

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 September 2024
for
Refugee Legal Support

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Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

	Page
Trustees Annual Report	1 to 18
Independent Examiner's Report	19
Statement of Financial Activities	20
Balance Sheet	21 to 22
Notes to the Financial Statements	23 to 30
Detailed Statement of Financial Activities	31 to 32

Trustees Annual Report

1. Introduction - a year at a glance

Once again, we're writing this report looking back at a year most clearly defined by politicised cruelty and hostility to the communities we work with.

In the UK, despite a change of government, the obsession with immigration and “small boats” has continued. Last year, we warned of the dangers of this inflammatory rhetoric and in recent months we've seen the consequences: a summer of violence targeting the communities and individuals we support fuelled by political hostility and media scapegoating.

We've seen the continued criminalisation of people for how they arrive in the UK, including long sentences for people who steered their boats. This is performative cruelty that fails to address why people are pushed into making these journeys. This failure has had very real consequences. 89 people were killed trying to reach the UK in 2024.

In Greece, people seeking asylum continue to face brutal treatment and are often denied their most basic rights. We've also seen the asylum system effectively come to a stop due to government mismanagement of an interpretation contract.

All of this is taking place in an increasingly challenging funding environment. We're seeing our partners and colleagues at other organisations either being forced to cut services or close their doors altogether.

However, there is hope. This was demonstrated by the brave public fightback against the summer riots in the UK. At RLS specifically, we continue to find hope in:

- The communities and individuals who we work with, who continue to fight for their futures with extraordinary resilience;
- Our colleagues and volunteers who battle on tirelessly in the face of immense challenges to secure justice for the people we work with;
- Our supporters, whose solidarity keeps us all going when things get tough.

We also find hope as we look back at what we've achieved in the last year as we made significant progress against our strategy.

In 2023/24 we reached over 2,200 people, more than ever before as we increased capacity in our team.

In the UK, we integrated our new legal aid contract across our projects, giving us the ability to litigate, often the only way to get positive results for our clients. In Greece, we've had some fantastic wins on cases that other organisations would never have taken on due to their complexity. While on the UK/France border we've been able to reach people in more

locations, including in camps and those in jail because of how they arrived in the UK. Our community engagement work has gone from strength to strength and is now influencing everything we do.

We also saw tangible impacts from things we've been working on for two years or more. In particular, people we've supported for years have finally received positive decisions on their cases. Our highlights of the year have included emotional phone calls from airports as families who have been separated for years are finally brought back together.

Our work towards system change is also bearing fruit. The [report that we produced with the Afghan community](#) in the UK has become the go-to resource on the matter. A new family reunion route to the UK for Afghans was opened, a key recommendation from this research backed up by our direct appeals to the government.

In Greece our reports on [conditions in camps](#) and [access to asylum](#) have been essential resources, including being cited in court decisions to release people from de facto detention.

These victories and the solidarity that fuels them are what keep us going.

The year ahead will bring more challenges. But we know that we'll be here, standing alongside people on the move to support them as they fight for their rights.

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Refugee Legal Support operates in accordance with its governing document, the constitution, signed on 6.10.2020 by its Trustees in the UK. The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Refugee Legal Support became a registered charity on 7.10.2020. The charity holds its funds in two bank accounts: one in the UK (Triodos Bank) and one in Greece (Alpha Bank). The transactions of both bank accounts are reported in the annexed accounts.

Refugee Legal Support is also incorporated in Greece as a civil non-profit organisation ("AMKE") under Greek law (General Commercial Registry No: 155695901000) with the name Refugee Legal Support Greece and the trading name RLS-Greece. RLS-Greece's registered office is at 14 Alexandras Avenue, Athens, postal code 106 82, Greece and is overseen by Annette Elder (trustee of the UK charity), Eva Maria Doerr (trustee of the UK charity) and Polly Rossdale (trustee of the UK charity). RLS-Greece is governed by its constitution which can be found on the charity website at <https://refugeelegalsupport.org/transparency-accountability/>

Trustees who served during the year ending September 2024	Christopher Walter Randall (<i>appointed 06.12.2021</i>) <i>Serves as chair from August 2022</i>
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Polly Rossdale (*appointed 21.04.2023*)

Aditi Kapoor (*appointed 21.04.2023*)

Charlotte Blundy (*appointed 21.04.2023*)

Farheen Chaudhry (*appointed 18.05.2023*)

Naima Musse Farah (*appointed 06.12.2021; resigned 22.02.2024*)

Rebecca Chapman (*appointed 7.10.2020*)

Annette Elder (*appointed 7.10.2020*)

Eva Maria Doerr (*appointed 7.10.2020*)

Vidya Ramachandran (*appointed 06.12.2021; resigned 03.06.2024*)

Management team

Isaac Shaffer, Legal Director

Nick Pilkington, Fundraising Lead

Efi Stathopoulou, Programmes Manager

3. Financial Review

The total incoming resources amounted to **£656,924** of which **£552,577** was for restricted purposes. The resources expended totalled **£649,669** including **£552,578** spent out of the restricted funds. **£145,235** of this expenditure related to staff costs involved in support services and **£504,434** of this expenditure related to the direct delivery of charitable activities.

