

Say It Loud Club

Receipts and Payments Accounts

31 December 2023

Registered Charity Number: 1192945

Say It Loud Club

Reference and administrative details

For the period ended 31 December 2023

Charity number	1192945
Registered office and operational address	200A Pentonville Road London N1 9JP
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year ending 31 December 2023 were: • Amanda Dickins (Chair) • Uche Godwin Dumkwu • MD Imran Hussain • Bridget Nakanwagi Kalinda • Katie McCallum • Rosemary Nakiwala • Kennedy Chigozie Obilom • Thomas George Wood • Sean Peter Counihan
Chief executive officer	Aloysius Ssali
Bankers	NatWest Group plc 36 St Andrew Square Edinburgh EH2 2YB
Independent examiners	Anthony Wayne Snow

Say It Loud Club

Report of the trustees

For the period ended 31 December 2023

The reference and administrative information shown on page 2 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with statutory requirements and the charity's Constitution.

1. Introduction

Say It Loud Club provides tailored support for LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, of which there is otherwise very little available. Other support offered is often either just for refugees – thus often causing discomfort around revealing sexuality – or just for LGBTQ+ people – thus often not appropriate or available to asylum seekers. Whilst there are some fantastic organisations for specific groups of LGBTQ+ refugees in the UK, we believe Say It Loud Club is the only organisation to provide holistic support that accounts for members' legal, financial, physical, social, and emotional needs.

Feedback from our member survey illustrates how our support has helped them:

- 92% say their life has changed for the better
- 98% are more comfortable with their sexuality or gender identity
- 98% are more open about their sexuality or gender identity
- 78% say their physical health has improved
- 88% say their mental health has improved
- 92% feel safer
- 88% have been helped on their journey towards being granted asylum
- 95% feel more connected with other LGBTQ+ refugees
- 88% feel more integrated with everyday life in the UK

Over the course of 2023, the Say It Loud Club expanded rapidly, partly through increasing referrals from GPs and partner organisations but also, as always, word of mouth within the community. By the end of 2023, we had over 680 members across the UK.

2. Vision, Mission, and Values

Say It Loud Club is the community of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.

Vision

Our vision is for a world where LGBTQ+ people can express their sexuality and gender identity safely and with pride. Until this is possible, we believe the UK should provide a place of safety for LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, providing an environment in which everyone can flourish as their true self. We engage with our members through one-on-one mentoring, workshops, social events, peer support, and referral to partner organisations for legal, financial, health and housing support.

Mission

Say It Loud Club is the community of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. We engage with our members through one-on-one mentoring, workshops, social events, peer support, and referral to partner organisations for legal, financial, health and housing support.

As a community, we:

- Encourage openness, helping our members gain the confidence to openly embrace their true identity, often for the first time
- Share knowledge, helping LGBTQ+ people fleeing persecution to better understand UK cultures and traditions through which to embrace their sexual orientations
- Promote safety, supporting LGBTQ+ people to seek asylum on the basis of their sexuality and to escape unsafe living situations in the UK
- Uphold good health, running workshops and advocating for access to improve our physical, mental, and sexual health, particularly support to overcome trauma
- Socialise, providing opportunities to come together as a community and supporting each other to integrate into new communities and UK society
- Advocate nationally to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers, advocate for a fair and humane asylum process and improve support for our community

Values

We are:

- **Member-led**: Our members are at the heart of everything we do. We are led by the lived experiences of our Founder (Aloysius Ssali) and Member Trustees as LGBTQ+ refugees. Many of our members volunteer to support the organisation and their peers.
- **Community-driven**: Our focus is on building a community where everyone's expertise, skills and experiences are valued.
- **Collaborative**: We can only provide the support we do because of our partners. We are proud to be part of a wide network of organisations, made up of activists, non-profits, and businesses across the UK, who all come together to support LGBTQ+ refugees.
- **Inclusive**: We believe everyone should be able to access Say It Loud Club's support, regardless of gender, race, religion, or circumstance. We celebrate the diversity of our community and want to actively reach out to groups we are not yet supporting, especially groups which are often marginalised.

3. Key activities

Housing project: LGBTQ+ refugees are at a higher risk of homelessness than the wider refugee population and higher risk of violence if homeless or housed in unsuitable accommodation. Our Housing project identifies members of the community who are most in need of housing and seeks to provide them with safe, suitable, permanent homes.

