

Asylum Matters

Charity number 1192664

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021



West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service

Asylum Matters

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

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Prepared by West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO

Asylum Matters

Trustees' report for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisors

The trustees during the financial period and up to and including the date the report was approved were:

Name	Position	Dates
Emma Harrison	Chair	Appointed at formation
Andrew White	Treasurer	Appointed at formation
Maya Mailer		Appointed at formation
Jonathan Featonby		Resigned 13 July 2022
Jacqueline Cotton		Appointed at formation
Ayad Al-Ani		Appointed at formation
Charity number	1192664	Registered in England and Wales
Registered and principal address	Bankers	
PO BOX 389	Unity Trust Bank plc	Hampshire Trust Bank
Leeds	4 Brindley PI	55 Bishopsgate
LS26 1GR	Birmingham B1 2JB	London EC2N 3AS
	Redwood Bank	
	The Nexus Bldg Broadway	
	Letchworth Garden City SG6 3TA	

Independent examiner

Simon Bostrom FCIE

West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO

Stringer House
34 Lupton Street
Leeds
LS10 2QW

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) foundation formed on 7 December 2020 and is governed by a constitution.

With effect from 1 March 2021, it took over the activities, assets and liabilities of the Asylum Matters Project, which had been hosted by City of Sanctuary since 1 January 2017.

Method of recruitment and appointment of trustees

The trustees of the charity are appointed by the trustees at a duly convened meeting.

Asylum Matters

Trustees' report (continued) for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

Objectives and activities

The charity's objects

The objects of the CIO are:

- 1) For the public benefit to relieve the charitable needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their dependants in the UK, in particular by:
 - a) providing training and support designed to build capacity among organisations which provide frontline support to refugees and asylum seekers and seek to improve their lives;
 - b) working with statutory agencies and key partners, through training, advocacy and campaigning work, to understand, examine and address the causes and consequences of the poverty and inequality which creates hardship amongst refugee and asylum seeking communities.
 - c) advancing public education in the asylum system, through campaigning, with the aim of raising awareness of the issues faced by refugee and asylum seeking communities and the need to address them.
- 2) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing refugees, asylum seekers and their dependants from becoming socially excluded, relieving their needs and assisting them to integrate into society.

The charity's main activities

Asylum Matters exists to improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees by working in partnership locally and nationally to secure positive changes in policy and in practice. Our core team of seven campaigners and advocacy experts are based in six locations and are rooted in their local communities, which means we are able to activate one of the broadest networks in the sector. Our network includes over 400 active partners which are mainly local charities that provide front-line support to people in the asylum system.

Asylum Matters facilitates the involvement of this broad partnership base in advocacy work by providing them with different opportunities for engagement which fit with their priorities and resources. We bring partners together to provide coordinated and strategic joint action around opportunities for change. We provide hands-on support to build skills, knowledge and confidence to campaign for change, while creating platforms for people with lived experience to advocate directly with decision-makers.

Public benefit statement

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our Trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Achievements and performance

Overview

The year has been dominated by working with our partners locally and nationally to challenge the UK Government's plans to dismantle the right to claim asylum, through its New Plan for Immigration and the Nationality and Borders Bill.

In this increasingly hostile external context, Asylum Matters has worked to bring partners together behind shared strategies; ensured our actions amounted to more than the sum of their parts; supported others to take action as part of a broader movement; and offered momentum, solidarity and hope in an otherwise bleak and isolating environment.

We have achieved this through continuing to develop and evolve our offer to partners to support them to campaign – lowering the barriers to entry, e.g. through increased use of webinars and 'live' resources, such as those we provided for the New Plan for Immigration consultation to enable partners' participation; and providing more one-to-one support. We also worked to build understanding of these plans amongst local, regional and devolved leaders, and succeeded in engaging a number of local councils, metro mayors and devolved governments to speak out about the impact on their communities.

Asylum Matters

Trustees' report (continued) for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

Achievements and performance continued

Beyond the primary focus on the Bill and challenging the UK Government's measures to harden asylum policy, our small agile team has been well-placed to respond to a rapidly shifting external context, picking up and leading on important issues as they emerge (such as the ASPEN card fiasco) while also continuing to progress long-term campaigns, such as Lift The Ban on the right to work. More than ever, we have ensured that front-line experiences and first-hand testimonies feed into the national debate.

Nationality and Borders Bill

Throughout the year we have prioritised public campaigning, convening and supporting partners to oppose the deeply damaging anti-refugee proposals from the UK Government.