This year, our funding came from diverse sources, namely:

Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group	1,500
Chalk Cliff Trust	5,000
John Peck (Donor)	20,000
Griffsome Trust (Donor)	20,000
ForRefugees	5,000

JUSACA Family Trust	30,000
AB Charitable Trust	25,000
Blue Thread/This Day	35,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	100,000
Rhododendron Trust	1,800
Afghan Probono Initiative: 14 Law Firms	202,500
Afghan Probono Initiative: Event sponsorship	1,800
National Lottery Community Fund: RC England	40,000
Family Reunion Project: 8 Law Firms	96,000
Fundraising/Income Generation	65,602

Our Reserves policy ensures adequate working capital and financial resilience for the charity. To meet the objectives of this policy, the Trustees agreed to aim for unrestricted reserves of **£90,000**. The total amount of unrestricted reserves at this year-end amounted to **£125,631**.

This amount is then broken down into Employee and Contractual Obligations (total of **£49,329**) which hold the funds available to the charity in the event that the charity had to close to cover costs related to redundancy, notice periods, winding down and to ensure all legal casework delivered by the charity is responsibly handed over. The remaining amount (total of **£76,302**) is available to assist with maintaining effective business and financial continuity while the charity is in operation.

When deciding an appropriate reserves level for the charity, the Trustees considered the following:

- the maintenance of essential services for beneficiaries;
- the risks of unplanned closure associated with the charity's business model;
- spending commitments;
- potential liabilities and;
- financial forecasts and responsibilities in relation to responsibly closing or referring its cases (main activity being legal support).

The Trustees will review the policy for maintaining reserves, taking into account all risks faced by the charity, their potential impact on income and planned expenditure, and an assessment of the ways to mitigate such risks. The frequency of reviewing the reserves policy will vary depending on the level of change in monthly expenditure as new projects are undertaken by the charity to pursue its objectives.

4. Investment policy

Any surplus funds are placed on short term deposit accounts.

5. Objectives, Mission and Values

5.1. Charitable objectives as per the charity's constitution

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The charity's objectives as per its constitution are:

- To relieve poverty, sickness, and distress of persons who are internally displaced or in migration or who are asylum seekers or refugees fleeing situations including (but not limited to) war, persecution, and climate change and their families and any dependants who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress;
- To advance education including the education and training of the Beneficiaries;
- To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of the Beneficiaries including but not limited to protecting the rights of the Beneficiaries; and
- To advance the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

5.2. Our mission and values

Our mission

Refugee Legal Support works in solidarity with people who migrate. We advocate for the promotion and protection of people's rights throughout the migration process.

We advance safe migration through legal support, casework, strategic litigation, outreach, training and partnerships. We strive to develop inclusive, sustainable and regenerative ways of working which are directly informed by those with lived migration experience.

We support the global movement that fights entrenched inequalities, racism and other forms of discrimination that force people to migrate.

In doing so we recognise that immigration systems are weighted against those forced to migrate and stand in opposition to hostile policies, along with all forms of violence against people compelled to migrate.

Our Values

These are the core principles of RLS. They're key to decision-making. They help us to decide not just what work we do and why, but also how we do it and how we work together.

- We believe that the lack of available financial resources should not hinder access to justice;
- We are anti-racist and denounce any form of oppression;
- We work in solidarity with those who migrate and those who support them;
- We work with people, not for them. We stand alongside and respect the inherent dignity and humanity of people who migrate;
- We are specialised and use our expertise for strategic impact;
- We respect and support the wellbeing and expertise of our colleagues;
- We're proud to be independent.

6. Our Activities and impact

In the last year, we've supported 2,243 people in the UK, on the UK's border and in Greece.

In the UK and at the UK's borders

The UK's asylum system remains broken. Despite widespread recognition of the crisis, access to legal support is at an all-time low. More than half of people seeking asylum can't find a lawyer. For people seeking family reunion or navigating the Afghan schemes, RLS specialist areas, the situation is even worse—either legal aid is unavailable, or it's so deeply flawed that lawyers can't take cases without working at a loss.

