

# PEACE OF MIND CIO

England & Wales · Charity number 1194752

## Details

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**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2021-06-10

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne And Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Phone** 07595300326

**Email** [peaceofmind455@gmail.com](mailto:peaceofmind455@gmail.com)

**Website** [www.peaceofmindnortheast.org.uk](http://www.peaceofmindnortheast.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** TO RELIEVE THE NEEDS OF THOSE GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS OR THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM AND THEIR DEPENDENTS LIVING (TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY) IN GATESHEAD AND NEWCASTLE, AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS BY:1. TO RELIEVE POVERTY OR FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY THE PROVISION OF ADVICE, TRANSLATING, EDUCATION, EMERGENCY FOOD PACKS, SMALL GRANTS, HOUSEHOLD AND PERSONAL CARE ITEMS.2. THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR RECREATION OR OTHER LEISURE-TIME OCCUPATION WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE NEED OF SUCH FACILITIES BY REASON OF THEIR YOUTH, AGE, INFIRMITY OR DISABLEMENT, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP OR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

**Activities:** Social drop in and educational classes, Advocacy support

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

## Geography

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- Gateshead
- Newcastle Upon Tyne City

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£288,231	£221,126	-	-
2023-12-31	£237,608	£205,647	-	-
2022-12-31	£236,668	£156,353	-	-
2021-12-31	£75,897	£47,186	-	-

## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
Nida Muzaffar	Chair	2021-06-10
Babar Sultan		2024-04-15
Mahnoor Mansoor		2021-12-07
Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi		2021-06-10
Tanveer Shuja		2021-06-10

**PEACE OF MIND CIO**

England & Wales - Charity number 1194752

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# Accounts

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peace  
of mind.  
Side by side with refugees



# Peace of Mind CIO - Annual Report

## January 2024 - December 2024

### Foreword

The year 2024 presented immense challenges for refugees and asylum seekers, with rising inflation and cost-of-living pressures compounding everyday hardships. The increasingly hostile political climate was sharply felt, especially following the distressing riots in August, which spread anxiety and disrupted lives among our RAS community. Amid this turbulent backdrop, Peace of Mind CIO intensified its focus on wellbeing, hardship support, empowerment, and skills-building, positioning itself as a cornerstone for resilience and integration. Our strengthened partnerships, including vital collaboration with Northumbria Police and Gateshead Public Health, enabled us to respond effectively during and after the riots, ensuring safety and reassurance for vulnerable individuals. Through education, advocacy, and practical assistance, we have worked tirelessly to foster a cohesive, inclusive community where refugees and asylum seekers can reclaim dignity and hope.

### Chair's Message

"Empowerment, solidarity, and compassion have been our guiding lights through a demanding year."

2024 tested the strength of every person involved with Peace of Mind CIO. Inflation pushed families deeper into hardship, while the riots brought fear and uncertainty. At the same time, a constantly evolving and often hostile political landscape around asylum and refugees added further complexity and anxiety, making our work to provide support and hope even more essential. We rose to these challenges by expanding hardship relief, embedding wellbeing at the heart of our work, and amplifying education and advocacy efforts to ensure everyone knew and could exercise their rights. Our partnership with Northumbria Police and local stakeholders during the riots was key to safeguarding our community and rebuilding trust. I pay tribute to the resilience of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, and partners whose collective efforts have transformed adversity into opportunity. Together, we are building stronger, more integrated communities and we stand ready to continue this vital mission in the years ahead.

## **Our Mission and Values**

Founded in 2014 as a refugee-led organisation, Peace of Mind CIO remains steadfast in its commitment to relieve hardship and champion inclusion with a trauma-informed and culturally respectful approach. We enable refugees and asylum seekers to rebuild their lives through practical support, education, skills development, advice, and advocacy, anchored in dignity, respect, and empowerment.

## **Core Purpose of CIO**

The objects of the CIO are to relieve the needs of those granted refugee status or those seeking asylum and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle, and the surrounding areas by:

1. Relieving poverty or financial hardship in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision of advice, translating, education, emergency food packs, small grants, household, and personal care items.
2. The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances.

Building on this core purpose, the following strategic aims outline the key priorities and objectives through which Peace of Mind CIO seeks to deliver meaningful and lasting impact for refugees, asylum seekers, and their families in our community.

## **Strategic Aims**

- Deliver immediate relief from poverty, hunger, and social isolation through culturally appropriate support and emergency aid.
- Promote wellbeing through dedicated health, mental health, and social engagement programmes.
- Provide education and skills-building opportunities that foster independence and promote integration into the local community.
- Offer welfare advice and advocacy to empower individuals in understanding and exercising their rights, navigating the complex benefits system, and addressing intricate personal circumstances.

- Facilitate digital inclusion as a vital means of connection, learning, and opportunity.
- Foster community cohesion and integration by creating welcoming spaces that encourage dialogue, mutual support, and cultural exchange.
- Collaborate with statutory and voluntary sector partners to influence policies and practices in ways that improve the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers.



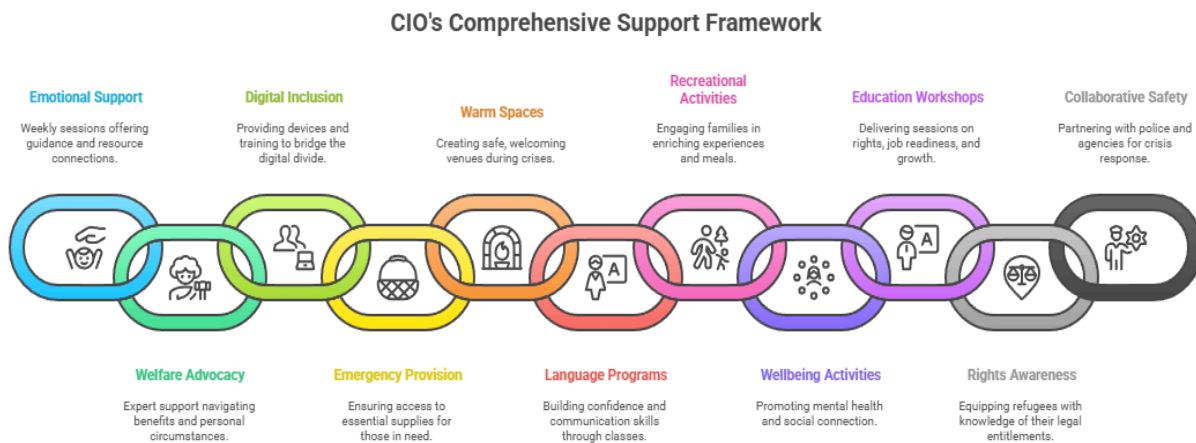
## What We Do

Our broad spectrum of interconnected services is designed to meet the immediate needs and longer-term aspirations of our beneficiaries, guiding them from crisis to greater stability, wellbeing, and integration.

- Weekly drop-in sessions offer emotional support, tailored guidance, and help connecting with essential resources.
- Welfare advice and advocacy provide beneficiaries with expert support and guidance to navigate the complex benefits system, address intricate personal circumstances, understand immigration processes, and access essential health and social care services.
- Digital inclusion initiatives supply devices, SIM cards, connectivity support, and digital skills training, empowering families to overcome isolation and participate fully in modern society and essential services.
- Emergency provision ensures access to culturally appropriate food parcels, clothing, school uniforms, hygiene kits, and newborn essentials for those facing acute need.
- Warm Spaces create safe, welcoming venues during colder months and times of crisis, reducing isolation and supporting wellbeing within the community.

- English language programmes (including Basic, Advanced, and Women-only classes) build confidence, enhance communication, and support employability.
- Recreational holiday activities engage families and children in enriching experiences alongside nutritious, culturally sensitive meals, nurturing children’s health, development, and social inclusion.
- Wellbeing activities include mental health workshops, peer support groups, recreational outings, and resilience-building sessions tailored specifically for parents and young people, promoting emotional strength and social connection.
- Education and skills workshops deliver sessions on rights awareness, job readiness, language development, and personal growth, fostering empowerment and independence.
- Know Your Rights workshops equip refugees and asylum seekers with practical knowledge about their legal entitlements and protections, delivered in accessible, multilingual formats.
- Collaborative safety initiatives include our close partnership with Northumbria Police and local agencies during the August riots, ensuring a coordinated crisis response and building community trust.

Together, these services establish a comprehensive path from vulnerability towards empowerment, dignity, and full participation in community life.



## Context and Key Challenges

In 2024, the UK faced sustained economic pressures as inflation remained persistently above the Bank of England’s 2% target. Rising costs across food, energy, and utilities exacerbated household financial strain, driving many families further into deprivation

and intensifying the ongoing cost of living crisis. By the end of the year, over half of UK households reported escalating financial difficulties.

These economic hardships were compounded by an increasingly fraught political and social environment, culminating in the August riots. This unrest heightened trauma and threatened the fragile fabric of community cohesion. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups bore the brunt of these shocks, facing increased insecurity amid systemic uncertainties.

The constant arrival of new refugee and asylum-seeking families in 2024, with over 108,000 asylum claims made, the highest on record since 1979, meant that demand for support and services remained consistently high throughout the year. With a large number being dispersed in the North East region, we had multiple contacts from across the area, including Durham and Stockton, reflecting broad regional need.

Peace of Mind CIO responded with agility and resolve, expanding hardship interventions and mental health support services while enhancing digital access to bridge information and service gaps. We intensified rights education and advocacy programmes to empower individuals navigating complex systems under stressful circumstances. Our close partnership with Nicola Turnbull from Northumbria Police enabled a coordinated protection strategy for vulnerable populations during periods of unrest. Additionally, our collaboration with Gateshead Public Health strengthened holistic wellbeing initiatives, reinforcing efforts to nurture resilience and sustain integration.

Collectively, these measures reinforced community solidarity and safeguarded progress towards cohesion and inclusion during an exceptionally challenging year.

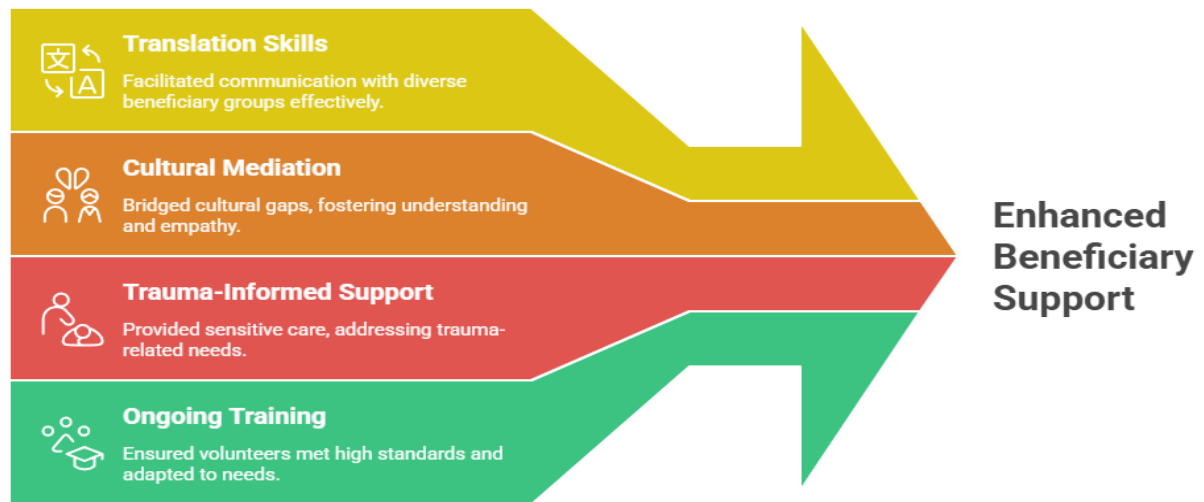
### Peace of Mind CIO Supports Refugees



## Volunteers: Pillars of Our Work

Our dedicated team of 28 volunteers brought invaluable skills and compassion, particularly in translation, cultural mediation, and trauma-informed support. Ongoing training upheld safeguarding standards and enriched volunteer capacity to engage meaningfully with complex beneficiary needs.

### Volunteers' Impact on Community Support



## Partnership and Advocacy

Peace of Mind CIO plays a vital role in regional and national advocacy networks. Key collaborative highlights include:

- Strategic partnerships with Gateshead Public Health, Housing and Education Departments, and local charities addressing food justice and child poverty.
- Engagement with asylum system reform coalitions advocating for fair treatment based on lived experience.
- Work alongside Northumbria Police during the riots to safeguard community wellbeing, enhance trust, and restore safety.
- Contribution to regional poverty and inclusion summits, influencing policy and practice for vulnerable populations.

## Community Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout 2024, Peace of Mind CIO undertook a range of important initiatives to strengthen community cohesion, highlight the contributions of refugees, and encourage cultural understanding. Our Refugee Week celebrations provided a vibrant opportunity to raise awareness of the invaluable role refugees play in our society, fostering a spirit of inclusion and collective appreciation.

