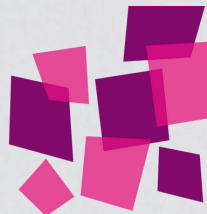


*Azalea*  
Walking free



# ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS AUGUST 2023- JULY 2024

"This week, I learnt to not let my past rule my future  
but to accept what I see and that love is free."

- Ebony, supported by Azalea

Encompass

Flint   
Men walking free

Reroute

Speak Out!  
LOCAL ROOTS. GLOBAL SHOOTS

PAST   
People  
Against  
Sex  
Trafficking

[www.azalea.org.uk](http://www.azalea.org.uk)

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## A Message from our CEO & Co-Founder

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2023-24. We are so pleased you have taken the opportunity to read about Azalea.

We can't really describe the sadness of sitting in the Encompass Drop-in late at night and listening to yet another woman's story of the violence she has experienced. We could write an entire book on the complexity of working with a Flint client who is earnestly seeking to end sex buying (in fact, we might well write that book one day). It is difficult to convey fully the power of volunteers being persistently present, or of those amazing moments when women take the risk of trusting us.

We can, however, share some of the many moments of joy encountered this year; there is so much to celebrate and we hope that as you read this year's report, you are encouraged by our work and crucially, by the progress made by our guests.

Azalea was delighted to receive a silver award in the not for profit business category at the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards. I was also delighted to be awarded Charity Champion of the year at The Best Business Women Awards 2023; I am enormously grateful to the BBW team for their commitment to supporting us this year.

Our long-held vision for a mobile support van became a reality this year; our guests named the van **Liberty** and with the support of our private funders, grant funders and the office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire (who have commissioned our van pilot through £80,000 of Ministry of Justice funding over 2 years), we launched the van in March, extending our outreach work into Bedford.

As I write, our records indicate that **497 women** have accessed Azalea since our beginning. By the time you read this, we will have met more, and we know that they may need us again at any moment. The road to recovery is long and hard; we want to be there for every twist and turn, and we know that we are stronger with your support.

**Thank you for being with us,**



**Ruth Robb, CEO & Co-Founder**



Ruth with Festus Akinbusoye (former Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner) and our Patron, Russell Beard (former High Sherriff of Bedfordshire) at the van launch



## A Message from our Chair of Trustees

On behalf of the Board, it is my privilege to express our respect and admiration for the women who are walking free with dignity and for the dedicated team and volunteers who support them.

Inspired by our Christian faith, we welcome all in our community, regardless of their own faith, whether as staff, volunteer, supporter or guest, as we deliver non-judgemental care and support to all those we meet, who are impacted by sexual exploitation and sex-trafficking.

At Azalea, reflecting on the year's achievements is always bitter-sweet. Powered by prayer for 16 years, we have now worked with 497 women surviving sexual abuse. This year alone, we delivered 68 mentoring sessions to men seeking to overcome addiction to sex purchasing. We know that more women and men than ever are seeking and accessing our support and the desire to meet that demand is palpable across our staff and volunteer teams. It is truly humbling to consider the countless hours given in support of Azalea's mission by our frontline Encompass and Flint volunteers, cake makers, knitters, meal makers, drivers, and so many more, whose energy has powered so much progress this year.

The times we are in remain challenging; the cost-of-living crisis continues to hit the poorest hardest and we are all too aware of the competition for funding, with so many demonstrably worthy projects and causes working tirelessly in support of those whose need is greatest. Bolstered by powerful community and business partnerships, we are looking to the future to build capacity, to advocate for change and to provide vital, relevant support to all those who engage with our services.

Thank you for reading about the many ways in which Azalea is transforming lives and creating lasting change in our community. Your prayers are vital and your support is priceless.



**Reverend Martyn Shea, Chair.**



*"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see"*  
*Hebrews 11:1*



## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT



**Charity Name** Azalea

**Principal Address** 3a Upper George Street, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 2QX

**Charity Registration Number** CIO: 1190508  
(Previously operating under Charitable Trust: 1126716)

**Patrons** Russell Beard  
Elaine Storkey

**Board of Trustees (Membership of committees)** Reverend Martyn Shea - Chair  
William Treasure - Treasurer (F)  
Amanda McCalla-Leacy (PC)  
Sam Hargreaves (VV, SO)  
Gerard van der Westhuyzen (SG,SS)  
Anna Theron (SS)  
Reverend Luran Bethell (SO)(VV)

*People's Committee (PC) Safeguarding (SG) Structures & Systems (SS)  
Finance (F) Speak Out (SO) Vision & Values (VV)*

The Board of Trustees has been appointed in accordance with the Charity's Constitution. The Board meets 5 times each year and certain powers and functions are delegated to the committees listed above. Those committees meet regularly, and report back to the full Board as soon as reasonably practicable, in accordance with the Constitution. In addition to the delegation of decision making to these committees, the Board of Trustees delegates the day to day management and running of the Charity to the Senior Leadership Team. All new Trustees receive an induction to the organisation and Azalea maintains a Trustee handbook providing information concerning the roles and responsibilities of Trustees.

**Public Benefit** The Trustees have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning how those aims will be met, for the public benefit. The Trustees have ensured that the charity's activities are carried out for the public benefit and have considered how these activities contribute to the achievement of the charity's aims.

### **Governing Document**

Azalea was first constituted as a charitable trust and registered with the Charity Commission in 2008 under number 1126716. Azalea CIO was registered under number 1190508 in 2020. The assets, liabilities and activities of the charity were transferred from the registered trust to the CIO with effect from and including 1 December 2022. The charitable trust was maintained in existence to allow sufficient time for donors to be made aware of the transition, and the trustees intend to dissolve the charitable trust during the financial year to 31 July 2025.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

Ruth Robb (CEO)  
Emma Koroma (Deputy CEO)  
Kate Dunwoodie (Deputy CEO - maternity cover)  
Hollie Stone (Encompass Director)

### **Charitable Trust bank account**

Co-operative Bank, 2-6 Alma Street, Luton LU1 2PL

### **CIO Bank account**

Lloyds Bank, Victoria (309897) Branch, PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT

### **Accountant**

Whittaker Plane Ltd, 30-34 Upper George Street, 2nd Floor, Apex House, Luton LU1 2RD

### **Independent Examiner**

Alan Endersby AAT, ACA, Streets Chartered Accountants, Basepoint Business & Innovation Centre, 110 Butterfield, Great Marlings, Luton LU2 8DL.