The success of this project is founded in strong partnerships - especially our close working relationship with Notting Hill Genesis. We also understand that members have limited resources to transform their housing into proper homes, so we support this by working with charities and businesses to offer discounts on key items as well as gathering donations of good quality furniture and equipment.

In 2023 we secured 15 affordable, safe, and permanent homes for our members.

Ambassador Project: Say It Loud Club Ambassadors (volunteers with lived experience) have enabled us to increase the holistic wrap-around support we offer to meet the needs of our growing community.

We are proud of Ambassadors, their skills and their diversity - which reflects the diversity of our community and has proved invaluable. For example, many of our Ambassadors speak multiple languages and their knowledge enables us to

communicate effectively with newly arrived asylum seekers and support them through this critical moment in their lives. In one recent case, knowledge of a specific French dialect ensured that a member's testimony on her forced arranged marriage was properly recorded by her lawyer and not simply noted as a "marriage" - linguistic nuance critical to an asylum claim.

The dedication of our wonderful individual Ambassadors, combined with generous support from funders and donors, has enabled the strong development of the programme. In 2023, we provided specialised training for individuals and groups of specialist Ambassadors, as well as training for all Ambassadors on critical issues such as confidentiality and healthy boundaries. We were also able to expand our practical support, providing all Ambassadors with laptops thanks to generous donations from FactSet as well as Choose Love.

Alongside this training, structured development helped Ambassadors develop their confidence and leadership skills, enabling them to take on increasing responsibilities. For example, our regular in person socials and educational workshops are now organised and led by Ambassadors. DBS checked Ambassadors have received safeguarding training, enabling them to provide new members with 1:1 peer mentoring and support through intimidating or potentially traumatic aspects of the asylum process, e.g. accompanying members to reporting centres for "immigration bail". Ambassadors are also able to support members in difficult situations, visiting people in immigration detention centres and providing practical support in emergency situations e.g. for those facing hunger and destitution.

Outreach: LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers are referred to Say It Loud Club by a wide range of individuals and organisations, including immigration officers, GPs, social workers, and other charities. Many also come across Say It Loud Club via online searches, or word of mouth.

We try to reach as many people as possible by promoting our work online, visiting detention centres, and building partnerships with the NHS, Local Authorities, charities, and other organisations which might be the first point of contact for LGBTQ+ refugees.

Initial assessment and referrals: After contacting Say It Loud Club, new members are initially invited to meet a member of staff (both our staff members have lived experience). This meeting is an opportunity for the person to find out more about Say It Loud Club and what we do before confirming they would like to become part of our LGBTQ+ community.

From a practical perspective, the initial assessment enables us to develop a good understanding of the new member's need for support and curate initial referrals and

partner them with the right individual(s) for peer mentoring. Based on their individual situation, they can be signposted to particular services within Say It Loud Club, as well as referred to external organisations. We partner with a wide range of other organisations which provide specialised support to LGBTQ+ and/or refugee communities, like solicitors, health services, therapists and trauma specialists, and housing associations and shelters.

One-to-one counselling: Each new member receives around 12 hours of 1:1 informal counselling. The content of the counselling depends on the individuals' experiences but often focuses on topics such as accepting and expressing their sexuality, managing the stress and anxiety of seeking asylum, and feeling at home in a new country and culture. Wherever possible, this counselling is delivered by someone with who has lived through similar experiences.

Workshops: Say It Loud Club hosts bi-weekly in person social and educational workshops for members. These are facilitated by our volunteer Ambassadors with presentations from volunteers and external speakers who are leaders and experts in their field. The aim of our workshops is to raise awareness and levels of understanding in areas specific to LGBTQ+ refugees and equip members with skills to help them navigate life in a new country. They range from discussions about 'coming out' and the impact of concealing your identity to educational workshops about physical, mental, and sexual health, money management, finding safe housing as an LGBTQ+ asylum seeker, employability skills, CV writing and understanding LGBTQ+ rights in the UK.