We organised Gateshead's first inclusive Warm Space Iftar, bringing together diverse communities in a shared setting that promoted unity and cultural exchange. Our lifesaving skills workshops offered essential safety training to parents, while children took part in supervised recreational activities, creating safe environments for learning and social interaction during a period of increased community tension.

Central to our empowerment work are the "Know Your Rights" workshops, held in several languages. These sessions provide clear and accessible information on immigration laws, enabling refugees and asylum seekers to navigate systems with confidence and assert their entitlements.

On a broader scale, we contributed to national advocacy campaigns such as the Warm Welcome initiative and championed reforms to the asylum system, translating local experiences into wider policy change.

## **Visits and Key Stakeholders**

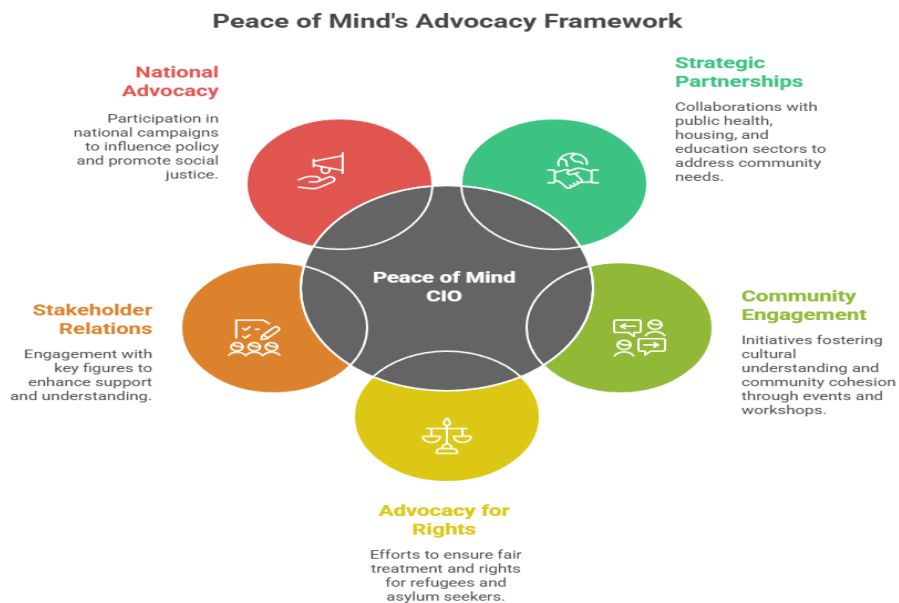
- Nitin Shukla, Programme Lead for Hate and Equality at Northumbria Police, offered valuable guidance on promoting inclusivity and community cohesion, especially following the disturbances in August.
- Mayor Kath McCartney engaged directly with community members, listening to their stories and offering hope through genuine connection.
- Councillors Kathryn Donovan, Denise Robson, and Kathryn Henderson have been active supporters, regularly visiting our drop-in sessions, providing donations, and maintaining strong relationships with the people we support.
- Peter Udall, Strategic Director for Economy, Innovation and Growth, toured our Warm Space to gain a deeper understanding of the practical support we offer during times of crisis.

## **Broader Engagement and Advocacy**

- Inspired by leaders such as Amanda Bailey of the North East Child Poverty Commission and Louise Jones, founder of Support and Grow NE, Peace of Mind

CIO integrates humanist values into its advocacy, focusing on addressing the underlying causes of poverty and promoting social justice.

- Participation in the Gateshead Food Summit enabled us to shape discussions on food justice, community health, and local economic resilience.
- Our active role at the North East Child Poverty Summit reinforced our dedication to tackling entrenched regional inequalities, with a strong focus on children's wellbeing.
- To enhance organisational capacity, our senior leadership completed the "Lead the Way" programme, funded by the Virgin Money Foundation. This training has strengthened our strategic planning, adaptive leadership, and long-term impact.
- At the national level, Peace of Mind CIO joined a coalition of over 300 organisations campaigning for urgent reform of the asylum system, advocating for policies that uphold human dignity and fairness within the immigration process.



## Impact

- Deepened understanding of poverty's effects on vulnerable communities, encouraging compassionate policy reforms.
- Advanced conversations on food justice, public health, and economic inclusion through regional summits.
- Reinforced inclusivity, diversity, and community integration through local stakeholder engagement.

- Provided vital aid including food, clothing, toys, educational materials, and hygiene items to more than 2,400 families and individuals.
- Contributed to systemic reform proposals ensuring fair and humane treatment for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Celebrated cultural richness through Refugee Week and other community events.
- Supported children with school uniforms, recreational activities, and confidence-building opportunities.
- Prioritised safety and mental wellbeing during times of increased risk, helping communities recover and flourish.
- Increased visibility and credibility nationally and locally through awards, recognition, and media coverage.

## Achievements and Recognition

- Refugee Support Organisation of the Year 2024 in North East England.
- Best Refugee-Led Charity 2023, awarded by SME Northern Enterprise for leadership, innovation, and impact.
- Featured prominently in the 2024 Warm Welcome Campaign Impact Report, showcasing our community-driven approach and best practice.

### Top Achievements of Peace of Mind CIO

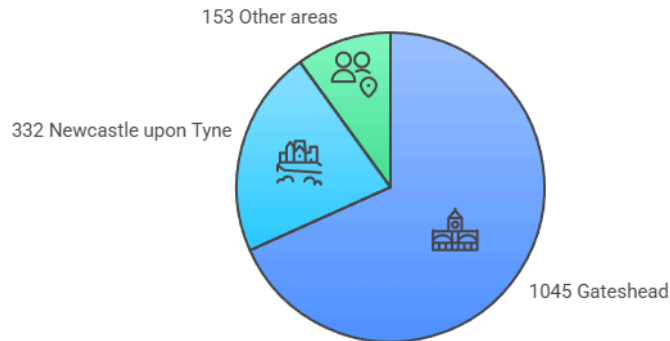


## Impact in Numbers

## The Number of Families and Individuals Supported in 2024

- Gateshead: 1,045
- Newcastle upon Tyne: 332
- Other areas: 153

**Distribution of Supported Households by Region in 2024  
(households)**



In 2024, Peace of Mind CIO proudly supported 1,530 separate households, representing 4,778 individuals from 39 diverse nationalities across Gateshead, Newcastle, and surrounding communities. This amounted to 8,372 contact episodes throughout the year, reflecting the significant and growing need for both emotional and practical support.

Our comprehensive support package included welfare and benefits advice, assistance with form-filling, homelessness support, emergency food and hygiene supplies, weather-appropriate clothing, school uniforms, newborn essentials, baby buggies, household items, and small furniture pieces.

In 2024, we distributed:

- 5,340 emergency food parcels
- 2,309 hot meals through our Warm Space initiative
- 2,638 hygiene parcels

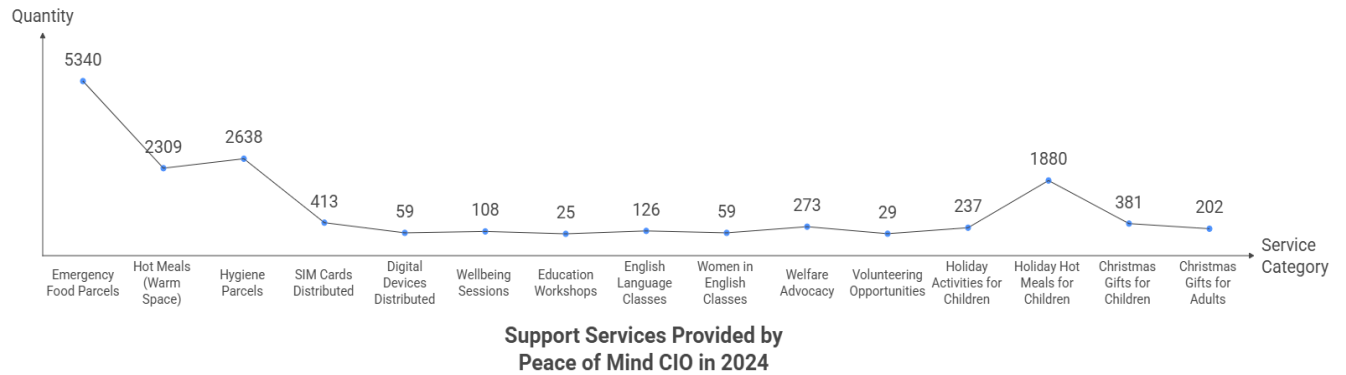
Peace of Mind CIO supported individuals from 39 nationalities during the past year.



## Our Year in Numbers

- 8,372 contact episodes recorded across our services
- 4,778 individuals supported directly or indirectly
- 413 SIM cards and 59 digital devices distributed to reduce isolation
- 108 wellbeing sessions focusing on mental health, peer support, and emotional resilience
- 25 education and skills-building workshops promoting empowerment and integration
- 126 individuals supported to learn English through weekly conversational classes
- 59 women attended English language classes
- 273 individuals received direct welfare advocacy to secure access to services and protect rights
- 29 young people supported through volunteering opportunities
- 237 refugee and asylum-seeking children engaged in holiday activities addressing hunger and social isolation
- 1,880 hot meals provided to children during the Christmas, Easter, and summer holidays when school meals were unavailable





## Christmas Support 2024

During the festive season, we ensured 381 children woke up on Christmas Day with a gift of their own, helping them feel included and valued alongside their peers. Additionally, 202 adults received Christmas gifts and food hampers, bringing much-needed relief and joy during this challenging time of the year.

## Beneficiary Voices

Our beneficiaries' words reveal the profound impact of our work:

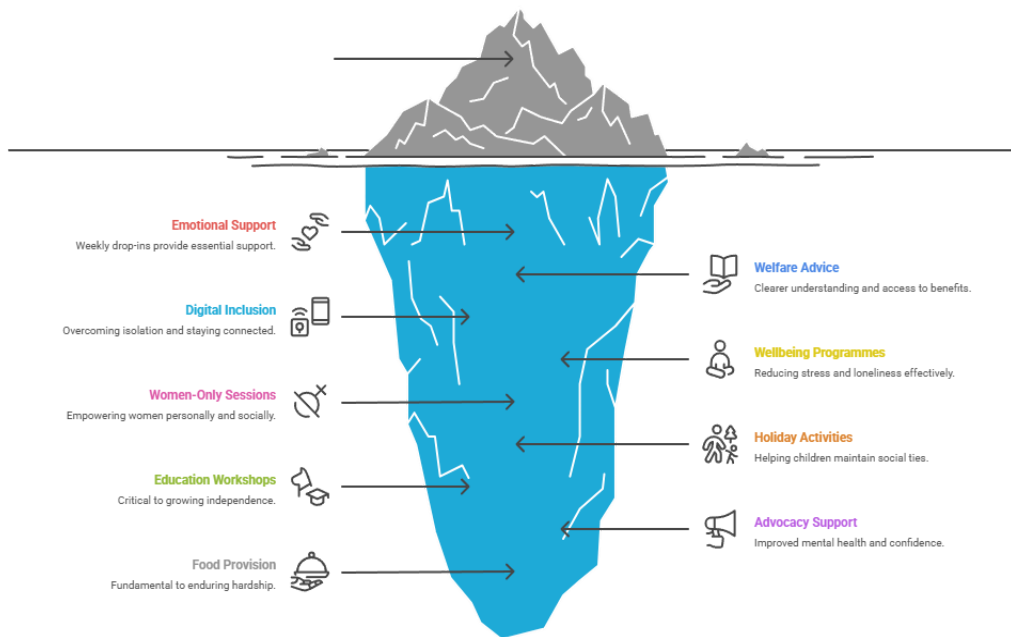
- "During the riots, Peace of Mind's team was there like a shield, helping me feel safe when everything around was uncertain."
- "Learning about my rights here helped me gain confidence. I now know how to reach out for help."
- "Thanks to the digital support, I was able to connect with my children overseas and access healthcare appointments online."
- "The wellbeing sessions gave me a place to share my worries and find strength in others who understand."
- "The food parcels and warm meals kept my family fed when money was tight. It meant more than just food; it meant care."
- "Volunteering here has helped me heal, learn, and give back. It has changed my life."

## Survey Findings 2024

Our latest survey data shines light on evolving needs and the deepening trust in our services:

- 97% agreed that weekly drop-ins provide essential emotional and practical support essential to their wellbeing.
- 95% reported that welfare advice gave them clearer understanding and better access to benefits and healthcare.
- 93% valued digital inclusion initiatives as key to overcoming isolation and staying connected.
- 90% credited wellbeing programmes with reducing stress and loneliness.
- 89% of women said women-only sessions empowered them personally and socially.
- 89% felt holiday activities helped children maintain social ties and feel part of the community.
- 85% cited education and skills workshops as critical to their growing independence.
- 83% confirmed that advocacy support improved mental health and confidence.
- 80% underscored culturally appropriate food provision as fundamental to enduring hardship.