### Our Charitable Objects

Azalea's Objects are set out in our Constitution and are:

- The relief of poverty and advancement of the welfare of people who are involved in the sex trade by the provision of support services that meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs, for the public benefit.
- The protection and preservation of health and the advancement of education of people involved in the sex trade by the provision of counselling and advice from a Christian perspective.
- The advancement of Christianity, for the public benefit, particularly, but not exclusively, by promoting hospitality, prayer and service toward people involved in the sex trade, within Christian communities.

Azalea sets its strategy for achieving its objectives for the public benefit through the Azalea Business Plan, which is prepared every three years and reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees and the Senior Leadership Team, who set key outcomes against which to measure achievement. The Senior Leadership Team reports on performance to the Trustees at quarterly meetings and the full staff and Trustee team meets annually to review achievements and set the vision for the next year.

### Our Mission

Driven by the belief that every person matters and inspired by our Christian faith, Azalea works to empower and facilitate sustainable transformation in the lives of the men, women and neighbourhoods impacted by sex trafficking. Through the sharing of expertise in this seemingly insurmountable global issue, Azalea then empowers others to respond to the particular challenges faced by their communities. We work to fulfil our mission through our five projects.

### Our Projects



Supporting women caught up in local and international sex trafficking, empowering all to develop exit pathways to recovery, with a holistic approach to care which is non-judgemental and unconditional. The four elements within Encompass are **Engage** - outreach and access to our drop-in; **Build** - support for budgeting, housing, addiction, relationships and health; **Flourish** - our therapeutic trauma recovery centre; and **Tamar** - our dedicated support for women trafficked for sex internationally.



Mentoring men from across the UK with strong temptations, to significantly reduce their purchase of sex and recover to a full and healthy attitude to sex and relationships.



Advocating locally, nationally and internationally for survivors of sex trafficking and in response to invitation, equipping communities across the globe to end sex trafficking in their region.



People Against Sex Trafficking works by developing collaborative community solutions to sex trafficking and influence policy making.



Building awareness of the risks of grooming for sex trafficking.



## Our Year At a Glance



### ENGAGE

**New to Engage: 78**

**Outreach: 198**  
interactions

**Drop in: 132** guests  
welcomed



### FLOURISH

**Invitations accepted: 41**

**Regularly attending: 10**

**Individual counselling sessions:**  
72

**Accessing group therapy: 8**  
independently attending

**Faith/community groups: 16**

**Fun day trips out: 11**



**Encompass**



**205**  
women  
supported

### BUILD



**New to Build: 11**

**Guests supported: 64**

**1:1 support delivered to: 52**

**Moved on: 7**

**securely housed: 29**

**accessing drug & alcohol**  
support: 17

### TAMAR



**International Guests supported: 13**

**Guests rehoused: 1**

**Guests relocated: 3**

**Dedicated drop-in sessions held: 3**

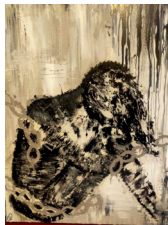
**Police operations supported: 1**

## Our Year At a Glance (cont'd)



Mentoring provided to Azalea Burundi

Frontline training delivered in South Africa



Supporting projects in 6 areas:  
Burundi, China, Egypt, South Africa  
and other sensitively secure areas



### Your neighbourhood matters. Signs of grooming.

If you have concerns that someone you care for is being groomed for sexual exploitation and trafficking, here are some signs you may have noticed:

- they've met a new person online, but never in person
- they've met a new person online, who is residing in a different country
- they are planning a trip abroad that has been booked by someone else - (of particular concern if it is a one way ticket)

The NSPCC\* advise that you also look out for the following:

- sudden changes in behaviour, such as spending more or less time online
- spending more time away or going missing from home or school
- being secretive about how they're spending their time, including when using online devices
- having unexplained gifts, big or small
- misusing alcohol and/or drugs
- having a friendship or relationship with a much older person
- developing sexual health problems
- using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know
- seeming upset or withdrawn
- mental health problems

If you have any of the above concerns about a child under the age of 18, call 999

If you have concerns about someone you care for who is above the age of 18, call us to talk it through and see how we can help on 01682 733200

You can also call the Modern Slavery and Exploitation helpline on 08000 123 700

\*<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/grooming>

Azalea CID 1109008



We have:

- hosted residents' drop-in meetings
- distributed leaflets door-to-door
- supported local Councillors' 'let's talk' meetings;
- hosted intelligence sharing meetings with key professionals and agencies
- welcomed local Councillors to walking outreach.

### Spotlight on *Encompass*

Our key objective in Encompass over the past year has been to reach women\* surviving sex trafficking through outreach. The care given by Encompass is always **unconditional and non-judgemental**; the women we meet - our guests - are welcomed to Encompass just as they are, and often precisely where they are. Our guests have shaped our work since our beginning 16 years ago and this year, Encompass has responded to their vision of a drop-in which can be taken out to where it is most needed, through the launch of a mobile support van.