Social events and reducing isolation: The benefits of our social events are threefold:

1. To provide opportunities for members to connect with each other, socialise, and share experiences and encouragement

2. To run events where LGBTQ+ refugees can meet others living locally, thus reducing isolation and helping people integrate with their new communities

3. To build members' confidence in navigating and getting to know the local area, helping people to feel more at home in the UK

As well as running monthly social events for our members, where community news can be shared and peer support is given, we co-host larger events which help our members meet others within the LGBTQ+, refugee, or wider community. With the help of our incredible volunteers, we can also organise outings in and around London and activities such as English conversation practice.

Advocacy: For LGBTQ+ refugees, attending legal appointments, tribunals, GP and hospital appointments, or other meetings can be an incredibly stressful experience. As well as the challenges of navigating complex, unfamiliar systems in a new language, many of our members fear detention, deportation, or discrimination based on sexual or gender identity when using a service for the first time.

At Say It Loud Club, we can help our members access the services they need by accompanying them to appointments and helping them communicate that they are finding it hard to express themselves or when their voice isn't being heard. We advocate for members at asylum tribunals and when they are communicating with the Home Office and local authorities, ensuring they are given the support they need to be able to express themselves and live safe, comfortable lives.

Ongoing support: Wherever members are on their journey to asylum and afterwards, Say It Loud Club is a point of support. Members are able to come to Say It Loud Club when they are in need and will receive further informal counselling and referrals onward.

As each individual's journey is different, we are as flexible as possible in the support we give – for example, sometimes supporting people to access food banks or a homeless shelter, writing letters when a member is concerned they are being treated unfairly, or simply being a listening ear to someone going through difficulties. We also run regular themed 'drop-ins', which members can attend if they have questions about accessing legal support, welfare, and financial aid, writing CVs, or finding volunteering opportunities.

Many of our members also volunteer with other charities, like London Friend or the British Heart Foundation. And, of course, our own Ambassadors Programme offers structured, supported volunteering opportunities within Say It Loud Club, seeing members take on vital roles within the organisation in outreach, peer support, events, communications, and campaigns. We also work with training, recruitment, and employment organisations, to ensure our members have the support and skills they need to pursue their chosen career once they have refugee status and the right to work.

Crisis support: the need for emergency support grew very rapidly in 2023, we spent £38,465.50 on emergency and destitute support, almost three times the that we spent in 2022 (£13,140.30). The growing number of members in our community helped to drive growing demand for support, but the rapidly rising cost of living was also a factor as Home Office asylum support failed to keep pace (asylum seekers are not allowed to work or receive mainstream benefits). Asylum support is now £49.18 per person per week in self-catered accommodation or £8.86 in full-board accommodation. These

amounts are insufficient to cover basics such as soap, period products or travel to compulsory appointments (signing in for “immigration bail”), tribunals, legal and medical appointments.

In addition, changes in Government policy in 2023 meant that members who achieved refugee status were given just seven days to find new accommodation before being turned out of their asylum hostel, often before their Government issued refugee identity document had arrived. Without their id or an address, they were unable to access benefits or open a bank account.

Fortunately, thanks to our fundraising in 2023, we were able to draw on support from the Cripplegate Foundation, London Catalyst Emergency Fund and NPC to provide members with urgently needed financial and practical assistance. We used our emergency fund to support members with travel to urgent legal and medical appointments, data to access online interviews and tribunals, emergency accommodation, food vouchers, and more. Our members have relied upon, and greatly appreciated this practical support in a time where homelessness and destitution among LGBTQ+ refugees are rife.

Peer-to-peer support: We have developed a peer-to-peer support system led by Ambassadors.

We provide a safe space for each new member and their designated supporting Ambassador to meet weekly to discuss concerns, aspirations, and personal interests in confidence - and explore and identify solutions and opportunities. This may cover immediate worries of the uncertainty of the outcome of interviews with the Home Office; what next steps they may wish to consider once granted, for example, identifying courses or areas of work and how to approach applying and presenting themselves positively; or simply finding creative activities that they can engage with to help combat loneliness, stress and isolation such as sports, entertainment, creative outlets or simply what may be on offer to a newcomer to the UK.

This 1:1 support is supplemented through broad community support. For example, we and the community identify low-cost or free activities that members can explore that will help introduce them to LGBTQ+ life in the UK and the community. Such opportunities allow them to shift focus from the main preoccupations of their claims and give them a chance to connect with a wider community in the UK.