Deepening Trust in Services Unveils Evolving Needs.



## Looking Ahead to 2025

Our vision for 2025 is to deepen our holistic support for refugees and asylum seekers through intensified hardship relief, empowerment-focused education, expanded community cohesion initiatives, and stronger advocacy. We will continue to build on our

trusted partnerships and cultivate lived experience voices in governance and strategy, creating an even more inclusive North East where everyone belongs and thrives.

## Conclusion

In 2024, a year shaped by economic hardship and social unrest, Peace of Mind CIO stood as a beacon of hope, dignity, and practical support. Our strengthened services, dedicated volunteers, and strategic collaborations, especially with Northumbria Police and local agencies, have safeguarded lives and nurtured integration. We remain committed to advancing a community where refugees and asylum seekers can rebuild with confidence, knowing their rights, accessing essential support, and feeling truly welcome. We thank all partners, supporters, and our community for making this vital work possible.

### Peace of Mind CIO - 2024

The infographic consists of four vertical columns, each with a colored header circle containing a letter, a smaller icon circle, and a corresponding colored rectangular box. The columns are: 1. Green: Letter 'S', icon of three people, box titled 'Dedicated Teamwork'. 2. Red: Letter 'W', icon of a person with a gear, box titled 'High Demand'. 3. Light Green: Letter 'O', icon of a plant, box titled 'Expanded Support'. 4. Orange: Letter 'T', icon of a cloud with rain, box titled 'Systemic Uncertainties'.

Letter	Icon	Section Title	Sub-headers	List Items
S	Three people	Dedicated Teamwork	Skilled volunteers and partnerships	Skilled Volunteers, Strong Partnerships, Community Engagement, Holistic Support
W	Person with gear	High Demand	Consistently high service demand	Overwhelmed by demand, Economic Hardship, Social unrest
O	Plant	Expanded Support	Intensify hardship relief and education	Holistic Support, Community Cohesion, Stronger Advocacy
T	Cloud with rain	Systemic Uncertainties	Economic pressures and social unrest	Economic Pressures, Social Unrest, Asylum System Strain



**Peace of Mind CIO**  
**Financial Statements**  
**For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

**Charity Number: 1194752**

**Registered Office:**

Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Date CIO registered:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Core Purpose of CIO:**

The objectives of the CIO are to relieve the needs of those granted refugee status or those seeking asylum and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle, and the surrounding areas by:

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**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar  
Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi  
Tanveer Shuja  
Mahnoor Mansoor  
Babar Sultan – appointed 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on 17th October 2025. It is signed by Rifit Siddiqi on behalf of the board.

## Financial Summary

Income of £288,231 was received during the reporting period, of which £258,891(90%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £221,126 a surplus of £67,105 was retained and carried forward to 2025.

Capital & Reserves brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 were £164,436, and with a surplus of £67,105 generated in 2024, the balance carried forward at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 is £231,541, of which £130,139 is restricted funds and £42,500 allocated funds.

The restricted funds are represented by:

- Gateshead Borough Council: £32,141
- Tyne & Wear Community Foundation: £21,375
- Virgin Money Foundation: £35,028
- Bauer Radio – Cash for Kids: £2,575
- Prism Gift: £17,800
- Connected Voice: £8,560
- Good Things Foundation: £3,000
- Bernicia Foundation: £7,160
- Lloyds Bank Foundation: £2,500

The allocated funds at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 are as follows:

- Women's Empowerment: £20,000
- Economic Inclusion: £15,000
- Individual Hardship (Asylum seekers): £7,500

This leaves a balance of £58,902 unrestricted funds, which is in line with the charity's policy of keeping reserves of around 25% of unrestricted annual spend (including restricted funds).

## Financial Statement: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### Income and Expenditure

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
<b>Income</b>			
Grants	£258,891		£258,891
Donations		£29,340	£29,340
	<b>£258,891</b>	<b>£29,340</b>	<b>£288,231</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Beneficiary support			£126,214
Volunteer Expenses			£5,295
Premises Costs			£20,957
Facilitator Fees			£66,906
Professional Fees			£1,755
			<b>£221,127</b>
<b>Surplus for 2024</b>			<b>£67,105</b>

### Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

<b>Net Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank	£235,541	
Less: Creditors	£4,000	
		<b>£231,541</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>		
Surplus b/fwd 1st January 2024	£164,436	
Surplus generated in 2024	£67,105	
Balance c/fwd 31st December 2024		<b>£231,541</b>





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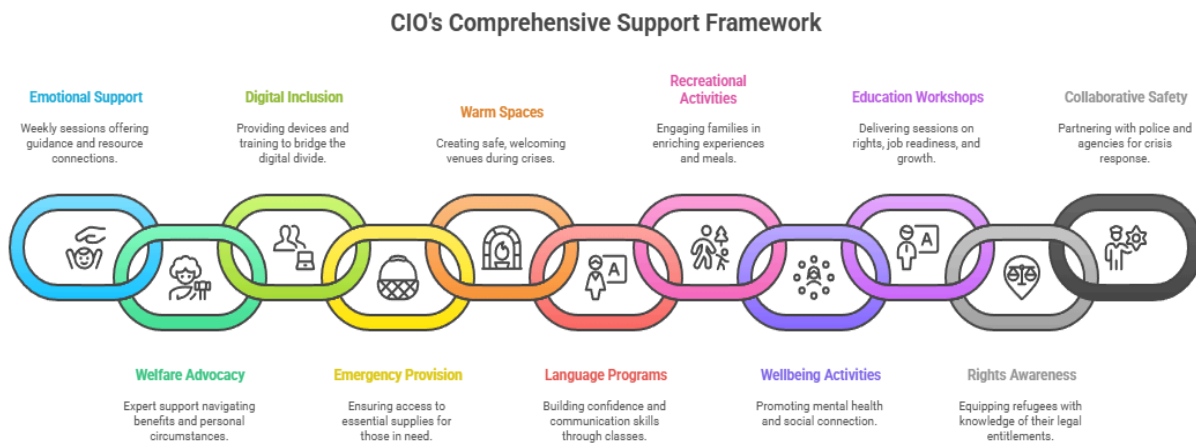
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These economic hardships were compounded by an increasingly fraught political and social environment, culminating in the August riots. This unrest heightened trauma and threatened the fragile fabric of community cohesion. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups bore the brunt of these shocks, facing increased insecurity amid systemic uncertainties.

The constant arrival of new refugee and asylum-seeking families in 2024, with over 108,000 asylum claims made, the highest on record since 1979, meant that demand for support and services remained consistently high throughout the year. With a large number being dispersed in the North East region, we had multiple contacts from across the area, including Durham and Stockton, reflecting broad regional need.

Peace of Mind CIO responded with agility and resolve, expanding hardship interventions and mental health support services while enhancing digital access to bridge information and service gaps. We intensified rights education and advocacy programmes to empower individuals navigating complex systems under stressful circumstances. Our close partnership with Nicola Turnbull from Northumbria Police enabled a coordinated protection strategy for vulnerable populations during periods of unrest. Additionally, our collaboration with Gateshead Public Health strengthened holistic wellbeing initiatives, reinforcing efforts to nurture resilience and sustain integration.

Collectively, these measures reinforced community solidarity and safeguarded progress towards cohesion and inclusion during an exceptionally challenging year.

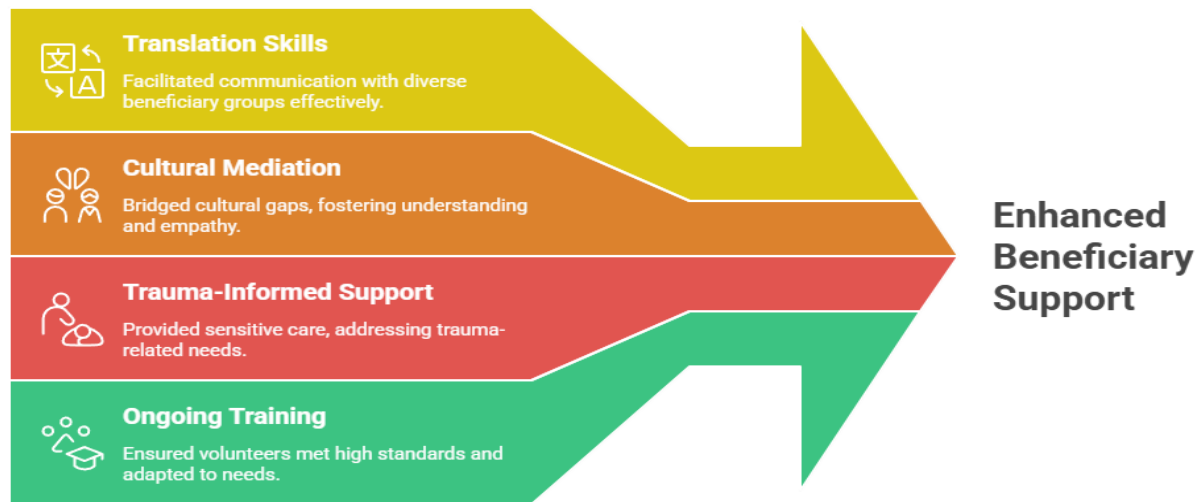
### Peace of Mind CIO Supports Refugees



## Volunteers: Pillars of Our Work

Our dedicated team of 28 volunteers brought invaluable skills and compassion, particularly in translation, cultural mediation, and trauma-informed support. Ongoing training upheld safeguarding standards and enriched volunteer capacity to engage meaningfully with complex beneficiary needs.

### Volunteers' Impact on Community Support



## Partnership and Advocacy

Peace of Mind CIO plays a vital role in regional and national advocacy networks. Key collaborative highlights include:

- Strategic partnerships with Gateshead Public Health, Housing and Education Departments, and local charities addressing food justice and child poverty.
- Engagement with asylum system reform coalitions advocating for fair treatment based on lived experience.
- Work alongside Northumbria Police during the riots to safeguard community wellbeing, enhance trust, and restore safety.
- Contribution to regional poverty and inclusion summits, influencing policy and practice for vulnerable populations.

## Community Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout 2024, Peace of Mind CIO undertook a range of important initiatives to strengthen community cohesion, highlight the contributions of refugees, and encourage cultural understanding. Our Refugee Week celebrations provided a vibrant opportunity to raise awareness of the invaluable role refugees play in our society, fostering a spirit of inclusion and collective appreciation.

We organised Gateshead's first inclusive Warm Space Iftar, bringing together diverse communities in a shared setting that promoted unity and cultural exchange. Our lifesaving skills workshops offered essential safety training to parents, while children took part in supervised recreational activities, creating safe environments for learning and social interaction during a period of increased community tension.

Central to our empowerment work are the "Know Your Rights" workshops, held in several languages. These sessions provide clear and accessible information on immigration laws, enabling refugees and asylum seekers to navigate systems with confidence and assert their entitlements.

On a broader scale, we contributed to national advocacy campaigns such as the Warm Welcome initiative and championed reforms to the asylum system, translating local experiences into wider policy change.

## **Visits and Key Stakeholders**

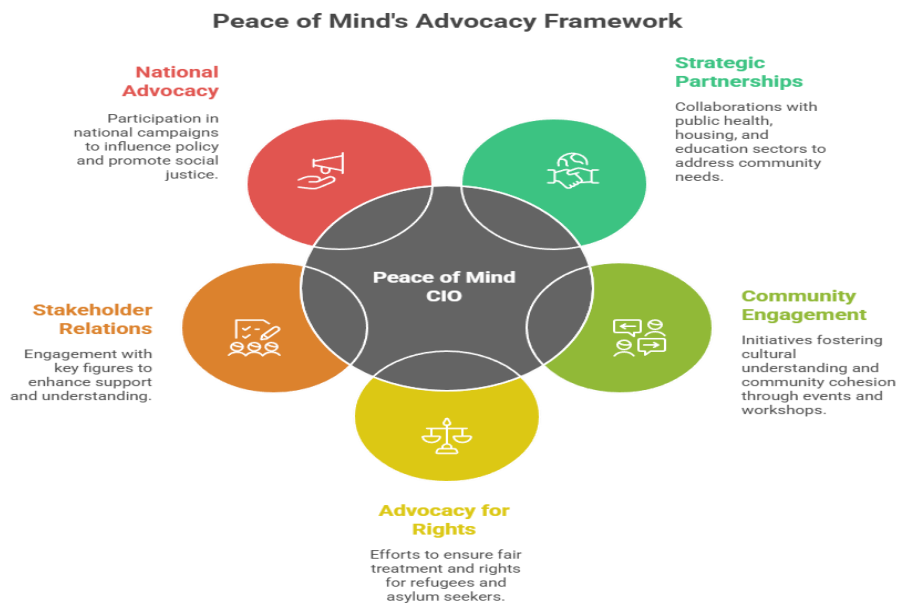
- Nitin Shukla, Programme Lead for Hate and Equality at Northumbria Police, offered valuable guidance on promoting inclusivity and community cohesion, especially following the disturbances in August.
- Mayor Kath McCartney engaged directly with community members, listening to their stories and offering hope through genuine connection.
- Councillors Kathryn Donovan, Denise Robson, and Kathryn Henderson have been active supporters, regularly visiting our drop-in sessions, providing donations, and maintaining strong relationships with the people we support.
- Peter Udall, Strategic Director for Economy, Innovation and Growth, toured our Warm Space to gain a deeper understanding of the practical support we offer during times of crisis.