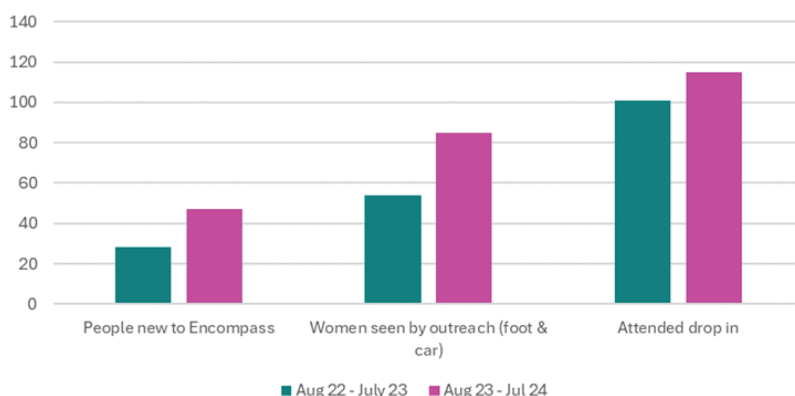
**Named Liberty by our guests**, we are now offering the

same warm, homely, safe and private support which we can provide from our Luton base, on the streets of Luton and Bedford. As we transitioned into a world where Covid-19 became part of daily life, our Encompass guests continued to face challenge upon challenge. Sadly, they have been some of those worst hit by the cost-of-living crisis. Women surviving sex trafficking face harsh realities every day, whether this be rape by a sex buyer, violence from a trafficker, loss of safe housing due to a local drug dealer, or the constant need to keep traumatic memories away, the list is endless. Despite the challenges faced by many nationally, Azalea has thrived, and we have seen growth in Encompass. We meet new guests every month, whilst continuing to care for women who we have known since we began 16 years ago. In the last 12 months, every single **Engage Drop-In session** went ahead, the teams went out on **Outreach** in Luton on Monday evenings and on Wednesday early mornings, and in Bedford on Tuesday evenings. During Drop-In sessions we have hosted other local professionals, including a link worker from a local GP and Victim Engagement Officers from Bedfordshire Police. This has been hugely successful as it has allowed guests to access vital help on their terms and in their time. We have seen relationships developing really well between guests and the Police, with an increase in reporting violent sex buyers and perpetrators as a result of this collaboration. Through **Build** we have journeyed with 52 women as we have met them for 1-1s, building vital relationships and providing practical support. These 52 women have been

empowered to believe and plan for a future in which they are no longer captive to sex trafficking or coercive relationships but are free to build their own, independent life. Build runs alongside both Engage and Flourish, and we have seen significant impact when a guest is connecting with Build and Flourish at the same time, as their practical, spiritual and emotional needs are met. The support we deliver is open ended and vitally so as the women journey through many ups and downs repeatedly, before they are able to sustain recovery. Our Encompass team have been caring for women with severe physical health problems as a result of years of sexual abuse, meeting with women who have absented themselves for a year due to the shame they carry from relapsing, and supporting women through the intense and terrifying process of providing statements to the police. No two days are the same, **Tamar** has also seen significant growth this year; thanks to funding provided by **The Steel Charitable Trust** we welcomed a dedicated Anti-International Sex Trafficking Officer who has established an early morning outreach and has supported 13 international guests through intensive tailored 1-1 care. We are now also offering a dedicated weekly drop-in session for international survivors. Azalea supported Bedfordshire Police on the execution of one warrant in the last year. **Adina's story** (below) puts this vital partnership working powerfully into context..



**Our incredible volunteers on Outreach in Liberty, our mobile support van.**



\*Azalea will offer unconditional, non-judgemental support to all survivors of sex-trafficking, however through the research undertaken amongst our Encompass guests (all of whom are women) we have concluded that our drop-in services should remain as safe spaces for women only, due to the trauma and sexual violence suffered by our guests, inflicted by men. When our frontline teams meet male or transgender survivors, our approach is to provide the same initial outreach support, and to ensure wherever possible that survivors are safely signposted to receive further tailored support.



## ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

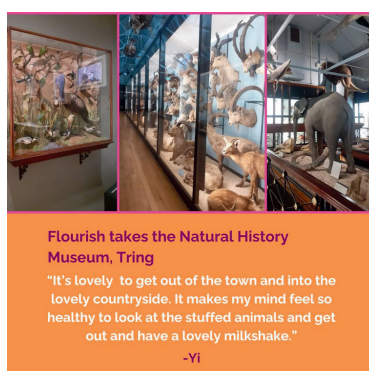
**Flourish** was created as a home of healing and empowerment for survivors of sex trafficking met by Azalea through Engage and Build. Open to all women who are caught up in sexual exploitation, Flourish encourages women to learn, explore and demonstrate how to rebuild love for ourselves and one another and where this is welcomed by survivors, how to fully understand the Good news of God's love and the Salvation we are promised through relationship with Him. This year we have developed the Flourish curriculum, adding regular new classes and including time for trips out and about. Our Flourish Lead Officer dedicates time each week to encouraging guests attending our drop-in centre to trial Flourish. We know that offering support in isolation will ultimately mean women remain trapped; we are passionate about Flourish, because it offers a tangible pathway to exit and healing. In Build, we are working hard 1:1 with guests to persuade them at least to consider trying one of the many activities on offer in Flourish.

Flourish is supported by a team of dedicated volunteers, who bring their unique skills and perspectives to each session. Carmel (pictured) has been a part of the Azalea family since our beginning 16 years ago. Our guests know her as Grandma (she is over 90 and yet her energy levels are nothing short of miraculous; she was awarded 'Best Volunteer' at **Luton's Best 2023 Awards** - thoroughly well deserved!) Guests can take part in weekly Barista training, cookery classes, arts and crafts, and sewing. There are themed projects throughout the year and guests enjoy fellowship through conversation. We also offer group therapy with our qualified in-house Counsellor, which is proving to be extremely beneficial; thanks to funding provided by the **Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund**, we partnered with **Stepping Stones, Signposts and Hope Church** to introduce our cross-organisation counselling programme. Our guests have had access to someone they trust to teach them tools to understand and conquer difficult mental health complexities.



