

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023
FOR
PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

Berringers LLP
Chartered Accountants
and Statutory Auditors
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PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

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for the year ended 31 March 2023**

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PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
for the year ended 31 March 2023

TRUSTEES

L Crisfield
K L Gay
G R Miller
N D Mulholland
S E Muna
E O'Hara (appointed 20.3.2023)
J Parkes
E Segal
A Taylor

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS

17 Old Ford Road
Bethnal Green
London
E2 9PH

**REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER**

1192355

AUDITORS

Berringers LLP
Chartered Accountants
and Statutory Auditors
Lygon House
50 London Road
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BR1 3RA

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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).

ROLE OF TRUSTEES

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report on each area of activity the organisation has undertaken whilst highlighting the benefits it has brought to the people that it is set up to support and work with. The review also helps the trustees to ensure that the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Public Interest Law Centre exists to challenge systemic injustice through legal representation, strategic litigation, research and legal education. We specialise in public law, actions against public authorities and public inquiries, bringing cases to court for individuals and grassroots groups who have been treated unfairly. We hold government and public bodies to account, challenging unlawful policies and practices. We will not rest until we see a fairer and more equal society.

Over the past 12 months, PILC has continued to make excellent progress against its strategic priorities:

- (1) Strengthen PILC's strategic, operational and financial management so it is robust and well-resourced and its governance reflects its values.
- (2) Grow the capacity of PILC's litigation team in its existing areas of expertise and develop one new area: planning/environmental law (associated to regeneration projects).
- (3) Develop PILC's communications to grow the organisation's profile, influence and supporter engagement.

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ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

We have made excellent progress towards growing the litigation team's capacity, including beginning to develop two new areas of law, namely planning and environmental law (where it relates to estate demolition and gentrification) and gypsy and traveller law (where it relates to planning, housing and land). The litigation team now counts 5 solicitors (2022: 3). We also recruited a paralegal and a legal assistant to support this growth.

1. Public Law

We opened 32 new cases in Public Law during the period. Of particular significance are the following strategic cases, which have wider public benefits:

a. Housing

- *MLR v Southwark Council* - Our client successfully challenged Southwark Council's housing allocation policy, which awards the highest band (Band 1) to applicants who are statutorily overcrowded. Whilst accepting that our client was statutorily overcrowded the council had refused him Band 1 on the basis that he had caused his statutory overcrowding as the result of a 'deliberate act' because the house was statutorily overcrowded at the point he moved in. We argued that our client did not have enough income to afford any larger accommodation and therefore did not have any meaningful choice but to move into the property. The High Court ruled in our client's favour, finding that for an act to be 'deliberate' an applicant must have had a real choice between two or more viable options and that Southwark Council's decision was irrational. This case built on a long-standing campaign led by Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth, which demanded an end to this unfair and harmful treatment of families in overcrowded housing.

b. Racial Justice and Migrants' Rights

- *LK v Secretary of State for the Home Department* - This is an ongoing challenge to the (automatic) pausing of EU Settlement Scheme applications on behalf of those with pending criminal prosecutions, affecting 10,000+ EU nationals with lengthy delays. LK applied for settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme in September 2020. His application was put on hold shortly after on the basis that he had a pending prosecution. The maximum sentence that LK could receive for his prosecution could never have met the threshold for refusing his application for Settled Status. We argue that the Home Office policy on pausing applications is irrational and a breach of the Withdrawal Agreement, as it forces Home Office caseworkers to put applications on hold where the prosecutions are not serious enough to result in a lawful refusal, were the application to be decided. The Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum) initially refused our application to judicially review the policy. Following an appeal to the Court of Appeal, permission was granted. The case will be heard in the Upper Tribunal in July 2023.

- *Various v Secretary of State for the Home Department* - This is an ongoing challenge to a Home Office policy not to provide a fee waiver for bereaved partners making applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain. Our clients all came to the UK on a spouse visa and suffered a bereavement of their UK spouse while they were on this visa. Despite the introduction of a concession in the immigration rules for people who become bereaved whilst on a spouse visa, the lack of a fee waiver effectively blocks applicants with a low income from accessing the concession. This disproportionately impacts women. In one of our clients' cases, she had been in the UK for 18 months before her husband died. She had NRPF and was caring for him full time before his death. She had no income or savings of her own and was left entirely destitute on his death. The fees for her to apply for ILR for herself and her daughter are almost £5,000.

c. Other

- *Anon v the Lord Chancellor* - This is an ongoing challenge to the financial eligibility criteria for pensioners seeking Legal Aid. There is currently a discretionary income limit of £733 per month for those applying for Legal Aid. As a result, applicants in receipt of solely the full New State Pension, without any other form of income, are often ineligible where they are not able to make any deductions from their income under the Legal Aid rules. Such deductions would typically include those for dependants, housing (though not for those whose housing costs are covered by Housing Benefit), employment expenses and tax. Whilst the scale of the problem is difficult to assess based on publicly available government data, there were 2.5 million people receiving the New State Pension in February 2022. The government has already acknowledged that those over the State Pension age are underrepresented in Legal Aid applications, which points to structural issues for pensioners making such applications. Our client wants to challenge the discriminatory effects of the disposable income limit on pensioners, given their inability to increase their capital or income to cover legal costs.

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2. Public Inquiries

Our Public Inquires work has grown significantly over the last 12 months following successful applications for Core Participant status on behalf of several organisations in the Covid-19 Inquiry.

a. Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI)

The Inquiry concluded Tranche 1 (covering 1968-1982) in February 2023. An interim report by the Chair to the Inquiry was subsequently published. It can be accessed here:

<https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Undercover-Policing-Inquiry-Tranche-1-Interim-Report.pdf>.

During the course of that Tranche, we represented three key Core Participants:

- Lindsey German was a former leading member of the Socialist Workers Party and a founder of the Stop the War Coalition;
- 'Mary' was a member of the International Marxist Group and a supporter of workers' rights. She was deceived into a sexual relationship with an undercover police officer;
- Richard Chessum was an activist in the Troops Out Movement.

We commend them for their extensive years of political activism and for maintaining their integrity throughout Tranche 1.

Tranche 1 initially investigated the early stages of the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS), its establishment and initial work. It then moved on to looking at the development of the work of the SDS. We made several statements to the Inquiry, which can be read in full in the subsequently published report: [Spycops: When the Public is the Enemy](#) (accessible on PILC website). Lindsey German and Richard Chessum also gave live evidence to the Inquiry.