## **Broader Engagement and Advocacy**

- Inspired by leaders such as Amanda Bailey of the North East Child Poverty Commission and Louise Jones, founder of Support and Grow NE, Peace of Mind

CIO integrates humanist values into its advocacy, focusing on addressing the underlying causes of poverty and promoting social justice.

- Participation in the Gateshead Food Summit enabled us to shape discussions on food justice, community health, and local economic resilience.
- Our active role at the North East Child Poverty Summit reinforced our dedication to tackling entrenched regional inequalities, with a strong focus on children's wellbeing.
- To enhance organisational capacity, our senior leadership completed the "Lead the Way" programme, funded by the Virgin Money Foundation. This training has strengthened our strategic planning, adaptive leadership, and long-term impact.
- At the national level, Peace of Mind CIO joined a coalition of over 300 organisations campaigning for urgent reform of the asylum system, advocating for policies that uphold human dignity and fairness within the immigration process.



## Impact

- Deepened understanding of poverty's effects on vulnerable communities, encouraging compassionate policy reforms.
- Advanced conversations on food justice, public health, and economic inclusion through regional summits.
- Reinforced inclusivity, diversity, and community integration through local stakeholder engagement.

- Provided vital aid including food, clothing, toys, educational materials, and hygiene items to more than 2,400 families and individuals.
- Contributed to systemic reform proposals ensuring fair and humane treatment for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Celebrated cultural richness through Refugee Week and other community events.
- Supported children with school uniforms, recreational activities, and confidence-building opportunities.
- Prioritised safety and mental wellbeing during times of increased risk, helping communities recover and flourish.
- Increased visibility and credibility nationally and locally through awards, recognition, and media coverage.

## Achievements and Recognition

- Refugee Support Organisation of the Year 2024 in North East England.
- Best Refugee-Led Charity 2023, awarded by SME Northern Enterprise for leadership, innovation, and impact.
- Featured prominently in the 2024 Warm Welcome Campaign Impact Report, showcasing our community-driven approach and best practice.

### Top Achievements of Peace of Mind CIO

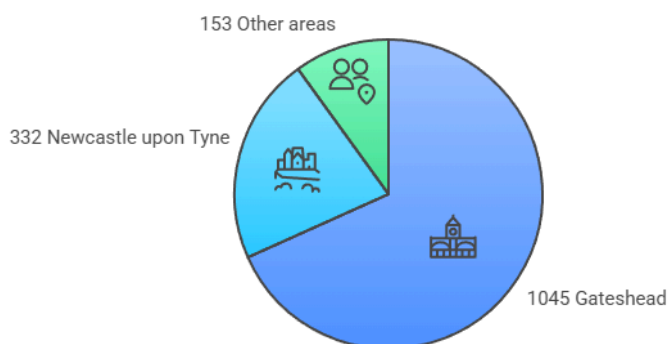


## Impact in Numbers

## The Number of Families and Individuals Supported in 2024

- Gateshead: 1,045
- Newcastle upon Tyne: 332
- Other areas: 153

**Distribution of Supported Households by Region in 2024  
(households)**



In 2024, Peace of Mind CIO proudly supported 1,530 separate households, representing 4,778 individuals from 39 diverse nationalities across Gateshead, Newcastle, and surrounding communities. This amounted to 8,372 contact episodes throughout the year, reflecting the significant and growing need for both emotional and practical support.

Our comprehensive support package included welfare and benefits advice, assistance with form-filling, homelessness support, emergency food and hygiene supplies, weather-appropriate clothing, school uniforms, newborn essentials, baby buggies, household items, and small furniture pieces.

In 2024, we distributed:

- 5,340 emergency food parcels
- 2,309 hot meals through our Warm Space initiative
- 2,638 hygiene parcels

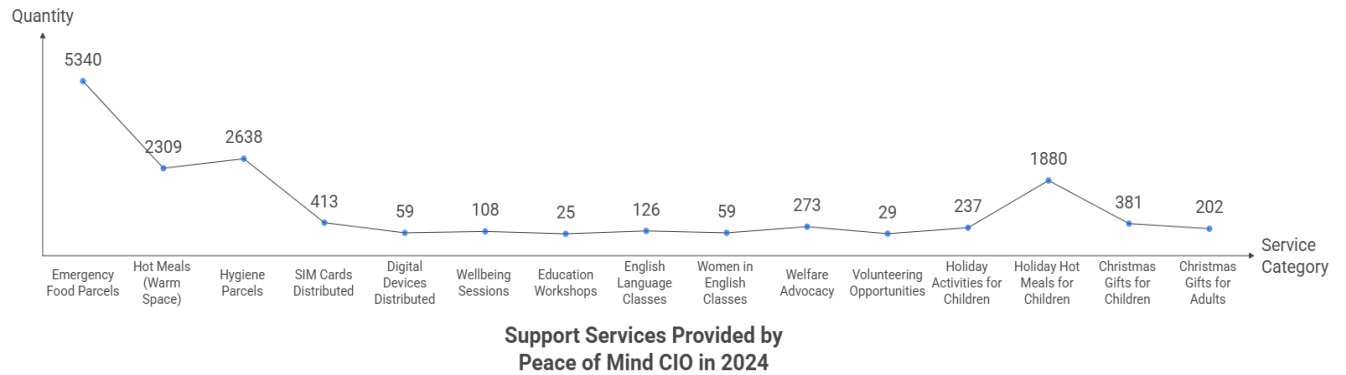
Peace of Mind CIO supported individuals from 39 nationalities during the past year.



## Our Year in Numbers

- 8,372 contact episodes recorded across our services
- 4,778 individuals supported directly or indirectly
- 413 SIM cards and 59 digital devices distributed to reduce isolation
- 108 wellbeing sessions focusing on mental health, peer support, and emotional resilience
- 25 education and skills-building workshops promoting empowerment and integration
- 126 individuals supported to learn English through weekly conversational classes
- 59 women attended English language classes
- 273 individuals received direct welfare advocacy to secure access to services and protect rights
- 29 young people supported through volunteering opportunities
- 237 refugee and asylum-seeking children engaged in holiday activities addressing hunger and social isolation
- 1,880 hot meals provided to children during the Christmas, Easter, and summer holidays when school meals were unavailable





## Christmas Support 2024

During the festive season, we ensured 381 children woke up on Christmas Day with a gift of their own, helping them feel included and valued alongside their peers. Additionally, 202 adults received Christmas gifts and food hampers, bringing much-needed relief and joy during this challenging time of the year.

## Beneficiary Voices

Our beneficiaries' words reveal the profound impact of our work:

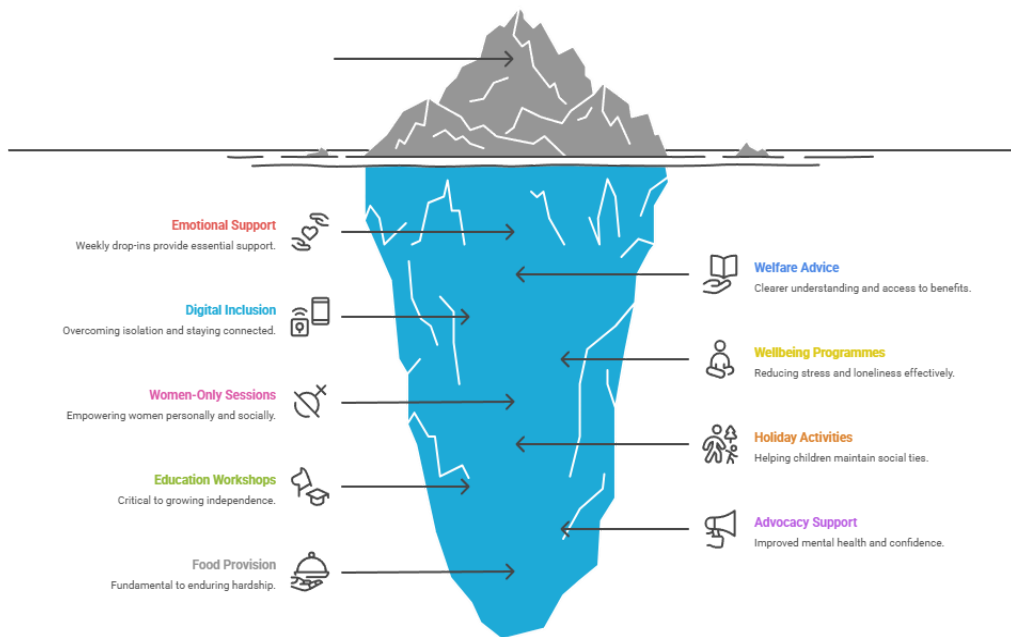
- "During the riots, Peace of Mind's team was there like a shield, helping me feel safe when everything around was uncertain."
- "Learning about my rights here helped me gain confidence. I now know how to reach out for help."
- "Thanks to the digital support, I was able to connect with my children overseas and access healthcare appointments online."
- "The wellbeing sessions gave me a place to share my worries and find strength in others who understand."
- "The food parcels and warm meals kept my family fed when money was tight. It meant more than just food; it meant care."
- "Volunteering here has helped me heal, learn, and give back. It has changed my life."

## Survey Findings 2024

Our latest survey data shines light on evolving needs and the deepening trust in our services:

- 97% agreed that weekly drop-ins provide essential emotional and practical support essential to their wellbeing.
- 95% reported that welfare advice gave them clearer understanding and better access to benefits and healthcare.
- 93% valued digital inclusion initiatives as key to overcoming isolation and staying connected.
- 90% credited wellbeing programmes with reducing stress and loneliness.
- 89% of women said women-only sessions empowered them personally and socially.
- 89% felt holiday activities helped children maintain social ties and feel part of the community.
- 85% cited education and skills workshops as critical to their growing independence.
- 83% confirmed that advocacy support improved mental health and confidence.
- 80% underscored culturally appropriate food provision as fundamental to enduring hardship.

Deepening Trust in Services Unveils Evolving Needs.



## Looking Ahead to 2025

Our vision for 2025 is to deepen our holistic support for refugees and asylum seekers through intensified hardship relief, empowerment-focused education, expanded community cohesion initiatives, and stronger advocacy. We will continue to build on our

trusted partnerships and cultivate lived experience voices in governance and strategy, creating an even more inclusive North East where everyone belongs and thrives.

## Conclusion

In 2024, a year shaped by economic hardship and social unrest, Peace of Mind CIO stood as a beacon of hope, dignity, and practical support. Our strengthened services, dedicated volunteers, and strategic collaborations, especially with Northumbria Police and local agencies, have safeguarded lives and nurtured integration. We remain committed to advancing a community where refugees and asylum seekers can rebuild with confidence, knowing their rights, accessing essential support, and feeling truly welcome. We thank all partners, supporters, and our community for making this vital work possible.

### Peace of Mind CIO - 2024

The infographic consists of four vertical columns, each with a colored header circle, a sub-header icon, a title, a brief description, and a bulleted list of points.

- Column 1 (Green):** Header circle with 'S'. Sub-header icon shows three people. Title: **Dedicated Teamwork**. Description: Skilled volunteers and partnerships. List: Skilled Volunteers, Strong Partnerships, Community Engagement, Holistic Support.
- Column 2 (Red):** Header circle with 'W'. Sub-header icon shows a person with a gear. Title: **High Demand**. Description: Consistently high service demand. List: Overwhelmed by demand, Economic Hardship, Social unrest.
- Column 3 (Light Green):** Header circle with 'O'. Sub-header icon shows a plant growing from roots. Title: **Expanded Support**. Description: Intensify hardship relief and education. List: Holistic Support, Community Cohesion, Stronger Advocacy.
- Column 4 (Orange):** Header circle with 'T'. Sub-header icon shows a lightning bolt and a cloud. Title: **Systemic Uncertainties**. Description: Economic pressures and social unrest. List: Economic Pressures, Social Unrest, Asylum System Strain.



**Peace of Mind CIO**  
**Financial Statements**  
**For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024**

**Charity Number: 1194752**

**Registered Office:**

Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Date CIO registered:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Core Purpose of CIO:**

The objectives of the CIO are to relieve the needs of those granted refugee status or those seeking asylum and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle, and the surrounding areas by:

- a) relieving poverty or financial hardship in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision of advice, translating, education, emergency food packs, small grants, household, and personal care items.
- b) the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupations with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances.

**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar  
Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi  
Tanveer Shuja  
Mahnoor Mansoor  
Babar Sultan – appointed 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on 17th October 2025. It is signed by Rifit Siddiqi on behalf of the board.