Over the year, Flourish guests have taken trips out and about; they have visited local lavender fields, local lakes, St Albans Cathedral, local Bluebell woods and a local stately home. In January, the Flourish Lead Officer and our CEO accompanied three of our Flourish guests to the Houses of Parliament to meet with MPs and Members of the House of Lords, to share their testimony as part of the End Demand Campaign presented to Parliament by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation. The courage and grace with which they spoke was striking. Flourish is fast becoming a platform for the women it supports to advocate for themselves.

Our Flourish Lead Officer summed up her thoughts on Flourish recently, as we took time as a team to reflect on the work of the last year. She shared that Flourish has developed considerably as the guests have grown in confidence, transforming into a relaxed setting in which the women quite literally are flourishing. It is vital to the recovery of our guests, that they themselves inform the recovery journey; the future looks bright in Flourish, with guests planning their first ever Flourish retreat. We could not have imagined that this would be possible one year ago. We cannot wait to see how our guests develop Flourish in the year to come - watch this space!



### Spotlight on *Flint*

When Azalea began back in 2008, we came to realise that the women we knew were the symptom of a much deeper problem - the demand for the purchase of sex. In response, we created **Flint**. The purchase of sex is a controversial topic, however it must be named and addressed if sex trafficking is ever to reduce. Flint is an empathic, holistic response to men who wish to change their habits. This year we have reviewed our service provision based on feedback from clients, and embedded a new practice to offer the best opportunity for recovery. Our Flint programme combines principles from Solution Focused Brief Therapy and a process called Mind Renewal which incorporates looking at the root of problems in order to find the forward-focused solution. Whilst the women we know are largely outcast and excluded from Society, the men we know are more likely to be part of mainstream society, but they are struggling with guilt and shame and are stuck in patterns of behaviour from which they cannot break free, which causes damage to their relationships with friends and family and destroys their sense of self-worth. They have confused ideas about sex, women and relationships, have sometimes experienced abuse themselves, and find it hard to ask for help due to the stigma attached to buying sex. Flint supports men who buy sex, helping them to change their lifestyles and behaviour patterns. Our part time project officer has been supported by a part time Community Relations Officer, who has been raising awareness of the project in the local community, in particular through outreach to churches. Our project team has been supported by four trained volunteers who are actively mentoring men wishing to reduce their sex buying. Over **68 sessions**, Flint has mentored **11 men** this year.

### Spotlight on *Speak Out!*



**Speak Out!**  
LOCAL ROOTS. GLOBAL SHOOTS

Formerly known as **Consulting & Partnering**, we have re-branded this project to reflect the full extent of the impact which we know we can make, through our work in building powerful partnerships with business and community organisations and with local and central government, advocating for the best support for the survivors we meet and those we have yet to find, and sharing our experience for the education of all in the fight against Modern Slavery in the UK and across the World. Crucially, we do not want to be a voice for the voiceless; the women we support want - and deserve - to be heard. Speak Out! is our response.

This year we have continued to contribute as an active member of boards involved in anti-sex trafficking legislation and implementation. Locally, our CEO chairs the Co-production Luton Safeguarding team and is a member of Bedfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board. Azalea is a key partner in the Luton On Street Sexual Exploitation 10 year strategy 2024 - 2034, working closely with Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police. She is also a board member of the Eastern Region Anti-Slavery Partnership and the Serious Sexual Assault Board for the East of England. Nationally, our CEO regularly contributes to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Commercial Sexual Exploitation, most recently speaking at the launch of its new inquiry report, 'Men who buy sex: Understanding the Demand for Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in the UK'. Internationally, Speak Out! continues to build on the foundations laid by Consulting & Partnering, responding to requests for consultancy support for projects who share in the vision to see an end to sex trafficking. This year, Azalea delivered training in Burundi and in South Africa.



### Spotlight on PAST

PAST seeks to develop collaborative community solutions to sex trafficking and influence policy making. The project aims to promote a zero-tolerance policy towards sex-trafficking by promoting helpful ways of engaging with this issue within the local community and encouraging compassion for all affected. Key activities delivered this year include hosting residents' drop-in sessions at Cafe Lagoa in Hightown, Luton, and attending 'Let's Talk' residents' meetings - community discussions for residents of the Central & Hightown wards hosted by local Councillors and the community policing team. These initiatives provide our PAST Director with the opportunity both to advocate for the women we meet and support, and to highlight the key role played by the community in intelligence gathering concerning criminal activity and exploitation. The women we support are often the default target for complaints of anti-social behaviour. At one meeting, 'Karen'\*shared a very negative view of the sex-trafficked women she had encountered with our PAST Director at the beginning of the meeting. She came back to talk further at the end of the meeting and asked if she could volunteer and help with Azalea's outreach. She had not appreciated the wider issues at play. Our PAST Director has also hosted regular intelligence sharing meetings at which a team of professionals from key agencies meet to bring their experience and perspectives to contribute to new ways to tackle sex trafficking in Luton. A new initiative this year has been extending invitations to local Councillors to join us on walking outreach. Feedback from Hightown Councillor James Taylor was positive - he complemented the relationship which our experienced frontline staff and volunteers have with the women. This first hand experience has strengthened local understanding of the need to focus Council time and resource on addressing the impact of sex trafficking in Luton.