4. Supporters

Charitable trusts and foundations

One of our aims for 2023 was to continue to diversify funding streams to increase our financial resilience. During the period ended 31 December 2023 we secured grants from several new funders and received grants from the following organisations:

- Core funding from Choose Love (a part-restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund)
- A multi year grant from Cripplegate Foundation to support the Ambassador Project
- An unrestricted multi year grant from the Lloyds Bank Foundation
- A one off grant from the NPC to support our emergency fund.

Individual donors

We received a significant number of donations from individuals whose support has allowed Say It Loud Club to support an even larger number of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the UK than ever before. These donors include some supporters who have run events, creative initiatives, and participated in sporting challenges to fundraise for Say It Loud Club We are incredibly grateful to all of our supporters.

5. Staff and volunteers

During the period ended 31 December 2023, Say It Loud Club had two paid full time employees: a Chief Executive Officer and an Operations Manager. Say It Loud Club was also supported by a large number of volunteers who lent their skills to financial activities, policy work, event organisation to name just a few areas of support. The Trustees would like to express thanks to everyone who volunteered with Say It Loud Club during this period.

6. Structure, governance, and management

Appointment of trustees

In the year to 31 December 2023, Say It Loud Club was managed by a board of nine Trustees. Our Trustees have been selected on the basis of their broad range of skills and their commitment to helping Say It Loud Club achieve its vision. Say It Loud Club's

constitution also stipulates that at least half of our Trustees must have lived experience – five of our nine Trustees in the year to 31 December 2023 were members with lived experience as an LGBTQ+ refugee.

The Board of Trustees meets several times a year. All Trustees contribute to the efficient and proper running and oversight of Say It Loud Club whilst the daily management of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, who is a paid employee.

Risk management

As part of their role, all Trustees have an obligation to identify, review and mitigate against risks Say It Loud Club is exposed to, ensuring there are suitable controls in place to minimise the risk of fraud and error.

7. Achievements and performance

Say It Loud Club continued to provide a wide-ranging programme of activities, support and initiatives to achieve its vision during the year ending 31 December 2023. We further diversified our funding portfolio to increase our financial resilience and, in line with our vision and values as a member-led community, benefited from the increasing contribution and leadership of our volunteer Ambassadors.

Substantial operational improvements enabled us to continue to provide 1:1 tailored support to a much larger community. In March we moved to new premises with permanent desks in a bigger office which enabled us to grow our provision, including offering double the number of 1:1 appointments to support members. Our operations manager was able to introduce new systems and efficiencies, based on lessons learned from the previous year.

We have listed some of our key achievements and impact metrics below for reference:

- In 2023, 302 (up from 232 in 2022) new members received 12 hours of one-on-one mentoring, talking therapy, and counselling led by an individual who has personally experienced seeking asylum as an LGBTQ+ person. After these sessions, members reported feeling more comfortable with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and could express themselves with pride.

- We held 35 in person educational workshops, which were typically attended by around 95 members. Our workshop preparing for London Pride was attended by over 120 people, who could barely fit in the room.
- Our support built the confidence of 220 members to enter the UK's formal asylum process, many of whom had previously lived in hiding. We are very proud that 108 members were granted UK refugee status in 2023 - more than double the previous year and our highest number ever. Say It Loud Club also supported 12 family reunions, 38 members starting further education, and 52 moving into full-time employment.
- In 2023, Say It Loud Club attended 42 tribunals to provide support to our members during the tribunal stage of the asylum process - nearly double the number we supported in 2022. The tribunal stage can be very daunting and stressful, especially for individuals seeking asylum based on their sexual orientation. In court, it is necessary for them to demonstrate their sexual identity, orientation, and the potential dangers they may face if they return to their home country. Our role is to assist our members by providing testimony to support their asylum claims and ensuring they are represented fairly and accurately throughout the proceedings.
- During 2023 Say It Loud Club supported 51 members with health care and GP referrals and did 52 detention visits across the UK - both substantial increases on the previous year.

8. Financial review and reserves policy

The Trustees are content with the financial position of the charity at the end of the period. They recognise that the deficit in FY23 was driven by shifts in Government policy that drove a substantial increase in the need for emergency support. Although funds were low at the end of the period, substantial funding has been secured for Q1 FY24 and policies introduced to help control expenditure, including clear policies on expenses for volunteers and limiting travel expenses for immigration tribunals.