## Financial Summary

Income of £288,231 was received during the reporting period, of which £258,891(90%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £221,126 a surplus of £67,105 was retained and carried forward to 2025.

Capital & Reserves brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 were £164,436, and with a surplus of £67,105 generated in 2024, the balance carried forward at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 is £231,541, of which £130,139 is restricted funds and £42,500 allocated funds.

The restricted funds are represented by:

- Gateshead Borough Council: £32,141
- Tyne & Wear Community Foundation: £21,375
- Virgin Money Foundation: £35,028
- Bauer Radio – Cash for Kids: £2,575
- Prism Gift: £17,800
- Connected Voice: £8,560
- Good Things Foundation: £3,000
- Bernicia Foundation: £7,160
- Lloyds Bank Foundation: £2,500

The allocated funds at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 are as follows:

- Women's Empowerment: £20,000
- Economic Inclusion: £15,000
- Individual Hardship (Asylum seekers): £7,500

This leaves a balance of £58,902 unrestricted funds, which is in line with the charity's policy of keeping reserves of around 25% of unrestricted annual spend (including restricted funds).

## Financial Statement: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### Income and Expenditure

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
<b>Income</b>			
Grants	£258,891		£258,891
Donations		£29,340	£29,340
	<b>£258,891</b>	<b>£29,340</b>	<b>£288,231</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Beneficiary support			£126,214
Volunteer Expenses			£5,295
Premises Costs			£20,957
Facilitator Fees			£66,906
Professional Fees			£1,755
			<b>£221,127</b>
<b>Surplus for 2024</b>			<b>£67,105</b>

### Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

<b>Net Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank	£235,541	
Less: Creditors	£4,000	
		<b>£231,541</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>		
Surplus b/fwd 1st January 2024	£164,436	
Surplus generated in 2024	£67,105	
Balance c/fwd 31st December 2024		<b>£231,541</b>





## Independent Examiners Report

### **Independent Examiner's Report to Peace of Mind CIO**

I report on the accounts of Peace of Mind CIO for the year 1st January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, which are summarised in the charity's 2024 Annual Report.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO**

The Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO are responsible for keeping proper financial records, including invoices, receipts and bank and other income statements. My responsibility is to review these, along with the accounts and state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Peace of Mind CIO and verification of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO concerning any such matters.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention, which gives me reasonable cause to believe that the requirements to keep proper accounting records and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records have been fully met.

Signed:

Name: David Beavis

Relevant qualification: Independent Accountant

Address: Pinetree Business Services, Birtley Business Centre, Station Lane, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 1QT

Date: 27/10/2025

**PEACE OF MIND CIO**

England & Wales - Charity number 1194752

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# Accounts

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**2023 Annual Report & Financial Statements**

# Peace of Mind Annual Report

January 2023 to December 2023

We are pleased to report that Peace of Mind has successfully continued its mission to support refugee and asylum-seeking (RAS) families and individuals throughout 2023, despite significant challenges. Our work, aimed at alleviating poverty, providing practical assistance, and fostering community integration, has grown in scope and impact over the last year. The ongoing economic crisis, cost of living pressures, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have disproportionately affected the communities we serve, driving many of our beneficiaries into deeper hardship. Nonetheless, our continued presence and expanded support services have been a lifeline for many.

## **A Message from Our Board of Trustees:**

As Trustees, we are acutely aware of the evolving landscape of challenges facing the refugee and asylum-seeking community in the North East. The past year has witnessed an unprecedented convergence of global crises, economic pressures, and policy changes that have significantly impacted our beneficiaries. Despite these formidable challenges, we are immensely proud of the resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment demonstrated by our staff, volunteers, and the community we serve.

Our organisation has not merely responded to immediate needs but has taken proactive steps to address systemic issues through advocacy and partnership-building. We have strengthened our governance structures, diversified our funding streams, and invested in capacity-building to ensure the long-term sustainability of our vital services.

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing compassionate, effective support to refugees and asylum seekers. Concurrently, we are working towards broader societal changes that promote inclusion, dignity, and equal opportunities for all. Our efforts are underpinned by our unique position as a refugee-led charity, which allows us to truly understand and address the needs of our community.

The achievements outlined in this report are a testament to the collective effort of our entire community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed to our

work, including our dedicated volunteers, staff, partners, and supporters. Your continued support enables us to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who have sought safety and a new beginning in our region.

As we navigate the challenges ahead, we remain inspired by the resilience of those we serve and motivated by the positive impact of our work. Together, we will continue to build a more inclusive and supportive community for refugees and asylum seekers in the North East.

### **Activities:**

- Weekly drop-in sessions offering support, advice, and signposting
- Emergency food, clothing, and hygiene parcels distribution
- Warm Space provision
- English conversation classes (Basic, Advanced, and Women-Only)
- Digital inclusion initiatives
- Holiday activities for children, including culturally appropriate hot meals
- Training and workshops
- One-to-one support
- Newborn baby equipment and household items
- Advocacy support

### **Key Challenges:**

The RAS (Refugee and Asylum Seeking) community continues to grapple with severe disadvantages, which has only been exacerbated by current economic conditions. The cost of living crisis has pushed many families into poverty, forcing them to make impossible choices between basic needs like heating, eating, and shelter. Due to their precarious legal and socio-economic status, many refugee and asylum-seeking individuals do not have access to the same level of support as others, leaving them more vulnerable to deprivation and exploitation.

In 2023, the North East of England faced particular challenges in supporting its RAS community. The region saw a significant increase in asylum seekers, with the North East currently hosting ten times as many asylum seekers and refugees as the South East and South West of England. This influx, coupled with the dispersal of vulnerable populations to already deprived areas with limited resources, has likely worsened their health outcomes.

The value of asylum support payments fell by 29% in real terms between 2000 and 2023, despite nominal increases. This reduction in financial support, combined with

rising costs of essential items, has severely impacted the ability of asylum seekers to meet their basic needs. Many struggle to afford formula milk for children (85%), nappies (88%), toiletries and cleaning products (89%), medicine for children (90%), and culturally appropriate food (93%).

Mental health issues have become increasingly prevalent, with 61% of asylum seekers experiencing serious mental distress. The ongoing uncertainty of the asylum process, coupled with the trauma of their past experiences, has contributed to this mental health crisis. Refugees are five times more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population.

One poignant example of the impact of this crisis is the story of a young mother who requested baby milk as a Christmas gift for her infant—an emblematic reflection of the hardship many in our community are experiencing. Similarly, a homeless beneficiary shared their struggle with food insecurity, recounting that the food provided by our services was the first meal they had had in five days. These stories highlight the extreme vulnerability faced by many in the RAS community, who, despite their resilience, are battling entrenched poverty.

### **Volunteers:**

Our volunteer team experienced fluctuations in the first quarter of 2023, initially decreasing from 24 to 19 members in the first quarter as some individuals moved into paid work and others were relocated by housing providers. However, we successfully recruited new volunteers, resulting in an overall growth to 28 members by year's end. This expansion has significantly enhanced our capacity to provide support. Our weekly drop-in team, comprising 11 dedicated volunteers, collectively speaks 10 different languages, which greatly reduces our interpreting and translation expenses while ensuring effective communication with our diverse beneficiary group. This resilience and growth in our volunteer base reflect both the challenges faced by the refugee and asylum-seeking community and the strong commitment of individuals to support our cause.

### **Partnerships:**

We maintain robust partnerships with a wide array of organisations and agencies across the North East. Our collaborative network includes local government bodies such as Gateshead Council, its Refugee Resettlement Team, Housing Department, Youth Council, Education Department, and Public Health team. We also work closely with charitable organisations like Citizens Advice Gateshead, the Regional Refugee

Forum, Feeding Families, The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, Social Justice Lass, Asylum Matters, Connected Voice, Mears (the designated housing provider for asylum seekers), Migrant Help, Support & Grow North East Charity and Gateshead Health Watch. This comprehensive coalition of partners enables us to deliver a holistic suite of emotional and practical support services to the refugee and asylum-seeking community, ensuring that we can address their diverse and complex needs effectively.

### **Achievements and Impact:**

2023 has been a year of significant achievement for Peace of Mind. We have expanded our reach and deepened our impact across a range of critical services, providing essential support to hundreds of families and individuals.

In 2023, Peace of Mind CIO continued to demonstrate its commitment to supporting the refugee and asylum-seeking (RAS) community, achieving significant recognition and making substantial contributions to the sector. Our key accomplishments include:

- 1. Award Recognition:**

Peace of Mind was honoured with the prestigious "Refugee-Led Community Organisation of the Year 2023 - North East England Award". This accolade recognises our dedicated efforts in supporting the RAS community and underscores the invaluable support we receive from the people of the North East. The award is featured in Acquisition International's winners list, highlighting our impact on a broader stage.

- 2. Warm Welcome Network Participation:**

We maintained our active involvement in the Warm Welcome Network, with our efforts being prominently featured in their annual report. This collaboration reinforces our commitment to providing a welcoming environment for refugees and asylum seekers.

- 3. Policy Influence and Advocacy:**

On 21st March 2023, Peace of Mind participated in the North East Local Engagement Hearing for the Commission on the Integration of Refugees. As one of the panellists, we represented the collective voice of the Gateshead RAS community, submitting evidence and recommendations to inform the Commission's report. This engagement aims to drive meaningful changes to the UK's Refugee and Asylum System, emphasising the importance of lived experience in shaping policy.

- 4. Media Recognition:**

Our organisation was featured in Connected Voice's Spring Magazine 2023. The

article highlighted the personal story of our volunteer, Mahnoor Mansoor, who eloquently described the transformative power of volunteering with Peace of Mind, both for personal mental health and in supporting others.

5. **Community Engagement:**

On 24th June, we celebrated Refugee Week 2023 in partnership with Gateshead City of Sanctuary. The event, themed around 'compassion', provided a platform for our refugee friends to express their perspectives on what compassion means to them, fostering understanding and connection within the community.



#### 6. Local Support and Donations:

We are grateful for the generous support we received throughout 2023, which included individual monetary donations and standing orders from our friends and supporters. Notably, we received a generous donation of £300 from local councillor Denise Robson and the Unite the Union NE/403/11 Branch Members on 13th January 2023. This contribution enabled us to provide essential emergency and hardship support to newly arrived members of the RAS community, exemplified by our ability to supply food for a family who lost their

Aspen Payment card over the Christmas period. Such acts of kindness are vital in helping us meet the immediate needs of those we serve, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have supported our mission.

These achievements reflect Peace of Mind's ongoing commitment to supporting the RAS community, advocating for systemic change, and fostering community integration. Our success is a testament to the dedication of our team, the support of our partners, and the generosity of the North East community. We remain grateful for this collaborative effort that enables us to continue our vital work in supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

### **The Number of Families and Individuals Supported in 2023:**

Gateshead: 932

Newcastle upon Tyne: 305

Other areas: 148+

This represents 2,232 individuals and over 8,000 contact episodes throughout 2023, reflecting the significant need for emotional and practical support. Our comprehensive support package included welfare and benefits advice, assistance with form-filling, homelessness support, emergency food and hygiene supplies, weather-appropriate clothing, school uniforms, newborn essentials, baby buggies, household items and small furniture pieces.

### **In 2023, we distributed:**

- 4,972 emergency food parcels
- 1,869 hot meals through our Warm Space initiative
- 2,425 hygiene parcels

Peace of Mind CIO supported individuals from 42 different nationalities during the past year.

### **Our Year in Numbers:**

- 8,000+ contact episodes
- 2,232 individuals supported directly or indirectly across our services
- 238 individuals supported with health and wellbeing issues
- 195 refugees and asylum seekers assisted through our advocacy support

- 110 individuals supported to learn English through our weekly conversational classes
- 64 women attended our English classes
- 318 Vodafone SIM cards distributed, supporting over 200 households to stay connected, providing an essential lifeline for many isolated families
- 32 young people supported with volunteering opportunities
- 224 refugee and asylum-seeking children supported through holiday activities, addressing holiday hunger and social isolation
- 2,310 hot meals provided to children during the Christmas, Easter, and summer holidays, offering vital nutrition when school-provided meals were unavailable

Our weekly drop-in sessions, offering emotional and practical support, remain at the core of our work. This year has been another exceptionally busy period, surpassing previous records in terms of demand and support provided. We have warmly welcomed new arrivals and implemented plans to address emerging issues created by the cost-of-living crisis.

### **Christmas Support 2023**

During the festive season, we ensured **368 children** woke up on Christmas day with a gift of their own, ensuring they didn't feel excluded or different from their peers. Additionally, **219 adults** received Christmas gifts and food hampers, providing them with much-needed relief and joy during this challenging time of year.