In the course of our submissions, we demonstrated that:

1. There was no justification for the infiltrations of the Troops Out Movement or the Socialist Workers' Party on the grounds of preventing public disorder.
2. There was no policing justification at all. The true purpose of these infiltrations was political and economic.
3. Neither of those purposes were legally justified and Government knew that to be the case.
4. The Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) intelligence was used to blacklist law-abiding members of the public.

In our closing statement, we further demonstrated the following:

1. The Rick Clark deployment was not simply an intelligence gathering exercise. It was designed, with the knowledge and approval of Special Branch managers and MI5, to undermine a democratic organisation.
2. The undermining of a democratic organisation was one of a range of "counter-measures" endorsed by Government.
3. Post 1972, the principle purpose of the SDS was not to assist with maintaining public order. Its task, in conjunction with MI5, was to spy on citizens who were politically active, particularly in the trade union movement.
4. Government knew, approved, encouraged and enabled the continuation of the SDS.
5. From as early as 1975, the SDS management knew of undercover officer sexual relationships with their targets.
6. The Public were continually deceived by Government, as to the function and tasking of Special Branch.

In our concluding remarks to the Inquiry we stated: "In their defence, the British establishment claimed to be defending democracy, but it was not a defence of democracy, it was the undermining of democracy in defence of the establishment".

b. Covid-19 Inquiry

The Prime Minister announced the launch of the inquiry in May 2021, with intentions to commence proceedings in the spring of 2022. Our primary objective is to use our extensive experience with public inquiries and reach out to marginalised communities through our grassroots and frontline partners.

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Between August and December 2022, we made Core Participant applications on behalf of several organisations for Modules 1, 2 and/or 3. We put in an incredible amount of resources into ensuring that these applications were of the highest standard and made within very short timeframes as directed by the Inquiry. These included organisations from the Women sector, Migrants Rights, grassroots Trade Unions as well as Housing and Homelessness organisations and groups who provide advice, support and campaigns:

- Bail for Immigration Detainees
- Cleaners and Allied Workers Union
- Doctors of the World UK
- Focus E15 Housing Campaign
- Homeless Taskforce
- Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth
- Independent Workers of Great Britain
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Kanlungan Filipino Consortium
- Latin American Women's Rights Service
- Law Centres' Network
- Medact
- Migrants Organise
- Parents United
- Solace Women's Aid
- Southall Black Sisters
- Star Support
- The Magpie Project
- United Voices of the World
- Women and Girls Network

Module 1

Module 1 opened in July 2022 and is designed to look into the preparedness for the pandemic. It will assess if the pandemic was properly planned for and whether the UK was adequately ready for that eventuality. It will also scrutinise government decision-making relating to planning and seek to identify lessons that can be learnt. None of the applicants were successful in Module 1. The Inquiry requested Rule 9 witness evidence for that Module from Medact and Southall Black Sisters, which we supported them to submit.

Module 2

Module 2 opened in August 2022 and is split into parts. First, it will look into core political and administrative governance and decision-making for the UK. It will include the initial response, central government decision making, political and civil service performance as well as the effectiveness of relationships with governments in the devolved administrations and local and voluntary sectors. Module 2 will also assess decision-making about non-pharmaceutical measures and the factors that contributed to their implementation. In October 2022, Southall Black Sisters and Solace Women's Aid were granted Core Participant Status in Module 2 and we supported United Voices of the World (UVW) in providing Rule 9 witness evidence for that Module. Module 2 hearings are due to take place in September 2023.

Module 3

Module 3 opened in November 2022. It will look into the governmental and societal response to Covid-19 as well as dissecting the impact that the pandemic had on healthcare systems, patients and health care workers. This will include healthcare governance, primary care, NHS backlogs, the effects on healthcare provision by vaccination programmes as well as long covid diagnosis and support. Kanlungan, UVW and Independent Workers of Great Britain were each initially refused Core Participant status. We submitted a renewed application on behalf of all of them jointly (as the 'Frontline Migrant Health Workers Group') and were granted core participant status further to that appeal in February 2023. We supported Doctors of the World UK to provide detailed Rule 9 witness evidence for Module 3.

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We intend on submitting further applications to upcoming modules as they are announced through the year, and support organisations in providing Rule 9 witness evidence where necessary.

3. Claims against Public Authorities

We continue to maintain a small caseload of civil claims for damages on behalf of clients who have been mistreated, mostly either by the Home Office or the Police. We opened 4 new cases during the period. This remains an area which we seek to develop but haven't had the capacity to properly consider how to resource it adequately and what focus it should take. We have experience of using civil claims effectively to seek damages for clients following public law litigation. The purpose of compensation claims is not so much about financial gains as it is about obtaining redress for the victims of human rights abuse. We are currently exploring the possibility of using civil claims in a strategic way against Local Authorities who gatekeep access to housing for survivors of domestic abuse.

We successfully settled the following three cases with a total of £67,000 paid out to clients:

- A long-standing civil claim for damages against a London Borough where, at the height of the Home Office's unlawful campaign against European rough sleepers, an officer had wrongly disclosed to the Department for Work and Pensions that our client had been removed by the Home Office and his benefits were stopped as a result. Our client was destitute for three months which led to the deterioration of his mental health.
- A civil claim for damages due to the unlawful detention and removal of our client to Poland, despite being housed and exercising Treaty rights at the time.
- A human rights damages claim against the Home Office in relation to the treatment of our client's immigration applications over 15 years. Despite arriving in the UK at the age of 2 and making an application for ILR a couple of years later, the Home Office never answered the application, causing our client to be undocumented for large periods until 2021. In 2016, they lost their home and their job as a result and their physical and mental health suffered badly. Had their application for ILR been answered when it should have been, this would have never happened.

4. Housing

Keith Coughtrie, an expert in Gypsy and Traveller Law, joined the organisation in February 2023. Keith has represented Gypsies and Travellers, including Bargees for over 15 years and gained the trust and confidence of this underprivileged community, which has the poorest life outcomes of any ethnic group in the UK. In 2022, He represented Lisa Smith in her successful challenge to the definition of a Traveller which was found by the Court of Appeal to be discriminatory to both disabled and elderly people and changed the landscape for planning decision makers and councils. He has brought an existing caseload from Deighton Pierce Glynn where he was acting as a consultant.

We plan to formally launch the 'Gypsy and Traveller Legal Advice' project later this year, which aims to defend and promote the rights of Gypsies and Travellers to pursue a nomadic way of life.