Say It Loud Club aims to rebuild its reserves in line with its policy of maintaining unrestricted funds of approximately £35,000 which would allow us to:

1. Pay our employees for a period of three months;
2. Conduct our core activities to support our members for a period of three months; and
3. Provide the charity with a sufficient level of financial resilience in any event of adversity.

The charity will continue to review its funding and grant structure to provide further resilience where possible during 2024. The Trustees agree that the charity remains in a phase of growth and should continue to focus efforts on building financial resilience. The Trustees will monitor and review the amounts of reserves that are required to ensure we can fulfil our continuing obligations. The policy will be reviewed in 12 months' time.

9. Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees have a duty to prepare financial statements, for each financial year, which give a true and accurate overview of the charity's financial activities and position, including the net income or expenditure of the charity for the year. In preparing these statements the trustees are required to:

- Choose appropriate accounting policies which must be consistently applied
- Make reasonable judgements and estimates where required
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Collate financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is believed the charity will not continue to operate

The Trustees and Treasurer are responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity, thereby enabling them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees and Treasurer are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and must therefore take appropriate steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees confirm that to the best of their knowledge there is no information relevant to the audit of which the independent examiners are unaware. The Trustees also confirm that they have taken all necessary steps to ensure that they are aware of all relevant examination information and that this information has been communicated to the independent examiners.

The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent examiner's report

To the Trustees of

Say It Loud Club

10. Independent examiners

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Say It Loud Club

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Say It Loud Club ('the Club') for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

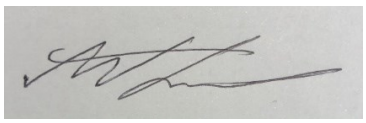
As the charity Trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). I report in respect of my examination of the Club's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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 as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Anthony Wayne Snow

c/o Queer Britain, 2 Granary Square, London, N1C 4BH

Date: 20th May 2024

Say It Loud Club

Receipts and payments account

For the period ended 31 December 2023

	Restricted (£)	Unrestricted (£)	**2023 total (£)**
Receipts			
Choose Love grant	37,000.00	37,000.00	**74,000.00**
Lloyds Foundation grant	-	27,250.00	**27,250.00**
Cripplegate Foundation grant	-	22,500.00	**22,500.00**
New Philanthropy Capital grant	15,000.00	-	**15,000.00**
Donations	-	48,616.18	**48,616.18**
Total receipts	52,000.00	135,366.18	**187,366.18**
Payments			
Salaries	37,000.00	27,403.83	**64,403.83**
Office rent	-	2,766.98	**2,766.98**
IT (software and hardware)	-	4,401.66	**4,401.66**
General expenses	-	26,839.30	**26,839.30**

Tribunal costs	-	30,628.00	**30,628.00**
Events and communications	-	16,598.52	**16,598.52**
Interpreters	-	8,668.19	**8,668.19**
Emergency and destitute fund	15,000.00	23,465.50	**38,465.50**
Housing project expenses	-	9,078.00	**9,078.00**
Ambassador project expenses	-	10,025.00	**10,025.00**
Total payments	52,000.00	159,874.98	**211,874.98**
Net receipts	-	(24,508.80)	**(24,508.80)**
Cash funds at 01 January 2023	-	28,809.58	**28,809.58**
Cash funds at 31 December 2023	-	4,300.78	**4,300.78**

Receipts and payments accounts commentary:

1. During FY23 (period ending 31 December 2023) we had a £24.5k deficit driven by substantial demand for emergency support: £23.5k of unrestricted funds were used to top up our Emergency and destitute fund. Demand on the fund rose sharply in Q3 and Q4, when an abrupt shift in policy meant those achieving refugee status were evicted from their accommodation with 7 days notice.

2. At the end of the year the charity held unrestricted funds of £4,300.78.
3. Our income predominantly comes from grants and donations, whilst our expenses are largely made up of employee salaries and project-related expenditure.

Say It Loud Club

Statement of assets and liabilities

As at 31 December 2023

	31 December 2023 (£)
Cash funds	
Cash at bank in hand	4,300.78
Total cash funds	4,300.78
Funds	
Restricted funds	-
Unrestricted funds	
General funds	4,300.78
Total funds	4,300.78

As approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Amanda Dickins

Date: 29th May 2024

Chair of Trustees, Say It Loud Club, 200A Pentonville Road, London N1 9JP