### **Beneficiary Feedback**

The feedback from our beneficiaries highlights the profound impact of our services on their lives. Here are a few of their heartfelt comments:

- *"Peace of Mind charity is like my home."*
- *"I feel safe when I am at Peace of Mind."*
- *"When you said: don't be afraid of asking for help. This made me very happy and relaxed. First time someone spoke to me so nicely."*
- *"Thank you, thank you for the food and toys. My children are so happy. We love the Peace of Mind Community."*
- *"I like meeting people from my country, it makes me feel happy and not alone."*

One particularly touching story came from a woman whose NASS section 95 support was stopped twice. She explained, *"If Peace of Mind was not there to support with weekly food parcels, my family, including three young children, would have starved to death. Thank you, Peace of Mind.:"*

## **Survey:**

We conducted a survey to better understand the needs and satisfaction of our RAS community. The key findings from the survey are as follows:

- **98%** were happy to receive advocacy support.
- **98%** were happy to receive culturally appropriate food, toiletries, and clothing support in their time of hardship/financial difficulty.
- **91%** were happy to have the opportunity to take part in wellbeing activities as a family with their children.
- **89%** were happy to receive befriending support and having someone to talk to about their concerns/needs.
- **89%** were happy to receive support around digital inclusion.
- **85%** were happy to access legal aid support through our referral process.
- **85%** were happy to receive information about their entitlement to free NHS services.

We also gathered data on specific challenges faced by our beneficiaries:

- **85%** struggle to afford formula milk for their children.
- **88%** struggle to afford nappies for their children.
- **89%** struggle to afford toiletries and cleaning products.
- **90%** struggle to buy medicine for their children.
- **93%** never have enough money to buy food, especially culturally appropriate food.
- **95%** struggle to afford the clothes they need, particularly winter clothing for children.
- **96%** struggle to buy secondary school uniforms and other supplies, including stationery.

These findings underscore the urgent need for continued support. Therefore, we will persist in providing relief through emergency assistance for food, clothing, toiletries, and baby items, as well as offering casework support to meet the immediate needs of new arrivals and those facing severe hardship.

## **Future Outlook**

The demand for our services has surged in 2024 as the challenges facing the RAS community continue to evolve amid ongoing economic uncertainty and social inequalities. Many families and individuals now require sustained, repeated support to combat homelessness, hunger, and isolation. We remain steadfast in our commitment to addressing these needs by expanding our core services—food, clothing, digital

inclusion, and emotional support—while also advocating for enhanced rights and assistance for the RAS community across the North East.

## **Conclusion**

2023 has been a year of both tremendous challenge and achievement for Peace of Mind. The communities we serve continue to face significant hardship, but thanks to our dedicated team, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our funders and partners, we have been able to provide a lifeline to thousands of vulnerable individuals and families.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so is our resolve. We remain committed to promoting dignity, inclusion, and hope for the RAS community, and we thank all those who have supported us in making this year's work possible.

Together, we will continue to create lasting change and provide essential services to those who need them most.

# Peace of Mind CIO

## Financial Statements

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31st December 2023

**Charity Number:** 1194752

**Registered Office:**

Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Date CIO Registered:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Core purpose of CIO:**

The objects of the CIO are to relieve the needs of those granted refugee status or those seeking asylum and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle, and the surrounding areas by:

- a) relieving poverty or financial hardship in particular, but not exclusively, by the provision of advice, translating, education, emergency food packs, small grants, household, and personal care items
- b) the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances.

**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar

Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi

Tanveer Shuja

Mahnoor Mansoor

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on 30th August 2024

## Financial Summary

Income of £237,608 was received during the reporting period, of which £214,810 (90%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £205,647, a surplus of £31,961 was retained and carried forward to 2024.

Capital & Reserves brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 were £132,475, and with a surplus of £31,961 generated in 2023, the balance carried forward at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 is £164,435, of which £74,500 (45%) is restricted funds. The restricted funds are represented by:

- Gateshead Borough Council: £12,537
- Tyne & Wear Community Foundation: £7,500
- Lloyds Bank Foundation: £25,000
- Groundwork UK: £1,463
- Whittington Charity: £20,000
- Power to Change: £8,000

From the unrestricted funds of £89,935 the Board of Trustees have allocated £41,000 to the following projects:

- Women's Empowerment: £20,000
- Economic Inclusion: £15,000
- Individual Hardship (Asylum applicants): £6,000

This leaves a balance of £48,935 unrestricted funds, which is in line with the charity's policy of keeping reserves of around 25% of current annual spend (including restricted funds).

## Financial Statement: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31st December 2023

<b>Income</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grants	214,810		214,810
Donations		22,798	22,798
	<b>£214,810</b>	<b>£22,798</b>	<b>£237,608</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Beneficiary support			113,242
Volunteer Expenses			1,879
Premises costs			12,799
Facilitator Fees			74,849
Professional costs			2,878
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>£205,647</b>
<b>Surplus for 2023</b>			<b>£31,961</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2023

<b>Net Assets</b>			
Cash at Bank		184,551	
Creditors		(20,115)	
			<b>£164,436</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>			
Surplus b/fwd 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023		132,475	
Surplus generated in 2023		31,961	
<b>Surplus c/fwd at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023</b>			<b>£164,436</b>

## Acknowledgements

The trustees would like to thank the following for their generous contributions during 2023.

Virgin Money Foundation  
Gateshead Council  
Rise North East  
Lloyds Bank Foundation  
Tyne & Wear Community Foundation  
J H Rausing Trust  
Groundwork UK  
Prism Gift Fund  
Power to Change  
Bauer Radio's Cash  
Fund for Human Need  
Whittington Charity  
Local Giving Ltd

And all those kind individuals and volunteers who supported the CIO.



Peace of Mind volunteers



## Independent Examiners Report

### Independent Examiner's Report to Peace of Mind CIO

I report on the accounts of Peace of Mind CIO for the year 1st January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, which are summarised in the charity's 2023 Annual Report.

### Respective responsibilities of the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO

The Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO are responsible for keeping proper financial records, including invoices, receipts and bank and other income statements. My responsibility is to review these, along with the accounts and state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's report

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Peace of Mind CIO and verification of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO concerning any such matters.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention, which gives me reasonable cause to believe that the requirements to keep proper accounting records and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records have been fully met.

Signed: 

Name: Peter Anderson

Relevant qualification: Independent Accountant

Address: Pinetree Business Services, Birtley Business Centre, Station Lane, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 1QT

Date: 13/08/2024

**PEACE OF MIND CIO**

England & Wales - Charity number 1194752

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# Accounts

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**2022 Financial Accounts**

# Peace of Mind CIO

## Unaudited Financial Statements

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31st December 2022

**Charity Number:** 1194752

**Registered Office:**

Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Date CIO Registered:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

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- b) the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances.

**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar  
Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi  
Tanveer Shuja  
Mahnoor Mansoor

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023

It is signed by Rifit Siddiqi on behalf of the board.

## Trustees' Report

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting this report on activities, together with the financial statements of the charity for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

Last financial year was a highly significant year for Peace of Mind as we continued to grow and develop as an organisation, increasing the number of beneficiaries we supported, launching new services such as Warm Space in partnership with Citizens Advice Gateshead.

The year covered by this report has been one of the most challenging in our 9 year's history, reflecting growing international crises and record levels of global displacement. We have seen urgent needs and demands on our services as a result of the short notice arrivals of refugees and asylum seekers in temporary hotel accommodation. The fall of Afghanistan to Taliban control and the exodus of people fleeing for their lives, often in traumatic circumstances, brought a number of Afghan refugees to the region. Many of these people held senior positions in the Afghan administration and staying in Afghanistan would have been extremely dangerous for them and their families. In addition to this we supported a number of refugees fleeing the terrible conflict in Ukraine.

In addition to this, high levels of (immigration related) disadvantages coupled with the impact from Covid 19, current economic and cost of living crisis pushed many within the Gateshead and Newcastle RAS community into extreme poverty and at risk of exploitation. Due to the multiple layers of disadvantage, the RAS community do not have access to the same level of support as their peers from other backgrounds, therefore, building resilience and overcoming hardship in this current climate has been far beyond their reach.

Trustees are pleased to report that the Peace of Mind CIO has continued to provide relief in need and support for refugees, asylum seekers, those without national status and others experiencing need, hardship or distress in Gateshead/Newcastle and its surroundings areas. The year has been our busiest ever, with demands on our resources forcing us to make rapid changes to the way we work.

We offered our RAS community a safe, warm, and welcoming place, treated them with dignity and empathy, got to know and understand their situation and aspirations, and helped them stand on their own feet in our wider community. We supported people to feel less isolated, more self-confident, better able to settle and adjust to life in the UK, more likely to integrate with their neighbours, and thus to contribute to the society in which they live and work.

The needs of some families were understandably high because of their extreme vulnerability. Our volunteers have risen to the challenge, working closely with the trustees, a part time project worker and session workers.

### Volunteers:

The success we achieved this year was not possible at all without the support from our incredible and outstanding team of volunteers. We are very grateful and sincerely Thank all our volunteers for their support throughout the year. Our team of volunteers grew rapidly from 14 to 24. The weekly drop-in team of 11 volunteers speak 10 different languages between themselves and this kept our interpreting/translation costs to a minimum level.



*Volunteers receiving gifts and thanks after distributing the Christmas gifts to nearly 300 children in Gateshead and Newcastle.*

**Partnerships:**

We continue to work in partnership with a wide range of organisations/agencies such as Gateshead Council, Refugee Resettlement Team, Gateshead Housing, Citizens Advice Gateshead, Feeding Families, Gateshead Volunteer Centre, Regional Refugee Forum, Education Department, Connected Voice, Mears (housing providers for asylum seekers), Migrant Help, Gateshead Health Watch and other local services operating in the area to offer emotional and practical support to the RAS community.

The Board is very mindful that, although much attention and effort have, rightly, been given to people from Afghanistan and Ukraine, there continue to be people from many other countries who are seeking refuge and asylum because of persecution and danger in their home country. We continue to serve them as they come to Gateshead. It is our belief and commitment that all people seeking refuge and asylum should have help and support and we will continue to deliver this to the best of our abilities with the support of the people of the North East.

The number of families and individuals we supported during the last year were:

Gateshead - 872

Newcastle Upon-Tyne - 219

Other areas - 83+

7,928 contact episodes took place reflecting the needs around emotional and practical support. Our support offers included welfare/benefits advice, Form Filling, homelessness support, Emergency Food and Hygiene supplies, weather appropriate clothing, school uniforms, newborn items, baby buggies, household items and small furniture items.

4,750 Emergency food and hygiene parcels were distributed during the year 2022 (this is between 85 - 110 food parcels every week)

Overall, 34 nationalities were supported at Peace of Mind CIO during last year.



*Newly arrived refugee families receiving energy efficiency training from Citizens Advice Gateshead.*

### **Our Activities during the reporting period:**

The CIO supported refugees and asylum seekers through the provision of services, which included:

- Emotional and Financial wellbeing
- Weekly advice and practical support sessions
- Emergency Food support
- Digital inclusion
- Warm space
- Training and educational sessions around Universal Credit and parenting in the UK
- Tackling the issue of clothing and hygiene poverty
- Promotion of volunteering (with the support from Gateshead Council)
- Community safety
- Holiday activities with food provision for children and families on low income



*Feedback session after our summer holiday activities successfully completed in 2022.*

### **Our year in numbers:**

- 7,928 contact episodes took place.
- 1,174+ people supported directly or indirectly across our services.
- 318 refugees and asylum seekers are supported through our advice service.
- 219 supported with health and wellbeing issues.
- 85+ supported to learn English through our weekly English conversational classes.
- 49 women attended our English classes.
- 39 young people supported with volunteering opportunities throughout the year 2022.
- 212 refugee and asylum- seeking children supported through holiday activities tackling holiday hunger and social isolation in 2022.
- 63 women attended our Women only fitness activities.
- 38 children's parents were supported to apply for school places.
- The range and depth of support services we organise continues to expand from running a food bank to women only fitness classes, conversational English, holiday activities for

children, music lessons and weekly "Warm Space" in partnership with the Gateshead Council and Citizens Advice Gateshead.