We will mainly do this by way of legal representation in:

- o Planning applications and appeals
- o Evictions from rented/owned land
- o Evictions from unauthorised encampments
- o Possession proceedings
- o Defending Injunction proceedings
- o Mobile Home Act proceedings

5. Other cases

In November 2020, PILC was instructed by the Tamil Information Centre (TIC) to file a complaint, supported by a detailed dossier of evidence, to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)'s War Crimes Unit. The complaint relates to alleged war crimes committed by British mercenaries in Sri Lanka. The investigation by the Metropolitan Police' War Crimes Unit is ongoing.

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In October 2021, we were instructed by the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam to challenge the latest decision by the Secretary of State to continue proscribing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, also known as 'Tamil Tigers') under the Terrorism Act (2000). This case is ongoing and will be heard in the Proscribed Organisations Appeals Commission next year.

In March 2022, we were formally instructed by Unite the Union to act as solicitors to the independent inquiry into the involvement by Unite the Union officers or officials in the operation of blacklists in the construction industry. The inquiry is led by independent investigators, barristers Nick Randall QC and John Carl Townsend. As a further safeguard, there is a panel of lay members consisting of two Executive Committee members for the Construction Sector and the Chair of the Blacklist Support Group. This lay member panel has broader oversight of the investigation with the objective of ensuring that it is truly fair and independent. The investigation is ongoing with a report due in the middle of 2024.

6. Projects

Most of our legal action fits into one of our key priority areas: state accountability, housing/homelessness; racial justice and migrants rights; the impact of austerity. More often than not, our cases straddle several priority areas. What makes our legal work unique however is what because it builds on and benefits from: relationship building with grassroots groups and frontline organisations, legal education and capacity-building, research and strategic communications. It is through this approach that we are able to engage directly with marginalised and working-class communities in high-level work such as strategic litigation. We frame our work as projects because it enables us to be more purposeful. It also reminds us that we use the law as a tactic - not as an end in itself - to hold the state to account, to build power with marginalised and working-class communities and to support social justice movements.

a. Housing

i. Domestic Abuse and Housing

Funded by the Baring Foundation since 2019, PILC operates a legal hub at the intersection of housing and domestic abuse. Through this work, we have supported frontline organisations in the women sector to challenge a range of gatekeeping issues against domestic abuse survivors - particularly where homelessness applications are made or tenancies need to be transferred due to risk of abuse. The Baring Foundation extended funding for another 3 years from April 2022 to expand our activities with a focus on the needs of black, minoritised and migrant women.

A legal campaign against gatekeeping of housing provision for Domestic Abuse survivor was launched in September 2022 through the publication of a comprehensive report authored by Isabella Mulholland (Legal Caseworker) and entitled 'Abused twice': the 'gatekeeping' of support for domestic abuse survivors in every London borough with a foreword by Liz Davies KC, exposing how domestic abuse survivors are often denied access to housing provision due to local authority 'gatekeeping'. The campaign was launched at an in-person event bringing together 50+ attendees with intervention from Latin American Women Rights' Service (LAWRS), frontline advocates and recordings of (enacted) survivors' testimonies extracted from the report. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office also attended the event and we have been in contact with them since about access to housing with a focus on migrant women.

We also formally wrote to the Mayor of London and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to demand an inquiry into PILC's findings. This resulted in the Secretary of State writing to all local authorities reminding them of their statutory duties, particularly in relation to people who have experienced domestic abuse and stressing the importance of staff training, including a reminder of the Department funds to help upskill staff. In addition, London Councils, working alongside London's Housing Directors, secured £20,000 for a project to 'identify the principles and processes that would underpin an exemplar housing support service model to ensure that people with an eligibility for support receive the service they are entitled to'. The project was set up to 'seek to address the findings of the recent report that identified examples of failures in how London local authority housing services were responding to domestic abuse survivors approaching the councils for support'. Whilst these are encouraging developments, we are under no illusion that gatekeeping can be resolved without a systemic response, including adequate levels of funding to Local Authorities and long-term investment into social housing.

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We continue to coordinate the Domestic Abuse and Housing Forum, which counts 160 members (additional 56 since April 2022). We also delivered training resulting in 75 frontline staff and grassroots groups being given knowledge, tools and post-training second-tier advice and assistance.

With support from the Strategic Legal Fund, we have teamed up with Latin American Women's Rights Service and Southall Black Sister to investigate the government's failure to provide migrant survivors of domestic abuse with access to accommodation enabling them to escape their abusers. Although the government has funded Southall Black Sisters to run a pilot project, we do not believe this goes far enough. We plan to submit evidence of this to a barrister later this year to seek formal advice.

Finally, we continue to build strategic partnerships through presentations and engagements, including:

- The Disrupt Foundation's conference on 'Housing Justice and Homelessness: Current Challenges faced by Minoritised and Migrant Women', resulting in new links being made with grassroots organisations;
- Attendance at The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's launch of her second major report on migrant victims of domestic abuse 'Safety Before Status: The Solutions';
- Engagement with Homeless Link's efforts in setting up communities of practice as part of the Women Housing Movement and the Women's Development Unit, a partnership between Connection at St Martin's & Solace, which developed a strategy to end women homelessness in London.
- Presentation at Garden Court Chambers 'International Women's Day' event and Doughty Street Chambers 'Domestic Abuse in Housing' conference.

ii. Gentrification

The gentrification project was launched in January 2023, supporting access to justice in the class-based transformation of urban space. The team is made up of Alex Goldenberg, solicitor, and Saskia O' Hara, Community Legal Organiser and Legal Caseworker, who work together with estate residents and community campaigners from 15 estates across 8 London Boroughs, including Southwark, Newham and Lambeth as initially planned and other interventions in Camden, Croydon, Tower Hamlets, Haringey and Lewisham following community requests. Our work primarily consists of providing legal advice and representation to individuals and groups but funding from Trust for London and the Tudor Trust also enables us to deliver legal education workshops, capacity-building and support with networking, communications and fundraising, particularly through crowdfunding.

This project has three principle aims:

- We work to build local power to increase scrutiny from the communities affected by gentrification and against the opaque processes of 'consultation', tight legal frameworks and slippery language used by local and regional authorities around the 'affordability' of housing and security of tenure.
- We aim to reverse the decline in social housing through the sale of public land, the long-term neglect of maintenance, the demolition of council housing and the lack of new social housing developments, resulting in working-class populations being moved out of London.
- We address the environmental impact of regeneration (particularly through demolition) both to the local community (e.g. air quality, infill of 'affordable' housing on green spaces in already densely-populated estates) and where building materials come from (e.g. dredging of UK coasts).