### Spotlight on Reroute

Here are some thoughts from our Encompass Director, explaining the rationale for Reroute:

'It's hard to articulate what it's like to watch kind, intelligent, competent women live in a deep hole of self hatred. At surface level it can be hard to understand their 'decisions', their 'choices', regarding the violent and unkind people that they spend time with, the substances that they pump into their bodies to escape reality, the health appointments that they DNA for life threatening illnesses, the array of support services that they avoid. But when you have spent time with them every week for 4 years and they've slowly told you little bits about their childhood: the sexual abuse they suffered at the age of 5 from a relative, and the sexual exploitation they experienced at the hands of a paedophile gang as a teen, how can you blame them? Rape, violence, sexual abuse, lies, threats, - this has been all they have known their whole lives. When these women were children no one stepped in. Did no-one notice? That's hard to believe. Did no one listen? That's terrifying to think'

**100% of the women supported by Encompass have suffered sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation.** . All children should be safe from sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. This year, we secured funding for a development officer to design a programme of awareness training for delivery in schools and community groups. One of our guests joined our interview panel and this vital role has been filled. Flint is key and exists to end the demand for sex trafficking, in the hope that one day Encompass will no longer be needed. **Reroute exists to empower and educate all on the risks and signs of childhood sexual exploitation and childhood sexual abuse. With this 360 degree approach, sex trafficking can be prevented before it begins.**

\*pseudonym used



### Managing Risk

The Board of Trustees ensures effective risk management controls are in place to manage the strategic risks facing Azalea by maintaining a risk register which is reviewed and updated regularly. This year, the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees carried out a review of Azalea's business continuity processes and procedures, taking into account learnings and knowledge acquired through our response during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The resulting revised business continuity plan will be regularly reviewed and updated going forward. Other key areas of risk for Azalea are unchanged from previous years and are set out below.

#### Cost of Living Crisis and Economic Downturn

The continued effects of the cost of living crisis have resulted in further rises in demand for our services, with the costs of delivering our services continuing at sustained high levels.

#### Funding

Against a background of increasing costs, we have experienced another successful short-term achievement in funding this year, with a small surplus as at 31 July 2024. However, we have set ambitious goals for service delivery in the year to 31 July 2025, with an equally ambitious budget. Our finance sub-committee will continue to meet every two weeks to ensure our financial risk and forecasting is constantly assessed. Azalea maintains a diverse income strategy, investing in a wide variety of supporters. Given the economic fragility nationally, we shall, however, continue to invest time into all potential income streams, seeking always to diversify further.

#### Health & Wellbeing

The ongoing health risks of Covid-19 are here to stay, albeit significantly reduced, and we need to continue to manage staff absence due to illness. There is a risk to all staff of overload and fatigue, and all staff are strongly encouraged to take up their full holiday allocation (including one annual break of at least three weeks for full time staff). Azalea also continues to provide mandatory supervision for all front line staff with a Psychotherapist every three weeks (and more often if required). The invitation is extended to administrative staff, though not mandatory. The frontline team meets weekly for a mentoring session with our CEO. Supervision is also made available to all frontline volunteers.

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding continues to be a key priority for Azalea; we continue to review our safeguarding policies twice per year and all frontline staff and volunteers received compulsory safeguarding training in June 2024. The Safeguarding Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees has met four times this year to ensure that safeguarding standards are continually upheld. Our designated safeguarding officers continue to attend multi-disciplinary meetings and specialist monthly safeguarding panels for the most vulnerable women. Our CEO and Encompass Director chair and co-chair the Luton Adults Safeguarding Board Coproduction team, which works closely with professionals working with at-risk adults in Luton. The Encompass Team continues to work very closely with Luton Borough Council and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure that safeguarding concerns raised in relation to Encompass guests and any associated children are appropriately followed up.

### Volunteers

Our volunteers are, without exception, simply incredible. Many of our volunteers have been with us for over seven years, and some have been with us since the very beginning. Highly skilled, deeply generous and endlessly patient, our frontline volunteers offer the unconditional non-judgemental care and support which enables Azalea to continue its mission. They are there because they choose to be, and because they genuinely believe our guests deserve the open-ended warm welcome which we offer. This is powerful, and it is often seen and acknowledged by our guests. Standing alongside our frontline Encompass and Flint volunteer team of **22**, we have a veritable army of cake bakers, frozen meal providers, envelope stuffers, admin, cleaning, and maintenance volunteers, and teams who come in week-in week-out to re-stock our clothing rails, food bank and tea and coffee facilities in the drop-in. This year, we have added a regular weekly mobile drop-in crew to the volunteer team and we are so grateful for each and every vital contribution. Frontline volunteer training took place during the Spring months, and we welcomed **4** new frontline volunteers to the team through this. Ongoing training is essential for all frontline volunteers; mental health & self care, Encompass scenarios & Role play training has been delivered this year and thanks to the generous support of **the Rock Church, Harpenden**, we now have a dedicated volunteer manager, ensuring that our volunteers receive the care they also need and rightly deserve.

At Azalea, we know that for women who are surviving sex trafficking, "regular working hours" don't exist. **Currently, peak demand for purchasing sex and committing acts of violence is between 5.30am and 7.30 am**, therefore we hold early morning outreach every Wednesday, which gives us the opportunity to signpost the women we meet to our drop in on Wednesday afternoons. Our outreach team met 'Adina' in this way. This is her story.

Having phoned ahead to CCTV and the Police to inform them of the intended outreach session, our anti-international sex trafficking Office (ASTO)) set out on foot accompanied by two volunteers, to walk the streets of Luton Town Centre and High Town loaded with back-packs containing hot drinks, cakes, haribo, condoms, personal safety alarms and essential signposting literature produced by Azalea in collaboration with the Police and other statutory services. Heartbreakingly, CCTV know many of the women within the "beat" by name, and will often let our outreach teams know who is "working". Collaboration with CCTV and the Police is essential to the safe delivery of our outreach work.

The outreach team met and talked with 7 women that morning. Of those, three were international, which is representative of the general increase in international women encountered by Azalea during Outreach. One of the women met by our ASTO on North Street (the women are often to be found here) was standing alone. As our ASTO approached her, she appeared to be frightened: as our ASTO explained, **"she looked like she thought she was in trouble"**. She introduced herself as "Monica". This is her working name, not her real name; we now know her as **Adina\***.

