trust	-	23,500	(23,500)	-	-
Tudor Trust	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Unbound Philanthropy	25,000	60,000	(85,000)	-	-
Trust for London	2,837	30,000	(32,837)	-	-
National Lottery Community Fund	18,077	75,587	(93,664)	-	-
John Ellerman Foundation	11,164	30,000	(41,164)	-	-
Blagrave Trust	4,259	33,000	(35,381)	-	1,878
Total restricted funds	61,337	254,087	(313,546)	-	1,878
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Support fund	-	-	-	150,000	150,000
Total designated funds	-	-	-	150,000	150,000
General funds	344,535	387,483	(282,990)	(150,000)	299,028
Total unrestricted funds	344,535	387,483	(282,990)	-	449,028
Total funds	405,872	641,570	(596,536)	-	450,906

15 Legal status of the charity

The charity is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation and its governing document is a written constitution dated 10 July 2019, updated in September 2021.