- Our weekly drop-in sessions (offering emotional and practical support) remain at the heart of our work, and this was the busiest year it has ever seen. We have given a warm welcome to new arrivals and put in place plans to tackle emerging issues created by the cost-of-living. We gave advice services to 318 people from 34 different countries, with the main areas of support being welfare/benefits, addressing food and hygiene poverty, homelessness, and health.
- 

### **Beneficiary Feedback:**

- We collect regular feedback from the beneficiaries and use evaluation/feedback forms to measure the impact of our support. This helps us to not only monitor the success against our charitable aims/objectives but also enables us to collect service user's comments and case studies to share with the funders. On the other hand, we have an advisory group that is predominantly led by service users and a great way of receiving feedback/knowing what is working well and what needs improvement. The impact of our support is usually demonstrated in evaluations from volunteers and clients undertaken quarterly at 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.
- Some of the comments and feedback collected from the beneficiaries:
  - "ALL IS WELL" Thank you for teaching me this sentence. I repeat this every day when I am worried about my asylum case and feel all is well now. Thank you for helping me with the cooking oil and chapatti flour".
  - "Thank you very much Peace of Mind for the clothes for my baby. My Allah will bless you and make you happy like you make me happy".
  - "Best summer holiday and best food ever" (feedback received from a child)
  - "Thank you, Peace of Mind charity, you gave me a new life with hope to live - Thank you so much for all your help. If Peace of Mind was not there to help me I would have lost my benefits"
  - "You are an angel; I never thought this issue would be resolved. I feel so relaxed now knowing things are in hand and I won't be deported back to my country where my life would be in serious danger".
  - "I don't have words to say thanks to you. I will never forget this day in my whole life".
  - "Thank you so much for everything".
  - "Thank you for these new and comfortable shoes. I can easily walk from Hotel to the Peace of Mind Church now without getting tired and without having pain in my feet."
  - "Thank you Peace of Mind for Christmas Presents. My children are so happy."

### **Our Plans are:**

- **Support Services** - With the cost-of-living crisis impacting the RAS community disproportionately, we aim to continue offering the crisis response and support in terms of emergency food, hygiene, clothing, and household items. We believe by meeting the immediate/urgent and basic needs of the vulnerable RAS community we can lay the

foundation and engage effectively with the RAS community to offer more holistic support around independence and empowerment.

- **Organisational Development** - We are actively considering gaining the OISC level 2 (immigration and asylum casework) qualification to start providing legal advice at the weekly drop-in sessions as the numbers are increasing rapidly + Law firms are facing more and more legal aid cuts. This means the only 2 good law firms in Gateshead (we work in partnership with) have a much-reduced capacity to take on new clients.
- **Office Space** - Our plans include sourcing support to have an office space so we can offer more effective and meaningful support to the marginalised RAS community in Gateshead and its surrounding areas.

## **Financial Review**

Income of £236,668 was received during the reporting period, of which £183,234 (77%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £156,353, a surplus of £80,315 was retained and carried forward to 2023.

Capital & Reserves were brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was £52,160 and with a surplus of £80,315 generated in 2022 the balance carried forward at 31<sup>st</sup> December 202 is £132,475, of which £78,343 is restricted funds.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 there were no debtors. There were creditors of £3,100 (Samona Sisters).

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern and it is assumed that the Charity will continue for the foreseeable future.

## Financial Statement: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31st December 2022

Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Grants	183,234	30,250	213,484
Donations		23,184	23,184
	<b>£183,234</b>	<b>£53,434</b>	<b>£236,668</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Beneficiary support			93,850
Volunteer Expenses			2,590
Premises costs			6,582
Facilitator Fees			41,700
Professional costs			11,631
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>£156,353</b>
<b>Surplus for 2022</b>			<b>£80,315</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2022

<b>Net Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank	135,575	
Creditors at 31st Dec 2021	(3,100)	
		<b>£132,475</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>		
Surplus b/fwd 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2022		
	52,160	
Surplus generated in 2022	80,315	
<b>Surplus c/fwd at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022</b>		<b>£132,475</b>

### Restricted Funds at 31st December 2022:

Gateshead Council	£10,000
Tyne & Wear Community Foundation	£12,343
Choose Love	£15,000
Virgin Money Foundation	£22,600
National Lottery	£10,000
Lush Retail Ltd	£4,700
Rise North East	£3,700
	<b>£78,343</b>

### Notes to Financial Accounts

#### 1. Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost convention basis.

#### 2. Debtors

There are no debtors at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

#### 3. Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

There is one Creditor (£3,100 owed) at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

#### 4. Employee numbers

The CIO is run by sessional staff and volunteer trustees.

#### 5. Going concern

The CIO meets its day-to-day working capital requirements and has sufficient reserves to sustain itself into the future.

The Trustees declare that these financial statements represent a fair and honest account of the trading history of the CIO between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

*Ridout*  
14/08/2023

## Acknowledgements

Our team at Peace of Mind CIO would like to sincerely THANK everyone who has helped to make January 2022 to December 2022 a successful year for Peace of Mind CIO and its clients, despite the many challenges faced. In particular, a massive and heartfelt Thanks to:

- our friends who supported us regularly through the standing order scheme.
- our friends, supporters and other community groups/organisations for helping us with one-off and regular donations and for responding to our fundraising appeals.
- to all our volunteers for their outstanding support throughout the year.

The trustees would like to also thank the following funders for their generous support and contributions during 2022.

Choose Love (The Prism Gift Fund)

Gateshead Council

Virgin Money Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Citizens' Advice (Gateshead) Household Support Fund

National Lottery Community Fund

Rise North East

Lush Retail Ltd

Cash For Kids

Fund for Human Need

Greggs Foundation

St. George's PCC

And all those individuals and volunteers who supported the CIO.



**2022 Financial Accounts**

# Peace of Mind CIO

## Unaudited Financial Statements

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31st December 2022

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**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar

Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi

Tanveer Shuja

Mahnoor Mansoor

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023

It is signed by Rifit Siddiqi on behalf of the board.

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*Volunteers receiving gifts and thanks after distributing the Christmas gifts to nearly 300 children in Gateshead and Newcastle.*

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- 

### **Beneficiary Feedback:**

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Capital & Reserves were brought forward at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was £52,160 and with a surplus of £80,315 generated in 2022 the balance carried forward at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 is £132,475, of which £78,343 is restricted funds.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 there were no debtors. There were creditors of £3,100 (Samona Sisters).

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern and it is assumed that the Charity will continue for the foreseeable future.

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Volunteer Expenses			2,590
Premises costs			6,582
Facilitator Fees			41,700
Professional costs			11,631
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>£156,353</b>
<b>Surplus for 2022</b>			<b>£80,315</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2022

<b>Net Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank	135,575	
Creditors at 31st Dec 2021	(3,100)	
		<b>£132,475</b>
<b>Capital &amp; Reserves</b>		
Surplus b/fwd 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2022		
	52,160	
Surplus generated in 2022	80,315	
<b>Surplus c/fwd at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022</b>		<b>£132,475</b>

### Restricted Funds at 31st December 2022:

Gateshead Council	£10,000
Tyne & Wear Community Foundation	£12,343
Choose Love	£15,000
Virgin Money Foundation	£22,600
National Lottery	£10,000
Lush Retail Ltd	£4,700
Rise North East	£3,700
	<b>£78,343</b>

### Notes to Financial Accounts

#### 1. Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost convention basis.

#### 2. Debtors

There are no debtors at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

#### 3. Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

There is one Creditor (£3,100 owed) at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

#### 4. Employee numbers

The CIO is run by sessional staff and volunteer trustees.

#### 5. Going concern

The CIO meets its day-to-day working capital requirements and has sufficient reserves to sustain itself into the future.

The Trustees declare that these financial statements represent a fair and honest account of the trading history of the CIO between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

*Ridout*  
14/08/2023

## Acknowledgements

Our team at Peace of Mind CIO would like to sincerely THANK everyone who has helped to make January 2022 to December 2022 a successful year for Peace of Mind CIO and its clients, despite the many challenges faced. In particular, a massive and heartfelt Thanks to:

- our friends who supported us regularly through the standing order scheme.
- our friends, supporters and other community groups/organisations for helping us with one-off and regular donations and for responding to our fundraising appeals.
- to all our volunteers for their outstanding support throughout the year.

The trustees would like to also thank the following funders for their generous support and contributions during 2022.

Choose Love (The Prism Gift Fund)

Gateshead Council

Virgin Money Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Citizens' Advice (Gateshead) Household Support Fund

National Lottery Community Fund

Rise North East

Lush Retail Ltd

Cash For Kids

Fund for Human Need

Greggs Foundation

St. George's PCC

And all those individuals and volunteers who supported the CIO.



## Independent Examiners Report

### **Independent Examiner's Report to Peace of Mind CIO**

I report on the accounts of Peace of Mind CIO for the year 1st January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, which are summarised in the charity's 2022 Annual Report.

### **Respective responsibilities of the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO**

The Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO are responsible for keeping proper financial records, including invoices, receipts and bank and other income statements. My responsibility is to review these, along with the accounts and state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Peace of Mind CIO and verification of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees of Peace of Mind CIO concerning any such matters.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention, which gives me reasonable cause to believe that the requirements to keep proper accounting records and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records have been fully met.

Signed: 

Name: David W Beavis

Relevant qualification: Certified Internal Auditor (CIA)

Address: Pinetree Business Services, Pinetree Business Centre, Durham Road, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 2TD.

Date: 25/08/2023

**PEACE OF MIND CIO**

England & Wales - Charity number 1194752

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# Accounts

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**2021 Annual Report**

## **RAS (Refugees and Asylum Seekers)**

### **Annual report for the period June 2021 - December 2021**

#### **Background**

Peace of Mind was set up on 14-02-2014. Peace of Mind is a refugee led community organisation managed by a committee of experienced Trustees - some of whom have lived experience of issues we are trying to address. We support refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into new and unfamiliar surroundings (British Society) and to overcome some of the difficulties they face. For example, cultural and social differences, language barriers, health issues - particularly mental health problems, diet and lifestyle. These can all be barriers to integration. Another important part of our work is to end hunger/food poverty and destitution among families with children and individual asylum seekers/refugees.

#### **Regular Activities:**

Peace of Mind has a strong reputation among people in Gateshead who are seeking asylum or have refugee status. The organisation is trusted and relied on by many as a first place to ask for help with any difficulties. This trust has taken time to build and has been gained due to the reliable, understanding and dedicated help offered by the group. People are supported with a huge range of issues including sourcing food for families with no income, assistance to access education, emergency help and support/financial assistance where necessary, accessing medical services appropriately and understanding/reporting hate crime. Our usual services include:

- 1) Weekly advice and practical support sessions for asylum seeker and refugees
- 2) Training and educational sessions around Universal Credit and parenting in the UK
- 3) Ending Food poverty
- 4) Promotion of volunteering
- 5) Networking and partnership working

We actively seek to adopt an 'open door' policy by welcoming anyone who turns up to our 'open' sessions which represent most of our work. We preclude no-one from these sessions and actively strive to make newcomers welcome by greeting them in an open and friendly way, and to introduce them to others in our groups with whom we think they may have particular things in common. We do not ask questions about their circumstances unless they choose to share these or unless we need to establish certain facts in order to be better placed to help them with a specific request.

We are proud to have made a positive difference to the lives of many within the struggling refugee community in the area of Gateshead. We have been able to offer essential support services aimed at addressing the disadvantage, exclusion and poverty which negatively affect asylum seekers and refugees. We offered practical help and advocacy support through weekly (Wednesday) drop-in sessions.

The North East has a highest number of dispersed asylum seekers relative to its population (16 supported asylum seekers in every 10,000 inhabitants), while the South-East has the lowest relative number (fewer than 1 in every 10,000 inhabitants) and Gateshead is one of the main dispersal areas for refugees and asylum seekers in the North East.

Since June 2021, 548 families/individuals representing 269 children benefited through our support. This figure includes new arrivals/those dispersed from other areas such as York and Newcastle hotels to Gateshead. This also includes a small number of those who received regular/multiple support from us since June 2021. Most stayed in contacted for help/support after receiving a negative decision from the Home Office on their asylum applications.

Asylum seekers and refugees who received our support since June 2021 represent 24 different nationalities: Syria, Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Pakistan, Albania, Turkey, China, Bangladesh, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Venezuela, Angola, Congo, Libya and India.