Finally, we have commissioned Dr Joe Penny from UCL Urban Laboratory to undertake research into the loss of council tenancies across London through a study of the various funding models of property development. We expect the research to be published early 2024 with a view to provide a framework for litigation in the High Court.

iii. Temporary Accommodation

Temporary accommodation was never intended to exist outside of providing emergency short-term accommodation. It's now accommodating in excess of 100,000 households, including over 125,000 children. According to Shelter, the majority of households have lived there for a year or more. Although this is not an area where we specifically litigate at present, we are all too aware of the harmful consequences of living in insecure and inadequate accommodation for lengthy periods.

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We have partnered with Law for Life, which will deliver a public legal education programme for community intermediaries (e.g. volunteers, advocates and community leaders) supporting people in temporary accommodation to help them address legal issues. After each series of workshops, PILC will attend follow-up sessions with Law for Life to explore systemic problems and strategic issues. This will also allow us to understand the challenges people face when applying the knowledge gained through training.

b. Racial Justice and Migrants Rights

i. EU Rights Lab

The second year of the EU Rights Lab saw the continuation of Coffee Mornings, building on the strong communal atmosphere that had been created in the first year. Our focus shifted from research and advocacy towards a practice based on building power and amplifying the voices of those marginalised in mainstream discourse, including grassroots groups and activists who share spaces with those with direct experience of homelessness services and immigration enforcement and who seek transformational change. Whilst we continue to straddle over different 'worlds' - interacting with mainstream charities and the legal system on one hand, we made a conscious decision to focus more on building power together with other like-minded groups and organisations, namely Museum of Homelessness, Streets Kitchen, Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth, Roma Support Group, Focus E15 and South Norwood Community Kitchen. We also began making links with the Magpie Project. Beyond where we situate ourselves, we share with these groups a critical analysis of the status quo and a deep commitment to transformational/structural change.

In November 2022, we published the first two parts of the Other Voices series. The first publication in the series is a memorial by our EU homeless rights adviser Kasia Makowska to some of the homeless European clients we've lost over the past few years. Things are fucked but we don't give up is a contribution to the Museum of Homelessness's Dying Homeless Project. Its purpose was to acknowledge the sadness, remember people with dignity and not to give up. It was also published in Polish. The second publication, entitled Solidarity not Charity collects interviews with PILC's friends at Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth, Museum of Homelessness and Streets Kitchen in which they discuss solidarity-based approaches to housing and homelessness. We plan to conclude this series of publications with a dialogue between five Polish men with a history of rough sleeping entitled 'England took us in...' Polish rough sleepers speak back. The five-Albert, Andrzej, Czarek, Eryk and Radek ('Fontanna')-are members of the coffee-mornings group run by Kasia Makowska in 2021-22. They were invited to share their reflections on migrating to the UK and living here over the past decade or so. A Polish version is available here. We plan to launch this last publication in the Autumn 2023.

In March 2023, we facilitated an event entitled 'Building Power against Housing Dispossession' bringing together a group of activists and friends working on housing and homelessness issues with a view to:

1. Share updates about our current activities and struggles
2. Develop a shared analysis, joining some of the dots across various housing and homelessness issues such as rough sleeping, temporary accommodation, unaffordable accommodation, estate demolition, gentrification, etc... and how they intersect with racism and discrimination against migrants.
3. Explore ways to build power across groups and issues

ii. Ketane Project

Between 2019-22, the Roma Support Group ran a project called Ketane, a Roma-led initiative to empower Roma communities across the UK and to bring the law closer to Roma civil society. It also created opportunities for legal professionals to be better informed about the community's needs and barriers.

The Public Interest Law Centre worked together with the Roma Support Group to increase awareness of social and welfare rights amongst Roma people through the co-design and delivery of legal education workshops for Roma advocates and communities across the UK via Facebook live videos and recordings. It strongly focused on the changes to immigration law brought about by Brexit. However, we also discussed its impact on other rights and entitlements such as housing, welfare benefits, access to health and education as well as employment. We conducted a session purely on housing, covering rights and duties, issues around repairs, damp, pest control and types of evictions.

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Whilst these sessions are not a replacement for individual legal advice, it can positively contribute to encouraging people who do not normally access legal advice to engage with their local services. It has also been useful for us to understand the barriers Roma people face in engaging with legal services locally. We have also used these sessions to identify issues and trends that require a strategic response, either through advocacy or litigation.

PILC's relationship with the Roma Support Group has grown since our inception. Having secured a grant from the City Bridge Trust to continue our work with EU migrants at risk of destitution, we hope to develop a Roma Rights project in partnership with the Roma Support Group.

iii. Migration Hub

With the support from The Legal Education Foundation and the Justice Together Initiative, we set up a legal hub in September 2022 to work with frontline migrant organisations and those affected by the hostile environment. We chose to begin working with only three organisations to ensure we would manage capacity, build meaningful relationships and also to understand what worked best. We have worked with RAMFEL, Praxis and Revoke to meet their needs and that of their members or service users through public law remedies.

Following a series of meetings to develop relationships with key staff members and to understand the needs and how PILC can best assist, we delivered training tailored to the needs of each organisation, e.g. general introduction to public law and how it can be used to support migrants, issue-specific sessions with pre-litigation steps and how to identify potential issues for legal challenge. We have also begun to develop several strategic legal challenges, such as the lack of fee waivers for bereaved partners and the housing of asylum seekers in a hotel targeted by the far-right. It has also been important to be a sounding board for the organisations with more general public law queries. These will often be one-off advice which is important to the organisations and can sometimes lead to identifying wider issues.

With support from the Strategic Legal Fund, we are monitoring the Home Office's handling of Subject Access Requests (SARs). PILC are working on this issue with Praxis, RAMFEL and Haringey Migrant Support Centre, who are finding that delays in Home Office SARs are causing serious difficulty in their casework and for their clients.