Meanwhile, people are stuck in limbo on the UK's border with France, surviving in inhumane conditions, being pushed to risk their lives through dangerous journeys and facing criminalisation upon arrival in the UK.

Against this backdrop, our work is essential.

Our projects in the UK

The Afghan Pro Bono Initiative

We set up our project to support Afghans quickly after Kabul fell to the Taliban in 2021. The UK government set up pathways for people to come to the UK but there was no support made available for people to navigate the system.

We quickly saw how significant the need was, with over 1,000 enquiries in the first year of the project. Despite the years that have passed since, the dysfunction of the scheme means that many Afghans who should be eligible remain in danger.

The Afghan Pro Bono Initiative is the only legal project in the UK dedicated to providing end-to-end casework for Afghans. RLS is the lead in a partnership with Safe Passage International and 10 leading commercial law firms.



Through this project we provide expert casework, from support with initial applications to appeal and judicial review, community legal work and targeted system-change work and research.

Our community engagement work sits at the heart of this project. Our aspiration is for those affected to drive and shape everything that we do.

Family Routes (formerly Family Reunion from Europe project)

Our Family Routes project was initially set up to support those whose family reunion applications would be left in limbo following Brexit. Since then, we've widened the scope to respond to the need as there's no other dedicated family reunion project for adults.

Through this project, we provide end-to-end casework - from initial advice and support with an application all the way to appeal and judicial review, where needed. We've also carried out research into the issues that most affect those we work with and are increasing our ability to provide community legal work.

We deliver the Family Routes project in partnership with eight commercial law firms.

The New Arrivals Project

We set up our New Arrivals Project as a pilot to ensure that people arriving in the UK understand their rights. We work closely with the communities affected to understand their needs and respond.

Since then, the need has grown as the law has changed. On top of our essential information sessions and information sheets in multiple languages, we also provide support for people in prison for how they arrived in the UK, support asylum applications and deliver research into the issues that people face.

A large focus for the project is plugging gaps in a system that is not set up to support people criminalised while seeking asylum. This means that we provide training and support for other professionals, including criminal lawyers and probation officers.

Legal Casework in the UK and at the UK's borders

Legal casework is at the heart of what we do.

This year, we strengthened this work through our legal aid contract, enabling us to escalate cases and, where necessary, pursue litigation. This has been invaluable in challenging poor decision-making and the intolerable delays that leave people in limbo for months or even years.

For example, a former helicopter pilot with special forces in Afghanistan had been in hiding for 18 months, fearing for his life, when we picked up his case. We launched legal

proceedings to challenge the delays, at which point the MoD quickly accepted his application. He moved to the UK with his family in the summer.

“She did not only help me with my case but she helped me with bringing them from Afghanistan to here, finding a house for us, and registering them for the government’s support. How could I do all those things without her support?”

In the UK in the last year, we provided direct casework to 122 people, securing 27 successful outcomes.

Most of our successful cases have come in the final quarter of the year. This reflects delays in decision making and we expect to have more successes in the year ahead as our cases are finally resolved.

“I feel alive every time I see my family back together in front of my eyes and that I am with my daughter after a long time.”



A family is reunited at the airport following our support.

Community legal work and legal information in the UK and at the UK’s border

One of our proudest achievements this year is the continued growth of our community legal work. With legal support so scarce, supporting people to advocate for themselves has never been more important.

In the last year, we've:

- **Reached 908 people through information sessions.** These sessions covered a range of topics, including updates on the Afghan pathways, info on what to expect at an asylum interview and info on your rights in the UK.
- **Provided one-off legal consultations to 157 people,** offering expert guidance where formal representation isn't available.
- **Produced new information sheets in 13 languages,** covering topics such as looking for a lawyer, accessing healthcare and trafficking and exploitation.
- **Developed and distributed the ARAP self-help guide,** providing vital resources for Afghan refugees.
- **Sent 17 email updates on the Afghan schemes, averaging 428 unique opens,** ensuring key information reaches those who need it most.

These figures reflect an area of work that is going from strength-to-strength as we strive to meet the huge level of need. This includes significant development of our work with the Afghan community, including reaching legal aid deserts.

We also continue to adapt to changing needs, including providing legal information sessions in more locations and supporting people who are criminalised for how they've arrived in the UK.

"The wonderful work that you are doing is bringing hope to so many people. Thank you and everyone involved"



Our team for a drop-in session.

Pushing for systemic change in the UK

At the heart of our strategic vision is the belief that meaningful change must be driven by those most affected. Over the past year, we've made significant progress in ensuring that the voices of displaced communities shape the fight for a fairer asylum system.