We focused on drawing attention to the harmful impact that many provisions within this Bill would have on people in the asylum system, increasing the poverty, inequality and hardship they experience.

Our campaigning has been geared towards shifting the centre of the debate towards our vision of a more compassionate and fair asylum system, in order to provide cover for politicians of all parties to oppose the Bill; and lay the groundwork for future campaigning to repeal and mitigate the worst aspects of the proposals.

When the Government launched its consultation, we hosted a webinar to talk over 100 partners through the process, take questions, and facilitate campaigning plans. We published and updated a resource on our website to guide and signpost partners through submitting their consultation response. The extensive mobilisation we enabled – with many partners telling us they were only able to participate as a result of our resources and support - directly contributed to the enormous volume of responses. This left the Home Office having to concede that a consultation tailored to support its plans resulted in 75% of respondents opposing the proposals.

Subsequently, we have shared other practical resources to oppose the Bill. We worked with partners to lobby and enable local and devolved leaders to publicly reject the UK Government's approach and support an alternative vision of welcome – e.g. the Welsh Government and leaders of Newcastle, Sheffield and Birmingham voicing opposition to the plans; and we convened the voluntary sector and wider civil society both in Greater Manchester and in the North East to call on local leaders to act.

We have engaged MPs at constituency level, including organising meetings with partners with several 2019 intake Conservative MPs in 'Red Wall' seats. We also hosted the Shadow Immigration Minister for a series of meetings with local frontline agencies across the North East, to encourage Labour to maintain a strong stance against the Bill.

We co-founded the Together With Refugees campaign, as one of six organisations within the Asylum Reform Initiative, and worked hard to build, promote and support it as a broad coalition to oppose the Government's plans. To kickstart the coalition, we convened nine workshops to consult, inform and engage 150 local partners on Together With Refugees and its plans.

Later in the year, we were one of the key drivers behind the Together With Refugees 'Week of Action' in October 2021, where we worked with local partners at a grassroots level to demonstrate local support for a more compassionate approach to refugee protection. We provided materials, social media assets and guidance, media interviews and practical hands-on support to help deliver over 40 events up and down the country, from Tynemouth to Swansea.

Accommodation

The team has continued to address ongoing and frequently long-standing problems with housing standards. In addition, we have campaigned against increased use of unsuitable accommodation, laying the ground for future campaigning against the Government's stated plans to warehouse people seeking asylum in accommodation centres.

We used our and our partners' expertise in this field to provide written and oral evidence to parliamentary committees and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's inquiries into the use of former military barracks to house people seeking asylum. Their unequivocal, damning findings increased pressure on ministers and scrutiny of the Home Office's actions.

Asylum Matters

Trustees' report (continued) for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

Achievements and performance continued

We co-organised an online Day of Action in March, calling for an end to the use of barracks and urgent improvements to asylum housing. We briefed MPs and peers; and supported partners and experts by experience to take part in a mass lobby, an online rally with 600 attendees, social media actions and media interviews.

In December, in collaboration with five local partners, we published a new report 'In a Place Like Prison', based on in-depth interviews with 14 people in the asylum system on their experiences of living in institutional accommodation such as hotels and ex-military barracks. Throughout the year we've also continued to work with partners locally and regionally on many issues around asylum housing. For example, in the North East we worked collaboratively to successfully challenge contractors entering residences with no notice and without PPE during the pandemic.

Asylum support and right to work

Despite our repeated advance warnings to Home Office officials of the risks involved to vulnerable people's wellbeing, the contract transition for the ASPEN card (ie how people on asylum support access their money) was disastrous, with tens of thousands of people left with no access to money for days and often weeks.

Once the full scale of the crisis was apparent, we worked closely with partners nationally and locally to evidence the full scale of the crisis and insist on urgent action to remedy it. We broke and maintained the story in the media; and briefed the Shadow Immigration Minister and other MPs to raise it in oral and written questions and in key parliamentary committees and debates, all ensuring continued spotlight on and scrutiny of the crisis. Our continued advocacy led to a 'lessons learned' evaluation by the Home Office, to which we actively contributed; but despite our requests its findings will not be made public. Six months on we authored a joint report with 18 partners (titled 'Lessons Learned? How Government Contracts Failed People Seeking Asylum Again') to place on record the scale and impact of the failings. We also explicitly link ongoing Home Office contract failures and the anti-refugee Bill's inevitable expansion of private contracts – e.g. running large warehouse-like accommodation centres.