In addition to the above, we published a joint report on migrants' experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI). The report, entitled *Unequal Impacts: How UK immigration law and policy affected migrants' experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic*, explores how UK law and government decision-making exacerbated the impact of Covid-19 on migrants, particularly those with insecure immigration status. The report's areas of focus are access to justice, Home Office applications, state support, healthcare, and the asylum accommodation system, as well as immigration enforcement. Across all these areas, we highlighted how the government's anti-migrant approach has exposed migrants to increased risk from Covid-19, undermined public health efforts and introduced greater dysfunctionality into an already-broken immigration system. The report's authors, Ellen Fotheringham and Caitlin Boswell, urge the prime minister to ensure that the Covid-19 Inquiry examines how flaws in the immigration system have put migrants' lives at risk during the pandemic.

c. Community and Movement Lawyering

Ever since we set out our first strategic plan, we have aspired to contribute to the network of Law Centres by bringing our expertise and methodology to support other Law Centres to become more strategic in their approach and using public law remedies where possible. With support from The Legal Education Foundation, we have begun to explore how to capacity-build Law Centres to take a community-engaged and strategic approach. We started by working closely with South West London Law Centres but plan to widen the project to other interested Law Centres, with support from the Law Centres Network. This is also a huge opportunity for us to reflect on the way we work strategically with marginalised communities.

7. Communications

We have made moderate progress towards the development of PILC's strategic communications and it remains an area for development in the coming 12 months. Communications is better integrated to our legal work but further work and resources are needed to maximise the potential communications have to amplify our legal work and to ensure that the social-justice message of a case isn't lost, even if we lose in court.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

We are pleased to report that PILC's financial situation remains strong. Our income has comparatively increased whilst we cautiously manage the growth of our charitable activities without risking the long-term financial viability of the organisation.

PILC's gross income was £929,524 (2022: £1,000,180) whilst total expenditure amounted to £637,439 (2022: £596,954). This resulted in a net income of £292,085 (2022: £403,226). Although the gross income appears slightly lower, prior reporting period figures had been 'artificially' inflated by the asset transfers originating from the limited company. The company was closed during the reporting period and the last of the assets were transferred over in the sum of £34,713 (2022: £268,673). Expenditure increased mostly due to staff salaries amounting to £390,106 (2022: £297,563) and rising inflation.

PILC's income can be broadly divided in three categories:

1. Grants from Trusts and Foundations amounted to £342,923 (2022: £177,270), nearly double what had been raised in the previous period. We express our gratitude to:

- o AB Charitable Trust
- o Baring Foundation
- o Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- o Matrix Causes Fund
- o Oak Foundation
- o Strategic Legal Fund
- o The Access to Justice Foundation
- o The Legal Education Foundation
- o Trust for London
- o Tudor Trust

2. Earned income from legal work for the year amounted to £500,538 (2022: £509,976).

These figures include fees for Counsel and Costs Consultants, which total £134,041 (2022: £203,862). The net figure for earned income attributable to PILC is therefore: £366,497 (2022: £306,114).

3. Other income from training, consultancy and other miscellaneous income amounted to £48,799, a substantial increase on the prior reporting period (2022: £5,625), though this is not likely to be reflective of a long-term trend.

The balance sheet continues to show a healthy level of cash at bank of £494,938 (2022: £313,793), a net increase of £181,145 on the prior reporting period. It is very important that PILC maintains a substantial cash buffer given the duration of public law cases, lengthy billing procedures and protracted settlements for payment of legal work. The need for increased cash reserves also reflects the growth of the organisation and associated expenditure.

Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March 2023 include £10,488 in restricted funds (2022: £2,923), leaving PILC with £484,450 in unrestricted funds (2022: £310,870). This represents a substantial increase in unrestricted cash reserves: £173,580 (2022: £60,870).

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

RESERVES POLICY

The Board of Trustees has set a target of retaining free reserves which represent six months' annual operating costs. This amount is reflective of general good practice in the charity sector and is even more important for PILC as it requires higher levels of cash flow due to the nature of its work. PILC's board of trustees consider free reserves to be all available cash at bank excluding restricted and designated funds.

As the organisation is steadily growing, PILC's new free reserves target has increased to £365,877 (2022: £248,500), which corresponds to six months' annual operating costs from the organisational budget (2023-24). These reserves enable the Law Centre to deal with the following contingencies:

- Problems with cash flow due to delay in legal income payments;
- Reduction in or withdrawal of grant funding;
- Reduction in Legal Aid earned income;
- In the event of closure, three months' running costs to wind up the organisation and pay redundancies, leasehold and other liabilities.

Last year, the board had also designated funds as follows:

- £50,000 for unforeseen staffing issues (e.g. sickness, parental leave)

The board had also aimed to build additional designated funds over a 3-year period as follows:

- £50,000 towards a Fighting Fund;
- £40,000 in the event we need to move premises;
- £20,000 for replacing essential equipment, e.g. IT.

At 31 March 2023, we can report as follows:

- The Fighting Fund has been allocated £4,908 from donations. Although this appears to be low, we expect another £30,000 in additional donations into this fund in 2023-24.

- Funds to cover moving premises won't be needed for the foreseeable future now that PILC has relocated to larger premises (July 2023).

- £6,667 has been allocated to the fund for replacing essential equipment. We expect to reach the £20,000 goal for this fund in March 2025, which will coincide with necessary expenditure on IT.

This year, the board has decided to set up a new designated fund with a value of £175,000 to mitigate against the impact of the termination of public inquiries and to cover staff salaries during the transition period back to public law litigation. We estimate that our work on the Unite Inquiry will end by October 2024, our involvement in the Covid-19 Inquiry will end by March 2025 and the Undercover Policing Inquiry is set to end by March 2026. With this in mind, the board has allocated all remaining funds (£56,998) to this newly-created designated fund.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

In summary, total cash at bank less restricted and designated funds leaves free cash reserves to cover six months' budgeted expenditure, as per the table below.

At 31 March 2023

Total cash at bank	494,938	
Restricted funds	10,488	
Unrestricted cash at bank	484,450	
Designated funds		Target
Unforeseen Staffing Issues	50,000	50,000
Fighting Fund	4,908	50,000
Essential Equipment	6,667	20,000
End of Public Inquiries	56,998	175,000
Total designated funds	118,573	
Free Cash Reserves	365,877	

In future, the board may also consider increasing the amount designated for unforeseen staffing issues to reflect the increased staff headcount.