A key achievement this year has been witnessing our report on the issues facing Afghans, drawn directly from the relevant communities, become a critical resource, including regular citations in parliament and beyond. A key demand in this report, along with an open [letter that we organised](#), was for a new family reunion route for Afghans. Following our work, this route recently opened. We're now organising our response to make sure that Afghan communities can benefit from this new pathway.

We also analysed a little-publicised report on the Afghan pathways to expose [an effective secret pause on the processing of Afghan resettlement cases](#).

We've deepened our collaboration across the sector, strengthening the evidence base for change. In February, we co-published [No Such Thing as Justice Here with Oxford University](#), Captain Support Network and Humans for Rights Network. This report exposes the devastating impact of the UK's policy of criminalising people arriving via "small boats", reinforcing the urgent need for reform.

Through this work, we've had increased media coverage in outlets such as [Sky News](#) and [The Independent](#).

By ensuring that system-change work is grounded in lived experience and backed by rigorous evidence, we're helping to push the system towards meaningful, long-overdue change.

Sharing our expertise to support the sector

Collaboration is at the heart of our identity. We were founded by a group of lawyers from across the sector coming together to address the lack of access to justice, and collaboration remains central to everything we do. We know that achieving our goals relies on the strength of the wider sector.

Over the last year, we've worked to support colleagues in the sector through:

- **Training volunteers and staff from other organisations** working on the UK/France border in the basics of the asylum system so they're able to provide first level advice to the people they support
- **Inviting lawyers and other professionals to join our information sessions on the Afghan schemes** so they're better informed and able to support their clients.
- We've organised **a forum to bring together immigration and criminal lawyers to share knowledge** and ensure that those being criminalised for how they enter the UK are properly supported.

The importance of our pro bono partnerships

Much of our work focuses on areas where almost no other support exists, for example end-to-end casework support for Afghans. Our ability to deliver this work is made possible by our partnerships with commercial law firms, which provide funding, volunteer hours, expertise



and ongoing support. These relationships are essential to our work, and we've continued to deepen and expand these partnerships this year. This has ensured we can reach more people and tackle complex legal challenges effectively.

"The [Family Reunion] project has provided some of the most meaningful work I've done as a trainee solicitor. It is routinely one of the most talked about projects at our firm and people are keen to get involved. Ellie provides effective supervision, guiding where guidance is needed and utilising the skills within our teams."

Hassan's story (we've changed Hassan's name to protect his identity)

Hassan's journey to safety was long, distressing, and filled with obstacles. His story reveals the harsh realities of asylum and immigration systems and the resilience needed by those seeking safety—and the critical need for quality legal support. Without RLS lawyers, Hassan's right to family reunion might have been denied.

Life at Home

Hassan grew up in rural Somalia, where community and shared living were central to life. But tragedy struck when his father was killed. His mother fled to Kenya, and Hassan, unsafe in Somalia, was forced to leave. He hoped to reunite with his aunt and cousins in the UK—his only family in Europe.

Surviving Lesvos

After a perilous journey, Hassan arrived alone at a refugee camp in Lesvos, Greece. Conditions were dire. Exposed to harsh winter weather, with no heating and inadequate food, he was constantly hungry.

Initially registered as a minor, Greek authorities later changed his status to an adult without explanation, moving him to a section of the camp for single men. It was traumatic but not uncommon for young asylum seekers.

Legal Support That Changed Everything

At the camp Hassan met RLS lawyer Elèna who he says had a huge impact on his life. Due to Brexit, Hassan's family reunion application relied on proving he was under 18, but the deadline to challenge his wrongful age assessment had passed. His only chance was to submit an original birth certificate from Somalia—an urgent, time-sensitive process. Working against the clock, Elèna and her colleagues filed the application based solely on his birth certificate, bypassing Greece's incorrect records. Meanwhile, Hassan was referred to Rhona, a lawyer on our UK family reunion project, who joined the fight for his case.

Overcoming Barriers

Hassan needed to travel to Athens to complete his application, but movement restrictions trapped him on Lesvos. Bureaucratic hurdles delayed the process further, with authorities dismissing requests as "not their problem." Finally, after legal pressure, he was granted temporary permission to leave.

The determination of RLS lawyers to find solutions meant Hassan was able to submit his application. For the first time in years, he felt hope.

Disappearance and Further Delays

But more setbacks followed. Isolated, struggling with severe distress, and missing his family, Hassan disappeared. It took time, but Elèna found him and helped get his case back on track.

His application was submitted to the Home Office on an expedited basis in April 2022. Yet, it was refused in January 2023—an all-too-common outcome. Rhona appealed, and after two years of waiting, the decision finally came in March 2024: Hassan had won. He was granted indefinite leave to enter the UK.