Failures in the provision of asylum support payments, and the very low levels of support rates, are an even greater problem as people seeking asylum have no alternative, being effectively banned from working. We therefore continue to co-lead all aspects of the Lift The Ban campaign to change the rules and give people seeking asylum the right to work. During lockdown in early months of the year, we focused on generating media coverage with people seeking asylum who could act as key workers in the fight against Covid; and organising uplifting online gatherings to review campaign strategy, with coalition partners as a whole and also in a dedicated expert by experience-led and -focused session.

Later in the year, Cabinet ministers, backed up by centre-right media outlets, voiced their support for reform; while new opinion polling we commissioned showed strong support for change, in seats across the UK, including those of the Home Secretary and Prime Minister. We shared new financial analysis, showing even greater Treasury savings if the current ban were lifted.

At the end of the year the Home Office finally announced it would not change its right to work policy, following a three-year review – a disappointing if unsurprising statement which was made without any evidence to support it. Yet pressure remains on the Government on this matter – its own Migration Advisory Committee recommended ministers should look again at the policy and give people seeking asylum the right to work, a position backed by The Times, providing us with an ideal springboard to continue campaigning in the new year.

Asylum Matters

Trustees' report (continued) for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

Financial review

The net income for the period was £185,611, including net income of £111,053 on unrestricted funds and net income of £74,558 on restricted funds.

Income on unrestricted funds included grants of £72,500, received in 2021, to be spent in 2022.

We are very grateful for the support shown by all our funders, several of whom have provided additional funds to counteract the adverse effects of the pandemic.

Details of grants and donations received are shown in note 2 to the accounts.

At the time of signing these accounts the charity has been impacted by the global Covid-19 virus. The trustees have assessed the charity's ability to continue for at least 12 months from the date that the accounts are approved and conclude that no material uncertainties exist that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Reserves policy

The charity's free reserves, excluding fixed assets, at the period end were £111,053.

The trustees have decided that the charity should aim to hold between 3 and 6 months' worth of reserves for the purpose of enabling the smooth running of the charity and to allow for an orderly winding up should the charity need to close. On that basis the minimum level of unrestricted reserves should be £80,000, representing approximately 3 months recurring expenditure. The trustees expect the level of free reserves to be reduced to less than the minimum level by the end of the year.

Approved by the board of trustees on 13 July 2022

Andrew White (Trustee)

Asylum Matters

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Asylum Matters

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the CIO for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021, which are set out on pages 8 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a fellow of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act.

I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a fellow of ACIE 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 charity as required by section 130 of the Charities Act;
- 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.

Simon Bostrom FCIE

18 August 2022

West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO

Stringer House
34 Lupton Street
Leeds
LS10 2QW

Asylum Matters

Statement of Financial Activities

(including summary income and expenditure account)

for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 Unrestricted funds £	2021 Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £
Income from:				
Grants, contracts and donations	(2)	127,000	245,169	372,169
Transfer of funds on formation		93,914	(12,667)	81,247
Bank interest		21	-	21
Total income		<u>220,935</u>	<u>232,502</u>	<u>453,437</u>
Expenditure on:				
Salaries NI and Pensions	(3)	90,059	143,523	233,582
Recruitment		650	-	650
Staff training and support		142	552	694
Staff travel and accomodation		1,730	936	2,666
Staff wellbeing		1,976	-	1,976
Volunteer expenses		18	174	192
Grants payable		3,500	-	3,500
Advisory group / trustees travel and training		396	-	396
Advocacy and research and consultancy support		-	1,228	1,228
Campaign events and partner meetings		-	5,631	5,631
Contribution to host organisation costs		3,750	3,900	7,650
Insurance		603	139	742
Computers and IT		605	374	979
Phone and internet		613	141	754
Postage and stationery		633	146	779
Payroll charges		1,304	301	1,605
Bank charges		144	33	177
Independent examination		1,219	281	1,500
Legal and professional		2,540	585	3,125
Total expenditure		<u>109,882</u>	<u>157,944</u>	<u>267,826</u>
Net income / (expenditure)		<u>111,053</u>	<u>74,558</u>	<u>185,611</u>
Fund balances brought forward		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Fund balances carried forward	(4)	<u>111,053</u>	<u>74,558</u>	<u>185,611</u>