This policy is reviewed annually when the board of trustees considers the end of year projections and the audited accounts.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

FUTURE PLANS

We are now looking at a period of consolidation underpinned by the development of a new 3-year strategic plan. The litigation team is still relatively small, particularly as two of our most experienced solicitors are working on public inquiries. That said, our capacity is steadily growing and important legal challenges in our areas of expertise will continue to emerge. We will also need to increase core funding to enable the necessary growth of the central team. Over the next 12 months we intend to:

- Finalise 3-year strategic plan (2024-27), including a business plan to cost organisational growth and future-proof PILC against possible drop in income following the end of public inquiries.
- Strengthen effective governance through the creation of a governance manual, the provision of training for trustees and opportunities to further understanding of PILC's operating environment and legal context.
- Support staff wellbeing by beginning to build small teams around existing areas of expertise or projects.
- Diversify income streams by increasing pool of trusts and foundations, developing individual fundraising and increasing earned income from litigation and civil claims.
- Successfully manage legal aid contracts in Public Law, Claims against Public Authorities and Housing from 1st September 2023.
- Invest in maintaining existing and building new relationships with grassroots groups, activists and frontline organisations.
- Commission and publish research to support litigation and work on state accountability.
- Develop Community & Movement Lawyering hub for Law Centres with a view to increasing public law and strategic legal work across the network.
- Create and execute a communications strategy focusing on supporter engagement with a view to publish a quarterly newsletter and develop individual fundraising.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is key to PILC's business model and accounts for 45% of our income over the past 12 months. This enables us to work through our community and movement lawyering model - developing strategic legal work with marginalised individuals, grassroots groups and frontline organisations whilst delivering legal education and capacity-building. This also enables us to conduct or commission research and advocate on behalf of our clients beyond the courts.

PILC's approach to fundraising mostly focuses on grants from trusts and foundations, both for core and project funds. We have been extremely fortunate to be awarded a number of substantial and multi-year grants over the last 12 months from the following trusts and foundations:

- Baring Foundation (Domestic Abuse & Housing)
- City Bridge Trust (EU Destitute Migrants, Roma Communities)
- The Legal Education Foundation (Migrants' Rights, Racial Justice and Community Lawyering)
- Trust for London (Gentrification)
- Tudor Trust (Gentrification)

We are also grateful to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for extending the initial two-year grant for another 12 months and agreeing to use this grant to support the development of our work with Gypsies and Travellers from July 2023.

We have also benefited from small grants to support research and communications work, which are critical in maximising the reach and resonance of our work:

- Baring Foundation
- Matrix Causes Fund
- Garden Court Chambers Special Fund

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

As these grants tend to be project-specific, we will focus our efforts on raising core funding to compensate for increased running costs and to ensure infrastructural support is robust and match the ambitions of a growing organisation.

Fundraising from individual donors is negligible in comparison to income from other sources. We occasionally use Crowd Justice to protect clients from potential adverse costs of bringing legal action, though this does not usually benefit PILC directly. There is a PayPal 'Donation' button on PILC's website, which occasionally receives direct donations from members of the public. We have set up a Fighting Fund with some of the donations received, which will enable us to litigate where public funding is not available. This remains a very small initiative at present, which we hope to grow next year. Due to the limited nature of this activity we have not sought to register with the fundraising regulator. We also do not directly involve vulnerable people in our fundraising activities. We have not received any complaints about our fundraising activity. Going forward, we intend to commission a consultant to devise and execute a strategy to grow PILC's supporter base, generate engagement and increase individual donations.

PRINCIPLE RISKS

PILC policies, procedures and systems are now well-established and staff are able to access them online instantly. We also review them periodically, amending them where necessary or improving them where possible. We maintain a Risk Register, which is updated when new risks are identified. It is then reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team and bi-monthly by the Board of Trustees. Staff are trained annually on safeguarding and data protection. We also have a Business Continuity Plan, which is tested annually.

Sustained periods of over-working can lead to staff fatigue and burnout, which is a risk in an over-achieving organisation the size of PILC. Staff wellbeing has been a key consideration over the past 12 months. We have provided refresher training to all managers on best practice in supervision and line management. We have also improved our systems to emphasise wellbeing, learning and development. We have introduced a Wellbeing Policy to ensure pro-active management of staff wellbeing. We conduct an annual survey of staff satisfaction and consult staff meaningfully on matters of interest.

The loss of any staff for any substantial periods impacts our work. There continues to be a risk of over-reliance on key personnel, particularly where revenue is concerned, and some specialist staff who bring expertise in specific areas. We have strengthened our management functions and delegated responsibility to raise income by introducing targets for the litigation team for next financial year. We are also planning to build small teams around our areas of expertise to ensure no one works in isolation and cover is provided where needed.

Whilst PILC's current financial situation remains strong, high levels of inflation are an immediate and medium-term concern. We have offset this for staff by substantially increasing salaries for 2023-24, including non-consolidated payments beyond our salary scale to match inflation. This will need to be closely monitored as the organisation is unlikely to be able to raise salaries in line with such inflation rates year after year. It is also important to flag another financial risk of over-reliance on income from public inquiries, which are due to end by March 2026. We have set up a new designated fund to plan for that and we are working closely with staff to increase income from litigation and civil claims.

Some of PILC's work can be politically sensitive. We make every effort to manage our external communications accordingly. We also have policies in place to ensure that any activity undertaken is in pursuance of our charitable purpose and to mitigate against associated risks. Following the departure of our Research and Communications Coordinator, we have created resources internally to deal with immediate needs and plan to work with a consultant to set out a communications strategy, properly consider what resources are needed and build an authoritative reputation for the organisation.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

In February 2023, we applied to Companies House for PILC Ltd (No: 12133800) to be struck off. A final set of accounts had been submitted and all remaining assets transferred to the CIO, which is the remaining legal structure under which the Public Interest Law Centre now operates. The company was eventually dissolved on 2nd May 2023.

During the course of the reporting period, we exchanged correspondence with the Charity Commission following a request we had made in 2021 to add the 'promotion of human rights' to our charitable objectives. We felt this would have been an appropriate extension to our existing work, given the human rights elements to much of the casework we undertake within our existing objective: 'the relief of poverty, suffering and distress and the advancement of education among people living or working in the United Kingdom'. The Charity Commission did not agree there was sufficient justification for the inclusion of this additional objective, and that the existing objectives would allow for the furtherance of PILC's activities.

In February 2023, we held the annual Away Day in person bringing together trustees and staff to review progress against the strategic plan. We also began the process of projecting PILC into the next few years, taking the first steps in creating a new strategic plan. It was clear that PILC's mission still represents what the organisation aspires to do and how committed it is to marginalised communities. There was discussion about ways to improve how we deliver our mission, with particular reference to activities that feed into legal representation and flow from litigation, e.g. legal education and external communications. We also spoke about PILC's business model, its strengths and weaknesses and all agreed on the importance of the values we project through our work. Last but not least, staff wellbeing was discussed with a view to make further organisational improvements. In the course of that discussion, there was also an acknowledgement of the structural issues affecting the legal sector, which PILC has to navigate.