A Future at Last

When Rhona met Hassan after the victory, she saw a transformation—he was laughing and full of life for the first time. Now, reunited with his family, he tells us that he feels extremely positive about the future.

His next goal? Learning English, finding work, and one day visiting Elèna to thank her for her help in person.

Hassan's story is one of extraordinary resilience. His journey was unjustly long, but with the right legal support, he finally found safety, hope, and a new home.

In Greece

Greece continues to act as a legal and administrative bottleneck for people on the move. For many, it's the first European country they reach after fleeing danger - yet instead of finding refuge and being able to move on, they become trapped in inhumane conditions, with no clear path forward.

Those we work with in Greece face:

- **The threat of violence:** most of the people we work with have faced violence on their journey. For example, our client Peter faced four pushbacks at sea before finally making it to Greece. He's still deaf in one ear from the violence he encountered.
- **A complex, dysfunctional and hostile asylum system:** for instance, we recently took on the case of a Somali woman whose simple asylum case was rejected on spurious grounds. We helped her to overturn this decision and gain asylum.
- **Appalling conditions:** as documented by [our recent report](#), people seeking asylum in Greece are forced to live in appalling conditions in camps with little to no access to legal support, healthcare, or basic necessities.

Things have been particularly challenging in the last year. Thanks to mismanagement, the Greek state's contracts for interpretation and cash cards have come to an end. This means that many asylum cases have ground to a halt and people are left penniless and vulnerable.

Access to legal representation is the only way to navigate these barriers—but in Greece, it is nearly impossible to secure:

- The Greek state provides no legal aid for most people seeking asylum.
- Voluntary organisations struggle to meet overwhelming demand as international funders scale back support for work in Greece.

As a result, services are shutting down, leaving people with nowhere to turn. In this context our work has been more important than ever.

Legal casework in Greece

In the past year, our expert legal team in Athens has provided direct casework to support people seeking asylum in securing their legal status.

This has included:

- **Gathering and presenting crucial evidence**, including medico-legal and country of origin reports.
- **Preparing clients for asylum interviews**. We then accompany clients to interviews to make sure that they're asked the right questions and so we can then provide a follow up memo with supporting evidence.
- **Representing clients in appeals and subsequent applications**, cases that other organisations often won't take on.

Importantly, our team sees the whole person, not just their legal case. We work closely with other services, such as medical support and psychologists, to make sure that the people we work with are holistically and properly supported. We also adapt to the needs of those we work with, helping them to access services from education to LGBTQI support.

In the past year, we've provided **legal casework to 70 people**, securing **15 positive legal outcomes**. This has included 50% of our appeals being successful against an average of 11.5% (many of our appeals are yet to see results so this figure is likely to increase).

"I was so grateful. I'd never had someone fight for us the way Artemis did. I've had lawyers before, but they can't compare. It's a miracle for me, she gave me hope."

Community legal work and legal information in Greece

The chronic lack of accessible legal information, particularly in refugee camps, leaves people with no understanding of their rights or options.

To address this, we've worked to bridge the information gap.

Over the past year, we have:

- Conducted **18 visits to refugee camps** to provide legal information, outreach and engagement, where we worked with 226 people



- Continued to develop our **accessible online legal information**.
- Provided **one-off signposting to 344 people** and **one-off legal information to 253 people**

This work is about more than just information—it is about restoring agency to people trapped in a broken system.

Pushing for system change

Our legal and community work is closely linked to our wider system change efforts and human rights monitoring. We're committed to using our frontline experience to push for meaningful policy change.

Over the last year, we have continued working closely with the Advocacy Working Group to document issues and push for change. We published 10 open letters and statements on key issues facing those we support and two letters to the ministry to highlight these challenges.

We partnered with Mobile Info Team to publish two reports built around interviews with clients:

- [Protection Unavailable](#) in November, focused on restrictions to the right to asylum in Greece. The report gathered significant attention, including coverage in a [national daily newspaper](#) in Greece.
- [Voices from the Camps](#) in July, which shed light on conditions in Greek refugee camps. This report has become a key resource for the sector, with regular references and use as evidence in court to release people from de facto detention. It was covered in [international](#) and [domestic](#) media.

Sharing our expertise to support the sector in Greece

We work with the wider sector to ensure that, no matter the service people attend, those they speak to have a basic understanding of the asylum system and can direct them to support.

Over the past year, we've:

- **Provided 19 training sessions** to staff and volunteers across the sector, helping them understand asylum procedures, legal rights, and referral pathways.
- **Trained 227 people**, enabling them to provide first-line support to those navigating the systems

"The training session with Lucy from RLS was very helpful...Now we have more tools to help people we meet inside the camps and better information to give them about their legal situation. Lucy was very clear about how to take care when giving information and to allow people to make their own choices and be more empowered to follow their own legal path."