Often, a way into conversation is for us to offer a hot drink and a cake. Adina was overwhelmed when the outreach team offered her something to eat and drink, and as they started chatting, it became evident that Adina was "working". We didn't have long to speak to Adina - she was nervous of the exploitation she was being subjected to by the other women "working" there - but our ASTO managed to tell Adina about Azalea and pass on one of the secret business cards carried by our frontline team (these cards give the women a name and a contact number, but don't give details of Azalea - **evidence that a woman has spoken to Azalea could put her at risk of violence** from a perpetrator-pimp).

Early morning outreach continued the following week (and every week since: **continuity is vital to the success of Encompass**) and the team met Adina again. We gave Adina details of our weekly drop-in sessions and Adina found the courage to come along. **Trust was developing**; Our ASTO was determined to hold on to this fragile bond and invited Adina to meet her again that week. Miraculously Adina came again, and began to tell her story. She was confident enough to share her real name with us and accepted a phone loaded with £10 of credit and further literature.

We saw Adina again on our next early morning outreach. Again, Adina was invited to drop-in and again she came. She was reassured to find our ASTO there but she felt she couldn't join in with the activities offered to guests - she needed to clean herself and asked for a shower. **This is often the case with sexually exploited women; they want to scrub their skin clean of the abuse that they have experienced.** With the encouragement of our dedicated volunteers, Adina stayed at Drop-in and received acceptance just as she was, without any need to change or become clean. Over time, the outreach team saw Adina intermittently. It was clear she was homeless, and being exploited to feed an addiction. Then worryingly, three weeks passed with no sign of Adina. Women surviving sex trafficking rarely have the freedom to decide where and how to live. Adina was hiding in a small, sheltered area on a street near the Azalea Centre when we next spotted her. She was with another woman, who was about to light up a crack pipe. Men were loitering. Delighted to see Adina, our ASTO asked the men for some space and called over to her - **"I'm glad you are alive!"**. Adina was distressed that the team was witnessing the drug-taking. She apologised. We were relieved when Adina made it to another 1-1.. Our drop-in space was somewhere Adina could confidently meet our ASTO in safety. She explained that she had been living in a nearby town, staying with a 'friend'. **"it was warm"**

Adina reported; Our ASTO discovered that **this "warmth" came at a cost**, and this "friend" was far from someone who had Adina's best interests at heart.. Adina had chosen to come back to Luton and be homeless because this was preferable to the abuse she was experiencing with the "friend". Showing incredible courage, Adina decided to report her experience to the Police. Our ASTO went with her.



\*Pseudonym used throughout.

Adina told the police that she had been brought to Luton from Romania. She had been brought to a house to live with a "family". She described the family and gave the names of two men and a woman. Her account was detailed and it took the police several hours to record her statement.

**Adina had given evidence and in doing so, had become even more vulnerable.** The police were able to find a hotel for Adina for one night. Our ASTO picked her up the following morning. Car journeys are a good time to talk - side by side, but not face to face. Adina was chatty, despite the pain she was in from Class A drug withdrawal. She had more information and wanted to tell the Police. Back at the Police station with all her worldly goods (three bags), Adina was seen by a Modern Day Slavery Officer. After the meeting, our ASTO pressed the Officer for a decision on how best to protect Adina. She explained that Adina was withdrawing (the women know this as "Clucking") and needed accommodation. The officer directed our ASTO to speak to the Homeless Unit at Luton Borough Council. We had already tried the Council - an international with no papers is not entitled to help with housing. Adina was frightened: **"am I safe? Will you get my documents now?"**

The Police couldn't help, but we weren't giving up on Adina now. We called the Salvation Army on behalf of Adina and began to set up a referral through which the Salvation Army would help Adina to apply to be recognised as a victim of human trafficking through the National Referral Mechanism.

The harsh reality of Class A drug addiction is such that Adina couldn't hold on for another meeting. She told our ASTO she urgently **needed to go and earn £20** (the average price for sex in 2024 is £10-12)\*\*. We had to let her go. This, again, is a difficult reality of working with sex trafficking survivors. They have to have coping mechanisms to suppress their trauma and suffering and drugs usually do the job for a short while. **We remain non-judgemental as they battle their addictions alongside everything else.**

Later that week, our ASTO received a call from a Police Field Intelligence Officer who confirmed that he had picked up Adina's case file. He reported that officers were actively looking for Adina. Mercifully, **Adina was found.** Encouraged by the Police, she summoned the courage to give the information which she had not initially felt able to provide and **she is now safely housed, out of the area** and being offered long term support.

Adina's story does not end with her rescue. The intelligence gathered through Adina's disclosure enabled the Police to execute a warrant at the end of November 2023. To facilitate the execution of the warrant, Azalea assisted with the setting up and running of a reception centre. The Police had secured space in a church for this purpose. Our ASTO worked hard to try to make the space as welcoming as possible, for any women (and possibly children) who might be rescued. She gathered Romanian bibles, Romanian treats, toiletries, backpacks and games. for the women. She set up a craft table for children and ensured she had baby food, just in case. She worked on instinct - she had no idea how many survivors she might meet. Working alongside Azalea were Sexual Health Services, the Police and other agencies. Women and children were discovered by the Police and rescued during the execution of that warrant. We hope and trust that Adina will never know how many people have been saved because of her courageous escape. We hope and trust that Adina will never know how many sex traffickers have been detained by Interpol because of her brave disclosure. Adina deserves to walk free and never have to look back; she continues to live out of the area in a safe place, supported by Justice and Care, the Police, Azalea and other local services. As Adina moves on, so we at Azalea continue to move forward, in partnership with the Police, Border Force and other crucial local stakeholders and funders.

\*Pseudonym used throughout. \*\* Data extracted from the Luton On Street Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2024





## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### Financial Summary

	<b>1.8.2023-31.7.24</b>	<b>1.8.2022-31.7.23</b>
Income	530,251	417,955
Expenditure	505,469	399,481
Restricted Reserves	132,908	125,645
Unrestricted Reserves	176,530	159,011
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>309,438</b>	<b>284,656</b>

### Our Reserves Policy

It is Azalea's policy to hold three months' committed expenditure as reserves at all times. If reserves fall below the agreed amount, the Trustees must be notified by the Finance Sub-committee as soon as possible, in order to decide whether action is required. For 2024-25 we are working to budgeted committed expenditure of £160,508 for a 3 month period.