Board of Trustees

We are delighted that Elizabeth O'Hara joined the board of trustees in March 2023. She is an experienced trustee with a background in housing and a longstanding interest in using the law to address problems of everyday life. She has spent many years developing policy and strategy, including at Shelter. She has served as an elected board member of Waltherton & Elgin Community Homes (WECH), a resident controlled, community-led housing association. She has worked with the Housing Ombudsman Service on its Panel of Advisers.

Management structure

There were no major changes to the management team during the period. Paul Heron has become Legal Director. His focus is now on overseeing PILC's strategic legal work whilst continuing his involvement in several Inquiries. Consequently, much of the day-to-day legal management has been transferred to supervising solicitors. This has provided opportunities for other staff to step up, which is in the long-term interests of the organisation.

Organisational Development

In December 2022, PILC retained its Law Society's Lexcel accreditation for client care, compliance and practice management. We also began the process of accreditation to Cyber Essential to strengthen our IT security.

Benjamin Morgan (Research & Communications Coordinator) and Kasia Makowska (EU Homeless Migrant Advisor) left the organisation this year. Together they delivered much of PILC's work with migrant homeless people. They continued to work on a consultancy and short-term basis to finish the Other Voices series, published in July 2023. Luisa Le Voguer Cuyet (October 2022) and Juliet Galea-Glennie (February 2023) joined to assist Paul Heron and Helen Mowatt respectively with Inquiries work. They have both settled well and we are looking forward to seeing them grow and develop their legal work. We were also delighted to have Keith Coughtrie who joined in February 2023 as supervising solicitor (housing law).

Recruitment has presented challenges, particularly with mid-level positions, which is not specific to PILC but a sector-wide issue. We hope that the latest review of our salary scale will enable us to recruit more easily. We are also committed to developing young people coming through the organisation. Two of our caseworkers are on course to qualify over the next 12-18 months. We supported another member of staff's application to the Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund. This was successful and we anticipate they will qualify over the next 2 years.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for the year ended 31 March 2023

At 31 March 2023 PILC employs 12 staff (11.5 FTE) (2022: 10 staff, 9.1 FTE) and contracts out a self-employed Finance Officer (0.4 FTE).

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Report of the trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, the Charities Act 2011, Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2023 was 9. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditors

Berringers LLP has been re-appointed as the charity's auditor and has expressed its willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 1/11/2023 and signed on its behalf by:



.....
S E Muna - Trustee

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Public Interest Law Centre (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet, the Cash flow statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the independent auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of trustees' responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the independent auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and error, we considered the following:

- the nature of the industry, control environment and business performance;
- results of our enquiries to management about their own assessment of the risks of fraud and error;
- the matters discussed among the audit engagement team regarding how and where fraud may occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

Our procedures to respond to risk include the following:

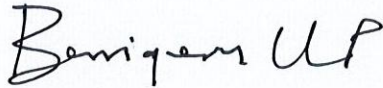
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected areas that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud or error;
- addressing the risk of fraud and error through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journals, assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF
PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Berringers LLP
Chartered Accountants
and Statutory Auditors
Lygon House
50 London Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3RA

Date:

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 March 2023

				Year Ended 31.3.23 Total funds £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 Total funds £
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £		
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	35,977	-	35,977	306,951
Charitable activities	4				
Legal representation		754,747	137,513	892,260	692,871
Investment income	3	<u>1,287</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,287</u>	<u>358</u>
Total		<u>792,011</u>	<u>137,513</u>	<u>929,524</u>	<u>1,000,180</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Legal representation		132,879	1,161	134,040	203,862
Staff costs		333,317	99,746	433,063	332,169
Accommodation costs		24,396	-	24,396	26,166
Other support costs		<u>16,900</u>	<u>29,040</u>	<u>45,940</u>	<u>34,757</u>
Total		<u>507,492</u>	<u>129,947</u>	<u>637,439</u>	<u>596,954</u>
NET INCOME		284,519	7,566	292,085	403,226
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>400,303</u>	<u>2,923</u>	<u>403,226</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>684,822</u></u>	<u><u>10,489</u></u>	<u><u>695,311</u></u>	<u><u>403,226</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

BALANCE SHEET
31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	6,284	-	6,284	6,600
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	438,136	-	438,136	294,364
Cash at bank		<u>484,450</u>	<u>10,488</u>	<u>494,938</u>	<u>313,793</u>
		922,586	10,488	933,074	608,157
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(244,047)	-	(244,047)	(211,531)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>678,539</u>	<u>10,488</u>	<u>689,027</u>	<u>396,626</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>684,823</u>	<u>10,488</u>	<u>695,311</u>	<u>403,226</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>684,823</u>	<u>10,488</u>	<u>695,311</u>	<u>403,226</u>
FUNDS	14				
Unrestricted funds				684,823	400,303
Restricted funds				<u>10,488</u>	<u>2,923</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>695,311</u>	<u>403,226</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on and were signed on its behalf by:

1/11/2023



S E Muna - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

		Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
	Notes		
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>181,526</u>	<u>313,435</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>181,526</u>	<u>313,435</u>
 Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,668)	-
Interest received		<u>1,287</u>	<u>358</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		<u>(381)</u>	<u>358</u>
		—————	—————
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		181,145	313,793
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>313,793</u>	—
 Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>494,938</u>	<u>313,793</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

**NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of financial activities)	292,085	403,226
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	1,984	1,650
Interest received	(1,287)	(358)
Donation of tangible fixed assets	-	(8,250)
Increase in debtors	(143,772)	(294,364)
Increase in creditors	<u>32,516</u>	<u>211,531</u>
Net cash provided by operations	<u>181,526</u>	<u>313,435</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.22 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.23 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	<u>313,793</u>	<u>181,145</u>	<u>494,938</u>
Total	<u>313,793</u>	<u>181,145</u>	<u>494,938</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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.

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.