Equipping RLS to meet the challenges ahead

Beyond providing direct legal support to those who need it most, one of our biggest achievements this year has been strengthening the way we deliver our work. We've made key structural and strategic advancements that will enhance our impact, embed long-term sustainability and equip ourselves to tackle future challenges head-on.

Some of these achievements have already been highlighted, including:

- **Embedding our legal aid contract across our UK work** – this has already begun delivering real results for our clients and positions us to both expand support and take on strategic legal challenges in the years ahead.
- **Deepening our community engagement** – we continue to expand both the reach of this work—ensuring we reach people who would otherwise have no legal support—and its depth, as we integrate this work across everything we do.

We've also continued to embed our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework across all areas of our work. This has provided space for reflection in both what we deliver and how we deliver it—allowing us to learn, adapt, and strengthen our impact in an ever-changing landscape.

Tackling complex challenges through cross-organisational working groups

This year, we created two working groups—comprising staff and trustees—to focus on critical, systemic issues that cut across our work and require long-term thinking. These groups will help us shape RLS's approach to some of the most pressing challenges that those we work with face.

The Refugee Leadership and Anti-Racism Working Group

This group was established to:

- Ensure that lived experience and refugee leadership are at the heart of RLS's work and decision-making.
- Challenge systemic racism—both internally within RLS and externally through our legal and system-change work.
- Develop anti-racist practices across our organisation, ensuring that our structures and strategies are actively inclusive, just, and equitable.

The Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Working Group

The impact of climate breakdown on migration is increasingly apparent. We launched the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group to:

- Deepen our understanding of the links between climate change, ecological collapse, and forced migration.
- Explore how these global crises shape the experiences of the people we work with.

- Consider how RLS can adapt its approach to legal support, system-change, and strategic legal work in response to these growing challenges.

We're delighted to have an external expert, Emily Rowe, chairing this group. Emily is a lawyer with expertise at the intersection of climate and migration, and her leadership is already helping to drive this work forward. In a significant step, Emily will represent RLS at COP29 in Baku, ensuring that we play our part in ensuring that refugee and migrant justice remains part of the global climate conversation.

7. Looking forward

The coming year will be another difficult one for the people we work with. While we continue to hope for—and fight for—a more humane and just political environment, we also recognise that the immediate reality is unlikely to see material improvements.

Against this backdrop, our presence, our work, and our organisational health have never been more important.

Our next strategy

As we enter the final year of our strategy, we're beginning the process of defining our direction for the years ahead.

This will not be a top-down process. Our strategy will be shaped by the people we work with and the colleagues who stand alongside them. We're open to where this process will lead us, but one thing is certain: we'll remain true to RLS's core values—solidarity, justice, and a deep commitment to the rights of people seeking safety.

New leadership

A significant step in our evolution is our plan to appoint RLS's first ever Executive Director. This marks an exciting new chapter for our organisation—one that will strengthen our capacity, amplify our impact, and ensure we remain as effective as possible in the face of growing challenges.

Expanding our community legal work

Despite the immense barriers people face, our community legal work has proven that access to the right information, tools, and support can support people to fight for their rights.

We have plans to build on the successes of the past year, focusing on how to expand and deepen this approach across all areas of our work.

Strategic litigation, led by the communities we work with

Our community legal work will be further embedded in our strategic legal interventions.



We want to address the disconnect we so often see between high level legal work and the people it's supposed to benefit. We're developing a new model that ensures the legal challenges we pursue—whether in individual cases or through systemic litigation—are driven directly by the experiences of the people most affected.

This will strengthen our ability to fight injustice in the courts while ensuring our system-change work is deeply rooted in the realities of the communities we serve.

Looking ahead

The challenges of the next year are undeniable. But so is our resolve.

Through litigation, system change work, and community-led legal empowerment, we will continue to stand with people seeking safety—pushing for justice, securing real change, and building towards a future where safety and dignity are not denied to those who need them most.

No matter what lies ahead, we will keep going.

8. Support, Funding and Solidarity

Our work over the last year would have been impossible without the support of our funders. We simply wouldn't exist without your support.

Many of our funders have offered help beyond their funding, whether it's guidance, introductions or helping us to access expertise to support our development.