### Fundraising

We are deeply thankful to all who have supported Azalea this year. **Thank you for choosing to invest in our work and in the lives of those who engage with Azalea's services.** In line with the Trustees' stated approach to managing financial risk, Azalea has continued to diversify its fundraising activities as far as possible this year. Set out below is a breakdown of income sources in 2023-24 and 2022-23:

<b>Income Source</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>% Total</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>% Total</b>
Individual Regular Donors	72,194	14	68,037	16
Grants	267,449	50	210,895	51
Community Giving	32,375	6	24,536	6
Ministry of Justice	56,343	11	7,500	2
Regular Church Donors	5,900	1	9,190	2
Events & Campaigns	28,664	5	30,310	7
Training income	7,730	1.5	-	-
Rental income	3,175	0.6	-	-
replication income	1,200	0.5	4,800	1
Bank interest	4,694	0.9	523	-
Miscellaneous donations	31,820	6	40,151	10
Gift Aid recovered	18,708	3.5	22,013	5
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>530,251</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>417,955</b>	<b>100</b>

### Grant Fundraising

We received financial support from the following grant-making trusts and foundations in the year to 31 July 2024:

- Amateur Trust
- Anchor Foundation
- Archer Trust
- Axis Foundation
- Barleycorn Trust
- Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation
- Bedfordshire Charitable Trust
- Benefact Trust
- Church Welfare Association
- Gale Family Charitable Trust
- Harbinson Trust
- Hobson Charitable Trust
- Howard Foundation
- James Grace Trust
- Maidenhead Malachi Trust
- National Lottery - Cost of Living Fund
- Screwfix Foundation
- SMB Charitable Trust
- Souter Trust
- Steel Charitable Trust

We have also been supported by the Ministry of Justice, commissioned through the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire.

### Business Network

We believe in the power of collaboration to extend our reach and maximise our impact. We are delighted to highlight the successful mutual partnerships which we have developed with **Talk UK Telecom, Golf 2 Golf, the Athena Network, Unilever, , Mint Construction, Good Gym and The Diamond Trust**. We are extremely grateful for the support we receive from our corporate partners, which is delivered in so many ways. Azalea offers training on Modern Slavery and supports its business partners with their commitment to social responsibility, providing opportunities to increase team morale and engagement through participation in impactful and fulfilling activities, many of which directly support survivors of sex trafficking, helping to restore lives and build safer communities. Our business partners provide Azalea with opportunities to galvanise interest in and further support for our drive to end sex trafficking, through their professional networks.

### Community fundraising

Community fundraising campaigns continue to provide us with the opportunity both to extend our network of supporters and to hear and respond to the community's concerns over and solutions to the problem of sex trafficking. Our Christmas campaign was well supported and we collaborated with local business in the summer to host a juicing event, to thank the community for their continued support.

**Report of the Independent Examiner for the year-ended 31st July 2024**

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**Report to the trustees of Azalea CIO Number 1190508**

On the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2024.

Financial statements as set out on pages 19-22 of the report.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. As a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants I consider myself suitably qualified to carry out the independent examination.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the financial statements.

**Independent examiner's statement**

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

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

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities

have not been met or

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



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Name: Streets S J Males Limited  
Basepoint Business & Innovation Centre  
110 Butterfield  
Luton  
LU2 8DL

Date: 11/11/2024

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year-ended 31st July 2024

	y/e 31/07/2024 Restricted Funds £	y/e 31/07/2024 Unrestricted Funds £	y/e 31/07/2024 Total Funds £	y/e 31/07/2023 Total Funds £
<b>Income</b>				
Regular donations from Individuals	247	71,947	72,194	68,037
Gift Aid recovered	-	18,708	18,708	22,013
Grants / Trusts	273,152	50,640	323,792	218,395
Church Gifts	3,905	28,470	32,375	24,536
Church Standing Orders	500	5,400	5,900	9,190
Fundraising Income	2,099	26,565	28,664	30,310
Rental Income	-	3,175	3,175	-
External Training	700	7,030	7,730	-
Replication Income	-	1,200	1,200	4,800
Bank Interest	-	4,694	4,694	523
Miscellaneous Personal Donations	3,450	28,370	31,820	40,151
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>284,053</b>	<b>246,198</b>	<b>530,251</b>	<b>417,955</b>
<b>Less Expenditure</b>				
Salary	187,496	84,764	272,260	248,026
Employers NI	14,223	4,458	18,681	14,720
Employers Pension	5,118	3,494	8,612	7,248
Volunteer Training and Support	90	1,091	1,181	1,072
Staff Training and Welfare	2,910	6,215	9,125	7,817
Printing, Postage, Stationery	71	7,308	7,379	4,016
Marketing Literature	1,301	5,352	6,652	5,770
Advertising	-	1,836	1,836	-
Rent	25,200	6,800	32,000	32,000
Repairs & Maintenance	3,530	13,855	17,385	4,061
Depreciation	7,317	5,941	13,258	7,223
Volunteer Gift	-	681	681	727
Project Expenses	20,777	9,129	29,906	14,341
Training refreshments	-	-	-	-
Website	-	2,608	2,608	677
Telephone & Internet	-	2,579	2,579	2,817
IT Support & equipment	3,231	5,016	8,247	6,134
Motor Expenses	53	4,878	4,931	4,273
Insurance	3,795	5,184	8,978	5,191
Subscriptions	178	2,523	2,701	2,083
Payroll Bureau	-	1,488	1,488	702
Travel Expenses	61	590	651	248
Utilities	1,440	17,955	19,395	9,046
Event Expenditure	-	1,054	1,054	433
Bank Fees	-	390	390	98
Donations	-	60	60	784
Miscellaneous	-	127	127	55
Independent Examination Fee	-	1,500	1,500	1,500
Consultancy	-	23,476	23,476	322
Database costs	-	4,713	4,713	4,669
External Training Costs	-	67	67	714
Legal Expenses	-	2,998	2,998	12,711
Replication Expenses	-	552	552	3
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(276,790)</b>	<b>(228,680)</b>	<b>(505,469)</b>	<b>(399,481)</b>
<b>EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>7,263</b>	<b>17,519</b>	<b>24,782</b>	<b>18,474</b>
<b>Total Funds brought forward</b>	<b>125,645</b>	<b>159,011</b>	<b>284,656</b>	<b>266,182</b>
<b>Total Funds carried forward</b>	<b>132,908</b>	<b>176,530</b>	<b>309,438</b>	<b>284,656</b>