Computer equipment - 20% on cost

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.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

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.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Donations	1,264	38,278
Exceptional items	<u>34,713</u>	<u>268,673</u>
	<u><u>35,977</u></u>	<u><u>306,951</u></u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Deposit account interest	<u>1,287</u>	<u>358</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Grants	342,923	177,270
Legal Income	500,538	509,976
Training, services and other income	<u>48,799</u>	<u>5,625</u>
	<u><u>892,260</u></u>	<u><u>692,871</u></u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Baring Foundation	52,400	32,675
Strategic Legal Fund	9,016	3,470
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	31,625	20,625
AB Charitable Trust	30,000	27,500
Oak Foundation	108,000	93,000
Matrix Causes Fund	1,800	-
Trust For London	28,000	-
Tudor Trust	26,577	-
The Legal Education Foundation	40,833	-
Access To Justice Foundation	<u>14,672</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><u>342,923</u></u>	<u><u>177,270</u></u>

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 6) £	Totals £
Legal representation	134,040	-	134,040
Staff costs	430,992	2,071	433,063
Accommodation costs	-	24,396	24,396
Other support costs	9,927	36,013	45,940
	<u>574,959</u>	<u>62,480</u>	<u>637,439</u>

6. SUPPORT COSTS

	Other £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Staff costs	2,071	-	2,071
Accommodation costs	24,396	-	24,396
Other support costs	29,763	6,250	36,013
	<u>56,230</u>	<u>6,250</u>	<u>62,480</u>

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the period ended 31 March 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the period ended 31 March 2022.

8. STAFF COSTS

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Wages and salaries	390,106	297,563
Social security costs	26,876	23,778
Other pension costs	14,010	6,770
	<u>430,992</u>	<u>328,111</u>

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

	Year Ended 31.3.23	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22
Legal advice	8	7
Administration	3	3
	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

8. STAFF COSTS - continued

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

9. EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

Included within donation income is an exceptional item totalling £34,713 (2022: £268,673) which was donated by Public Interest Law Centre Ltd in relation to a transfer of operations (as detailed in the Trustees Report) which included the transfer of final cash balance on 26 October 2022 upon cessation of the company. Public Interest Law Centre Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales (no. 12133800).

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	306,951	-	306,951
Charitable activities			
Legal representation	636,101	56,770	692,871
Investment income	<u>358</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>358</u>
Total	<u>943,410</u>	<u>56,770</u>	<u>1,000,180</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Legal representation	203,862	-	203,862
Staff costs	288,705	43,464	332,169
Accommodation costs	26,166	-	26,166
Other support costs	<u>24,373</u>	<u>10,384</u>	<u>34,757</u>
Total	<u>543,106</u>	<u>53,848</u>	<u>596,954</u>
NET INCOME	<u>400,304</u>	<u>2,922</u>	<u>403,226</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>400,304</u>	<u>2,922</u>	<u>403,226</u>

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer equipment £
COST	
At 1 April 2022	8,250
Additions	<u>1,668</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>9,918</u>
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 April 2022	1,650
Charge for year	<u>1,984</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>3,634</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2023	<u>6,284</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>6,600</u>

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	324,179	217,845
Other debtors	20,061	15,537
Accrued income	88,695	55,868
Prepayments	<u>5,201</u>	<u>5,114</u>
	<u>438,136</u>	<u>294,364</u>

13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	136,738	72,436
Taxation and social security	41,604	29,001
Other creditors	<u>65,705</u>	<u>110,094</u>
	<u>244,047</u>	<u>211,531</u>

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	400,303	284,520	684,823
Restricted funds			
Strategic Legal Fund	1,215	2,006	3,221
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	<u>1,708</u>	<u>5,559</u>	<u>7,267</u>
	<u>2,923</u>	<u>7,565</u>	<u>10,488</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>403,226</u>	<u>292,085</u>	<u>695,311</u>

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	792,011	(507,491)	284,520
Restricted funds			
Baring Foundation	52,400	(52,400)	-
Strategic Legal Fund	9,017	(7,011)	2,006
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	31,624	(26,065)	5,559
Matrix Causes Fund	1,800	(1,800)	-
Trust For London	28,000	(28,000)	-
Access To Justice Foundation	<u>14,672</u>	<u>(14,672)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>137,513</u>	<u>(129,948)</u>	<u>7,565</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>929,524</u>	<u>(637,439)</u>	<u>292,085</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	400,303	400,303
Restricted funds		
Strategic Legal Fund	1,215	1,215
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	<u>1,708</u>	<u>1,708</u>
	<u>2,923</u>	<u>2,923</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>403,226</u>	<u>403,226</u>

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	943,410	(543,107)	400,303
Restricted funds			
Baring Foundation	32,675	(32,675)	-
Strategic Legal Fund	3,470	(2,255)	1,215
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	<u>20,625</u>	<u>(18,917)</u>	<u>1,708</u>
	<u>56,770</u>	<u>(53,847)</u>	<u>2,923</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>1,000,180</u></u>	<u><u>(596,954)</u></u>	<u><u>403,226</u></u>

15. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

During the year there was a transfer of cash totalling £34,713 (2022: £268,673) from Public Interest Law Centre Ltd, a company connected due to key management in common.

PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	1,264	38,278
Exceptional items	<u>34,713</u>	<u>268,673</u>
	35,977	306,951
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	1,287	358
Charitable activities		
Grants	342,923	177,270
Legal Income	500,538	509,976
Training, services and other income	<u>48,799</u>	<u>5,625</u>
	<u>892,260</u>	<u>692,871</u>
Total incoming resources	929,524	1,000,180
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities		
Salaries	390,106	297,563
Social security	26,876	23,778
Pensions	14,010	6,770
Non-recoverable disbursements	2,777	1,928
Counsel fees	130,840	187,236
Project costs	4,678	2,896
Legal Aid costs	3,200	16,626
Professional insurance	<u>2,472</u>	<u>2,201</u>
	574,959	538,998
Support costs		
Other		
Rent	24,000	24,000
Rates and water	396	2,166
Insurance	323	667
Telephone	538	552
Postage and stationery	2,528	1,678
Sundries	2,373	2,028
Repairs & maintenance	158	92
Advertising & marketing	2,815	950
Carried forward	33,131	32,133

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PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE

**DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 March 2023**

	Year Ended 31.3.23 £	Period 16.11.20 to 31.3.22 £
Other		
Brought forward	33,131	32,133
Travel & subsistence	573	88
Bank charges	520	431
Subscriptions	1,676	1,795
Cleaning	235	362
Training costs	1,275	3,688
Computer, software & IT costs	7,626	8,155
Storage & archiving costs	680	460
Legal & professional fees	7,734	2,874
Staff costs	796	370
Computer equipment	<u>1,984</u>	<u>1,650</u>
	56,230	52,006
Governance costs		
Auditors' remuneration	<u>6,250</u>	<u>5,950</u>
Total resources expended	<u>637,439</u>	<u>596,954</u>
Net income	<u>292,085</u>	<u>403,226</u>

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