Organisations that have supported us this year have included:

AB Charitable Trust	ForRefugees	The National Lottery
Blue Moon Trust	Griffsome Trust	Community Fund
Cambridge Convoy	Haella Stichting	Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Refugee Action Group	Incubator Gallery	The Rhododendron Trust
Chalk Cliff Trust	Jusaca Trust	
Dr Martens Foundation	London Legal Support Trust	

We also want to thank our law firm partners. Much of our work focuses on working in areas where there's no other support available. We're only able to do this thanks to these impactful partnerships. Our law firm partners this year have been:

Allen & Overy Shearman	Skadden, Arps, Slate,	Mayer Brown
Ashurst	Meagher & Flom (UK)	Ropes & Gray
Reed Smith	LLP	Orrick
	Hogan Lovells	Debevoise & Plimpton



Akin Gump Strauss
Hauer & Feld
Eversheds Sutherland
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher
Norton Rose Fulbright

Kirkland & Ellis
White & Case
Simmons & Simmons
Clyde & Co

Cleary Gottlieb Steen &
Hamilton
Squire Patton Boggs
Herbert Smith Freehills

As a small charity, we also rely on the generosity of our friends and supporters who make regular donations to our work. We wouldn't be here without your help.

In particular, we wish to thank the many hundreds of named, and often unnamed, individuals who make regular donations, give to our CrowdJustice campaigns and to our London Legal Walk team. We carry your messages of solidarity and strength with us.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Refugee Legal Support

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Refugee Legal Support

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Refugee Legal Support (the Trust) for the year ended 30 September 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 Trust 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 the 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 a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

Jamal M Chaudhry
Jamal M Chaudhry (Jun 28, 2025 13:16 GMT+1)

Jamal M Chaudhry

Faiz & Co. Limited
Chartered Accountants
8B Accommodation Road
London
NW11 8ED

28/06/25

Date:

Refugee Legal Support

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	30/9/24 Total funds £	30/9/23 Total funds £
	Notes				
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	90,488	552,577	643,065	499,576
Charitable activities	4				
Support cost		13,859	-	13,859	6,453
Investment income	3	-	-	-	843
Total		104,347	552,577	656,924	506,872
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Support cost		23,379	121,856	145,235	496,663
Direct cost		73,712	430,722	504,434	-
Total		97,091	552,578	649,669	496,663
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		7,256	(1)	7,255	10,209
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		118,376	29,504	147,880	137,671
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		125,632	29,503	155,135	147,880

The notes form part of these financial statements

Refugee Legal Support

Balance Sheet

30 September 2024

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	30/9/24 Total funds £	30/9/23 Total funds £
	Notes				
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	316	-	316	421
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	13,782	15,000	28,782	-
Cash at bank		171,163	193,084	364,247	281,886
		<u>184,945</u>	<u>208,084</u>	<u>393,029</u>	<u>281,886</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(59,630)	(178,580)	(238,210)	(134,427)
		<u>125,315</u>	<u>29,504</u>	<u>154,819</u>	<u>147,459</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>125,315</u>	<u>29,504</u>	<u>154,819</u>	<u>147,459</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>125,631</u>	<u>29,504</u>	<u>155,135</u>	<u>147,880</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>125,631</u>	<u>29,504</u>	<u>155,135</u>	<u>147,880</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Refugee Legal Support

Balance Sheet - continued

30 September 2024

FUNDS

Unrestricted funds

General: Business/Operational Continuity (incl £7,255 tax rebate that will be spent on delivery costs in 24-25)	76,302	74,432
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Designated: Employee & Contractual Obligations Restricted Funds	49,329	43,944
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125,631	118,376
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Restricted funds	29,504	29,504
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TOTAL FUNDS	155,135	147,880
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The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 24 April 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Chris Randall

Chris Randall (Jun 23, 2025 11:03 GM T+1)

C Randall - Trustee

Charlotte Blundy

C haroteBlundy(Jun 27, 2025 20:18 GM T+1)

C Blundy - Trustee

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Financial reporting standard 102 - reduced disclosure exemptions

The charity has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemption in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Designated funds are kept for employees' obligations including notice periods alongside contractual obligations (leases etc), all calculated up to Sept 24.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charity's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Income from Charitable Act	609,408	499,576
Donations	33,657	-
	<u>643,065</u>	<u>499,576</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Deposit account interest	-	843
	<u>-</u>	<u>843</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Other income	13,859	6,453
Activity Support cost	<u>13,859</u>	<u>6,453</u>

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 6) £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Support cost	38,505	106,730	145,235
Direct cost	445,498	58,936	504,434
	<u>484,003</u>	<u>165,666</u>	<u>649,669</u>

6. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Direct costs comprise of delivery projects and programme costs, including case disbursement costs and grants paid to delivery partners (FRFE and APBI) and other related spend.