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

Asylum Matters
Balance sheet
as at 31 December 2021

	2021 Unrestricted £	2021 Restricted £	2021 Total £
Current assets			
Cash at bank	118,074	76,958	195,032
Total current assets	<u>118,074</u>	<u>76,958</u>	<u>195,032</u>
Current liabilities:			
amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors and accruals	(5) 7,021	2,400	9,421
Total current liabilities	<u>7,021</u>	<u>2,400</u>	<u>9,421</u>
Net current assets / (liabilities)	<u>111,053</u>	<u>74,558</u>	<u>185,611</u>
Net assets	<u>111,053</u>	<u>74,558</u>	<u>185,611</u>
Funds			
Unrestricted funds	111,053	-	111,053
Restricted funds	-	74,558	74,558
Total funds	<u>111,053</u>	<u>74,558</u>	<u>185,611</u>

The financial statements were approved by the board of trustees on 13 July 2022

Andrew White (Trustee)

Asylum Matters

Notes to the accounts

for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

1 Accounting policies

Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) and with the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

Going concern

The trustees are satisfied that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the resources, it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SOFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

Where grants are related to performance and specific deliverables, they are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

Expenditure and liabilities

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out the resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

Grants payable without performance conditions

Where there are no conditions attaching to the grant that enables the donor charity to realistically avoid the commitment, a liability for the full funding obligation must be recognised.

Taxation

As a charity the organisation benefits from rates relief and is generally exempt from income tax and capital gains tax but not from VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is included in the cost of those items to which it relates.

Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme for the benefit of its employees. The costs of contributions are recognised in the period they are payable.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

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

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

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

Asylum Matters

Notes to the accounts continued

for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

2 Grants, contracts and donations	2021 Unrestricted funds £	2021 Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £
Grants and donations			
AB Charitable Trust	40,000	-	40,000
Barrow Cadbury Trust	-	24,000	24,000
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	37,500	-	37,500
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	102,425	102,425
Migration Exchange	-	25,000	25,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	30,000	30,000
Sam and Bella Sebba Charitable Trust	17,500	3,000	20,500
The Balcombe Charitable Trust	10,000	-	10,000
The Blue Thread	-	5,000	5,000
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	31,482	31,482
Tides Foundation (Ben and Jerry's)	-	24,262	24,262
Tudor Trust	2,000	-	2,000
Contracts			
Unbound Philanthropy	20,000	-	20,000
	<u>127,000</u>	<u>245,169</u>	<u>372,169</u>

3 Staff costs and numbers	2021 £
Gross salaries	208,622
Social security costs	21,459
Employment allowance	(4,000)
Pensions	<u>7,501</u>
	<u>233,582</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 6, being an average of 5.5 full time equivalent. There were no employees with emoluments above £60,000.

Defined contribution pension scheme	2021 £
Costs of the scheme to the charity for the year	7,501

4 Restricted funds	Transfer on formation £	Incoming £	Outgoing £	Transfers £	Balance c/f £
Barrow Cadbury Trust	(4,000)	24,000	20,000	-	-
The Blue Thread	-	5,000	5,000	-	-
The National Lottery	-	31,482	19,912	-	11,570
Lloyds Bank Foundation	(11,919)	102,425	65,054	-	25,452
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	30,000	24,444	-	5,556
Migration Exchange	(1,829)	25,000	19,176	-	3,995
Tides Foundn. (Ben and Jerry's)	-	24,262	-	-	24,262
Sam and Bella Sebba	-	3,000	-	-	3,000
Transition fund	5,081	-	4,358	-	723
	<u>(12,667)</u>	<u>245,169</u>	<u>157,944</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>74,558</u>

Asylum Matters

Notes to the accounts continued

for the period 7 December 2020 to 31 December 2021

4 Restricted funds continued

Fund name	Purpose of restriction
Barrow Cadbury Trust	Towards the cost of a Campaigns Manager for the West Midlands
The Blue Thread	For campaign materials
The National Lottery	For Greater Manchester Step Change Project
Lloyds Bank Foundation	For the cost of Campaigns Managers for Yorkshire and Humberside and the North East
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	For Covid 19 related work
Migration Exchange	For Covid 19 Respond and Adapt Programme
Tides Foundn. (Ben and Jerry's)	For staff costs
Sam and Bella Sebba	For work related to Afghan refugees
Transition fund	Funding from Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Tudor Trust towards the cost of setting up and registering a new charity for Asylum Matters

5 Creditors and accruals

	2021
	£
Accruals for grants payable	3,500
Creditors	641
Accruals	5,280
	9,421

6 Related party transactions

Trustee expenses

No trustee received any expenses during this period.

Trustee remuneration and benefits

No trustee received any remuneration or benefit during this period.

Remuneration and benefits received by key management personnel

The total employee benefits received by key management personnel during the year was £67,196.

No trustee received any remuneration or benefit in this capacity during this period.