Balance Sheet as at 31st July 2024

	Note	y/e 31/07/2024		y/e 31/07/2023	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Leasehold Improvements	1		4,588		-
Motor Vehicles	1		36,583		1,749
Computer Equipment	1		15,032		6,502
<b>Non-current assets</b>			56,203		8,251
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Cash at bank and in hand		284,741		270,066	
Gift Aid Debtor		8,432		10,476	
Other Debtors		3,940		229	
			297,113		280,771
<b>Less Current Liabilities</b>					
Trade Creditors		6,347		0	
Accruals and Deferred Income		29,500		2,908	
Pensions Payable		1,913		1,458	
PAYE/NI		6,118		-	
			43,878		4,366
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			253,234		276,405
<b>Net Assets</b>			<u>309,438</u>		<u>284,656</u>
<b>Excess of Income b/f</b>			284,656		266,182
<b>Excess/(deficit) of Income for period</b>			<u>24,782</u>		<u>18,474</u>
			<u>309,438</u>		<u>284,656</u>

**Restricted Funds**

The restricted funds represent amounts received from grant-making bodies to fund the projects described in Note 2.

		2024	2023
		£	£
Note 2	Total Restricted funds	132,908	125,645
Note 3	Total Designated funds	-	4,192
	Total Unrestricted funds	176,530	154,819
	Total Funds carried forward	<u>309,438</u>	<u>284,656</u>

The financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 11/11/2024 and signed on their behalf by



Martyn Shea, Chairman

Notes to the accounts for the year-ended 31st July 2024

1 Fixed Assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Motor Vehicles £	Computer Equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>				
As at 1 August 2023	7,947	10,996	26,495	45,438
Additions in year	5,005	43,900	12,306	61,211
Disposals in year	-	-	(11,670)	(11,670)
As at 31 July 2024	<u>12,952</u>	<u>54,896</u>	<u>27,131</u>	<u>94,979</u>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>				
As at 1 August 2023	7,947	9,247	19,993	37,187
Depreciation charge for the year	417	9,066	3,776	13,259
Removed on disposals in year	-	-	(11,670)	(11,670)
As at 31 July 2024	<u>8,364</u>	<u>18,313</u>	<u>12,098</u>	<u>38,775</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>				
As at 31 July 2024	<u>4,588</u>	<u>36,583</u>	<u>15,032</u>	<u>56,203</u>
As at 31 July 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>1,749</u>	<u>6,502</u>	<u>8,251</u>

2 Restricted Funds

The restricted funds represent amounts received from grant-making bodies to fund:  
 Encompass Project - Contribution to project costs  
 Partnership and Consulting - Contribution to project costs  
 Outreach Van - A pilot scheme to purchase and run an outreach van project  
 Flint Project - A mentoring project for men who buy sex  
 Partnership Mental Health Officer - A partnership project with other local charities  
 International Officer - A post dedicated to combating International sex trafficking

	b/f	2024 Income	2024 Expenditure	c/f
Encompass Project	73,843	33,009	52,059	54,792
Partnership and Consulting	6,000	5,350	6,245	5,105
Outreach Van	13,141	72,384	20,253	65,272
Flint Project	11,337	5,747	12,866	4,217
Partnership Mental Health Officer	6,649	37,038	43,687	-
International Officer	14,676	14,676	29,352	-
Therapeutic Manager	-	16,166	12,643	3,523
Family Leave	-	25,000	25,000	-
TNL Community Fund	-	74,684	74,684	-
	<u>125,645</u>	<u>284,053</u>	<u>276,790</u>	<u>132,908</u>

3 Designated Funds

In 2018, the trustees designated an amount of £10,000 to support the launch of a new project:  
 Replication - Exploring replicating Azalea's work in other locations in the UK.

	b/f	2024 Transfer In	2024 Expenditure	c/f
Replication	4,192	-	4,192	-
	<u>4,192</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,192</u>	<u>-</u>

#### **4 Related Party Transactions**

In 2024, there was 1 Trustee (2023 - 1) receiving remuneration and benefits.

Mark Plane received salary of £5,191 (2023 - £10,332) while employed by Azalea as a Management Accountant until January 2024.

In 2024, there were nil Trustees (2023 - nil) receiving expenses.

In 2024, there were transactions of £975 (2023 - £nil) with parties related to the Charity or its Trustees.

£975 was paid to Whittaker Plane Ltd for book-keeping services, a company 51% owned by Mark Plane.

#### **5 Independent Examination Fee**

In 2024, £1,500 (2023 - £1,500) was payable for independent examination of the Charity's accounts.

#### **6 Staff Information**

In 2024, 13 (2023 - 14) employees were employed the Charity.

There were no employees who received salary greater than £60,000.

#### **7 Merger Accounting**

On 1st December 2022, the assets and activities of Azalea Charitable Trust no: 1126716, was transferred to Azalea CIO no:1190508.

Throughout the year-ended 31st July 2023 Azalea Trust transferred £227,196 to Azalea CIO.

Both Charities used the same accounting policies and there were no significant adjustments on transfer.