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management	Finance	Governance	Totals
	£	£	costs	£
	£	£	£	£
Support cost	35,539	41,294	29,897	106,730
Direct cost	49,096	975	8,865	58,936
	<u>84,635</u>	<u>42,269</u>	<u>38,762</u>	<u>165,666</u>

8. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 September 2024 nor for the year ended 30 September 2023.

9. STAFF COSTS

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Wages and salaries	388,140	319,938
Social security costs	76,347	60,292
Other pension costs	8,870	8,173
	<u>473,357</u>	<u>388,403</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	30/9/24	30/9/23
Staff	13	11
	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

10. COMPARATIVES (2022) FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	95,947	403,629	499,576
Charitable activities			
Support cost	-	6,453	6,453
Investment income	843	-	843
Total	<u>96,790</u>	<u>410,082</u>	<u>506,872</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Support cost	<u>96,533</u>	<u>400,130</u>	<u>496,663</u>
NET INCOME	257	9,952	10,209
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	118,119	19,552	137,671
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>118,376</u>	<u>29,504</u>	<u>147,880</u>

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings £
COST	
At 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2024	<u>1,000</u>
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 October 2023	579
Charge for year	<u>105</u>
At 30 September 2024	<u>684</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 30 September 2024	<u>316</u>
At 30 September 2023	<u>421</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Trade debtors	15,000	-
Other debtors	13,782	-
	<u>28,782</u>	<u>-</u>

13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	30/9/24	30/9/23
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	1
Taxation and social security	718	5,343
Other creditors	237,492	129,083
	<u>238,210</u>	<u>134,427</u>

Total creditors consist of deferred income of £237,286 (2023: £127,331) and pension liability of £nil (2023: £1,032).

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.10.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 30.9.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	118,376	7,255	125,631
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	29,504	-	29,504
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>147,880</u>	<u>7,255</u>	<u>155,135</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	104,347	(97,092)	7,255
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	552,577	(552,577)	-
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>656,924</u>	<u>(649,669)</u>	<u>7,255</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.10.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 30.9.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	87,602	(13,170)	74,432
Designated Funds	30,517	13,427	43,944
	118,119	257	118,376
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	19,552	9,952	29,504
TOTAL FUNDS	137,671	10,209	147,880

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	83,363	(96,533)	(13,170)
Designated Funds	13,427	-	13,427
	96,790	(96,533)	257
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	410,082	(400,130)	9,952
TOTAL FUNDS	506,872	(496,663)	10,209

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.10.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 30.9.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	87,602	(5,915)	81,687
Designated Funds	30,517	13,427	43,944
	118,119	7,512	125,631
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	19,552	9,952	29,504
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>137,671</u>	<u>17,464</u>	<u>155,135</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	187,710	(193,625)	(5,915)
Designated Funds	13,427	-	13,427
	201,137	(193,625)	7,512
Restricted funds			
Restricted Funds	962,659	(952,707)	9,952
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,163,796</u>	<u>(1,146,332)</u>	<u>17,464</u>

15. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 30 September 2024.

Refugee Legal Support

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

	30/9/24 £	30/9/23 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Income from Charitable Act	609,408	499,576
Donations	33,657	-
	643,065	499,576
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	-	843
Charitable activities		
Other income	13,859	6,453
	656,924	506,872
Total incoming resources		
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities		
Wages	293,746	242,131
Social security	75,089	59,298
Pensions	5,076	4,677
Direct expenses	80,247	22,861
Interpreters fees	26,837	27,925
Staff recruitment costs	722	-
Sundries	29	-
Subscriptions	2,257	2,136
	484,003	359,028
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	31,727	26,152
Social security	629	497
Pensions	1,897	1,748
Training cost	3,389	2,897
Rent, Rates and water	25,158	19,501
Insurance	3,683	2,214
Telephone	1,002	1,187
Postage and stationery	-	480
Advertising	9,162	3,464
Travelling	2,887	3,521
Carried forward	79,534	61,661

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Refugee Legal Support

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 30 September 2024

	30/9/24 £	30/9/23 £
Management		
Brought forward	79,534	61,661
Office expenses	3,397	4,580
IT and Software costs	1,704	1,845
	84,635	68,086
 Finance		
Wages	36,217	29,853
Safeguarding	9	50
Sundries	-	47
Bank charges	837	460
Health and safety	129	534
Accountancy fees	4,972	6,792
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	105	141
	42,269	37,877
 Governance costs		
Wages	26,450	21,802
Social security	629	497
Pensions	1,897	1,748
Travelling	921	-
Consultancies, quality assurance and accreditation costs	7,491	6,993
Legal and professional fees	1,374	632
	38,762	31,672
 Total resources expended		
	649,669	496,663
 Net income		
	7,255	10,209

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