We were able to offer welfare support and signposting to other agencies/organisations where we couldn't meet the need of a family or individual. Our dedicated volunteers also continued to offer befriending support where family/ individual was struggling with depression and anxiety caused by loneliness, financial insecurity and uncertainty of future because of complicated Asylum journey. Overall, since June 2021 we have been able to help migrant community by offering:

- 1472 Food parcels (Including help with other household and newborn baby items) for struggling RAS families/individuals
- 315 phone calls to "The Migrant Help" on behalf of clients needing help with:
  - a) HC2 certificates
  - b) Asylum payment cards
  - c) Asylum ID cards
- 163 clients were referred to Gateshead and Newcastle based legal aid solicitors/Law Firms for

- immigration advice
- 56 Individuals were supported into employment by helping them with work clothes and shoes
- 106 Referrals were made for welfare support/benefit advice
- 331 befriending phone call resulting in 109 emergency food parcels and 23 emergency electric/Gas top up, 15 families/individuals were supported to secure their own accommodations through “Tyne and Wear Homes” by helping them to set up their online accounts and by guiding them to put regular bids on for houses that meet their needs and 28 Homeless (refused) asylum seeker supported by sourcing temporary shelter/accommodation.
- 62 Referrals were made to other organisations including: Gateshead Carers, young Carers, citizens advice Gateshead and Talking Therapies Gateshead

As the Covid restrictions slowly lifted, England moved towards the end of lockdown but asylum seeking and refugee community faced more challenges in terms of an increase in negative decisions from the Home Office on asylum applications and a rise in homelessness as a result of these refusals. Many other struggles faced by our migrant community were:

- Mental Health Issues - new mental health problems have developed as a result of the pandemic and existing mental health problems are getting worse
- Social exclusion of migrant/RAS community mainly caused by Isolation, language barrier and limited social networks
- Increased food poverty among asylum seeking community
- Unemployment among refugee community
- New immigration plan that includes Rwanda Scheme
- Opening of Hassockfield detention centre in Durham

Key Activities and Positive Impacts/Outcomes			
Activity	Average # of participants per week	Demographic info (e.g. age, gender, disability, unaccompanied minors, etc.)	Positive impacts/outcome
Emergency (Culturally Appropriate) food parcel	Between 48 - 60 per week	19 Years old - 62 Years old	Basic (emergency/hardship) food needs were met for a number of

support including Hot meals for homeless			struggling families/individuals which improved their health and wellbeing by providing relief in need
Hardship support Clothing/household/ School uniforms/newborn items/nappies etc	Between 37 - 42 per week	0 Years old - 62 Years old	Basic needs met which improved health and wellbeing. Having age appropriate, good condition school uniforms meant improved attendance in school.
Welfare and housing issues + Referrals for immigration advice+ Befriending support	Between 8 - 15 per week	19 Years old - 62 Years old	Successful in receiving Universal Credit x 43  Success in Homelessness support x 28  331 befriending phone calls were made in total  163 clients were referred to legal aid solicitors
Referrals to other organisations including Citizens advice, Talking Therapies Gateshead for mental health and Carers	62 Benefited	29 Years old - 35 Years old	Improved wellbeing, self-esteem and trust in available support services
Brighten The Day School Holiday Scheme	Up to 75 children benefited through	3 Years - 16 Years	Social and educational activities were offered including culturally appropriate hot meals

	<p>Summer and Winter holiday Schemes</p> <p>(most of them attended up to 19 days sessions)</p>		<p>for children to address the holiday hunger/food poverty. Our holiday schemes are always very successful and oversubscribed. Through these play schemes we have been able to offer equal opportunity for some of the most disadvantaged children in Gateshead.</p>
<p>People supported into employment (An additional outcome)</p>	<p>56 Refugees</p>	<p>25 Years old - 42 Years old</p>	<p>Economic inclusion, Financial stability, improved wellbeing, food security for parents and children</p>

### **Beneficiary Feedback**

We always involve our community in to the process of decision making by having regular surveys and chats with people in person, over the phone or via online methods. This helps us to better understand the needs of our community and enables us to respond to these needs in a most efficient way.

Most people mentioned in their recent feedback to us, that they feel comfortable discussing their needs knowing they will not be judged.

99% were happy to receive culturally appropriate food/clothing support in their time of hardship/financial difficulty

80% were happy to access legal aid support through our referral process

78% were happy to learn their rights as an asylum seeker in this country

42% were happy to receive information about their entitlement for free NHS services

65% were NOT happy about the wait and long queues, We promised to improve the situation.

### **Some of the comments used by the project beneficiaries were:**

'I always tell about Peace of Mind to any new asylum seeker I see or meet'

'It is very useful for my case; I didn't know what these words meant on the letter' (A beneficiary who brought a Home Office letter for us to read and explain to him in simple English)

"Your financial support has helped me to buy the school uniform and I am able to have enough food for my children"

"Thank you for the support - God bless all of you"

"I was lost and had no hope. If Peace of Mind was not beside me to help in this difficult process, things would have been very difficult. I am happy and looking for a bright future now in Gateshead"

Hard copies of the evaluation forms can be provided on request. Please see a positive case study below:

**Our partner organisations and friends also highly appreciated our work. Please see a few of comments below:**

"Fantastic help and planning - some organisations would look at 1 thing but the comprehensive support you provide is heart warming and uplifting - well done (Helen Bardwell - Mears Resident Welfare Manager Embassy Hotel - North East)"

"Thank you I thank you for being there and providing positive reports even in such difficult circumstances. I for one find this calms me a little from the constant feeling of helplessness x you are truly amazing" (Gaynor - Former Youth Worker)

"I hope this will highlight the amazing work you do with the already large refugee community, the need has been here a long time. Social Justice Lass stands beside you. (Sarah Studholme School Teacher and Community worker)"

**Please Note:** All the above 3 comments were left on our social media page.

**Case Studies:**

### 1 - Mrs Hassan

This single mother with 3 children from Birtley approached us for help as she was struggling financially. After discussing her needs, we found - She hasn't been able to pay the last 3 months' house rent as struggling due to the rising costs of food and energy + affected by the benefit cap + She is in debt for above £2,500 + struggling to find a job due to limited skills and language barrier. Mrs Hassan informed us that after paying her loan instalments, she doesn't even have money for electricity and gas in the house. We immediately helped her with £100 for gas and electricity top up and offered her a culturally appropriate food parcel from our food bank. Mum was struggling to buy age appropriate school uniforms for her 2 daughters. Therefore, we helped her with a £75 Asda gift card towards the cost of school uniforms for her children. After meeting her immediate needs we referred her to The Future You programme at Gateshead Council. She was offered an appointment and enrolled for housing support to save her from eviction/homelessness with her 3 children. Once her housing is secured and she is no longer in danger of being homeless with her 3 children - She is going to receive all the necessary skills to get her into paid employment. She was so pleased and rang us to say: "Thank You So Much, I didn't know this help was available. Thank you for referring me. Sihle (The support worker) is very nice and helpful"

### 2 - Mohammad

M arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker, later granted refugee status. He was supported by our team to prepare his CV. He was shortlisted and invited for an interview. M didn't have nice clothing for his job interview and no money to buy new clothes. He requested some support; Peace of Mind helped him with suitable clothing for his interview and travel expenses to and from his job interview. We are pleased to say, he was selected and going to start his paid job in April 2022. This family will not have to rely on our food support anymore. We believe this was an amazing outcome of the support POM provided and exactly why we exist. This is how we empower people so they can live an independent life rather than relying on us for day-to-day support. M sent a "Thank You message" to us that made all the work worthwhile. (A picture of his Thank you message was shared on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/peaceofmind455/>)

### 3 - Ali

A is from Iran, where he was tortured and raped by the authorities because of his conversion to Christianity. He managed to escaped

and arrived in the UK to claim asylum. Unfortunately, his asylum case was refused in 6 weeks. He received documents from the Home Office to apply for permission to appeal but his solicitor refused to further represent him on the basis of low success chances. After 21 days of receiving the refusal his financial support and accommodation was withdrawn. We encouraged A to persuade with the appeal and helped him to submit the application, he was granted permission to appeal and within 7 months he was granted refugee status after a successful appeal hearing in June 2021. This showed how sometimes solicitor can give false advice and why it is important to have an effective advocacy support.

A says "I was lost and had no hope. If Peace of Mind was not beside me to help in this difficult process, things would have been very difficult. I am happy and looking for a bright future now in Gateshead"

#### 4 - Parwen

"I feel thankful that Parwen's journey ended safely"

A journey that started with 32 people from Iraq ended with only 18 people as others were shot dead by Turkish border Police or couldn't survive the difficult journey to seek sanctuary.

Parwen is an asylum seeker who was referred to us by her CPN for emotional and practical support as she suffers from PTSD. Parwen had to take a dangerous journey through jungles and sea to reach safety. She witnessed people (within her group) dying because of long walks, thirst, hunger cold or because they were shot dead by the border Police. Parwen is a bright young girl who is hardworking and want to keep herself busy to avoid the flashbacks and who wants to become a useful part of the community she is living in. She showed an interest in volunteering with us; therefore, we offered her a volunteering role at Wednesday's drop in. Parwen proved herself to be reliable, hardworking and professional. We feel so relax when Parwen is around as we know this young girl will manage everything from welcoming new arrivals to setting up donations and making teas/coffees. The amazing aspect of her volunteering is that she walks nearly 40 minutes to come to the Church on Wednesday but doesn't want anything in return, not even travel reimbursement. "Parwen says when your life is a survival, it doesn't always give you choices and you have to be grateful for what you get."

This bright spark of a 24-year-old young girl could have been any of those 31 poor souls who never made it last week. Who never had a chance to seek sanctuary and to try survival. This makes us more grateful to think Parwen's journey ended safely, and we are proud to

have been able to welcome her and support her at our project  
"Peace of Mind"

Nida Muzaffar  
14/05/2022



**2021 Financial Accounts**

# Peace of Mind CIO

## Unaudited Financial Statements

For the period 10th June 2021 to 31st December 2021

**Charity Number:** 1194752

**Registered Office:**

Methodist Church  
Whitehall Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4LH

**Date CIO Registered:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Core purpose of CIO:**

To prevent and relieve poverty and the needs of those granted refugee status, or those seeking asylum, and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle and the surrounding areas.

**Trustees:**

Nida Muzaffar – appointed 10th June 2021


Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi - appointed 10th June 2021

Tanveer Shuja - appointed 10th June 2021

Mahnoor Mansoor - appointed 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

It is signed by Nida Muzaffar on behalf of the board



25/04/2022

# Peace of Mind CIO

## Unaudited Financial Statements

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Mahnoor Mansoor - appointed 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

It is signed by Nida Muzaffar on behalf of the board

## **Trustees' Report**

The Trustees of the CIO, for the purposes the Charities Act, are pleased to present their first annual report, together with the financial statements of the charity for the period 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

### **Objectives and Activities during the reporting period**

The CIO aimed to support refugees and asylum seekers through the provision of services that cannot be supplied by other service providers. This includes:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Weekly advice and practical support sessions
- Training and educational sessions around Universal Credit and parenting in the UK
- Ending food poverty
- Promotion of volunteering (with the support of Gateshead Council)
- Community safety

In total 548 refugees and asylum seekers (from a population of 989 asylum seekers in the borough of Gateshead) were supported.

### **Financial Review**

Income of £75,897 was received during the reporting period, of which £70,514 (93%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £47,186, a surplus of £28,711 was retained and carried forward to 2022.

Capital of £23,449 was introduced to the CIO from the previous unincorporated charity and Capital and Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 are £52,160.

Restricted funds of £41,976 were carried forward at the year end.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 there were no debtors. There were creditors of £374.

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern and it is assumed that the Charity will continue for the foreseeable future.

## Financial Statement – 10th June 2021 to 31st December 2021

Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Grants	70,514		70,514
Donations		5,383	5,383
	<b>£70,514</b>	<b>£5,383</b>	<b>£75,897</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Beneficiary support	26,653		26,653
Volunteer Expenses		954	954
Premises costs	1,837		1,837
Facilitator Fees	17,415		17,415
Professional costs		327	327
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£45,905</b>	<b>£1,281</b>	<b>£47,186</b>
<b>Surplus for 2021</b>	<b>£24,609</b>	<b>£4,102</b>	<b>£28,711</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2021

### Net Assets

Cash at Bank	52,534	
Creditors at 31st Dec 2021	(374)	
		<b>£52,160</b>

### Capital & Reserves

Capital introduced from Unincorporated charity	23,449	
Surplus for 2021	28,711	
		<b>£52,160</b>

Capital introduced from unincorporated charity includes £17,367 of restricted funds

**Restricted Funds at 31st December 2021:**

National Lottery	£9,952
Rothley Trust	£800
Virgin Money Foundation	£12,430
National Lottery/Places Called Home	£4,794
Local Giving	£500
Choose Love/Winter Grant	£5,000
Lush Wholeness Fund	£8,500
	<b>£41,976</b>

**Notes to Financial Accounts**

**1. Accounting policies**

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost convention basis.

**2. Debtors**

There are no debtors at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

**3. Creditors**

Creditors are recognised where the company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

**4. Employee numbers**

There are no salaried employees. The CIO is run by volunteer trustees and staff.

**5. Going concern**

The CIO meets its day-today working capital requirements and has sufficient reserves to sustain itself into the future.

The Trustees declare that these financial statements represent a fair and honest account of the trading history of the CIO between 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

## **Acknowledgements**

The trustees would like to thank the following for their generous contributions during 2021.

Virgin Money Foundation

Gateshead Council

National Lottery

Lush Wholeness Fund

Choose Love

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Arnold Clark

Rothley Trust

And all those individuals and volunteers who supported the CIO



## Independent Report on the Financial Records of Peace of Mind CIO

I have reviewed the financial accounts for Peace of Mind CIO for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Peace of Mind was registered as CIO on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

I confirm that the attached Financial Statement for 2021, which shows a net surplus of £28,711, generated from income of £70,514, is a true and fair record of the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

The Balance Sheet position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, showing total net assets (and equity) of £52,160, is a true representation of the financial position of the CIO at that date.

Based on the information to hand, I confirm that Peace of Mind CIO is a going concern and has sufficient on-going income and funds to meet its current and foreseeable financial commitments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Beavis".

David Beavis

Managing Director,  
Northern Pinetree Trust Trading Ltd t/a  
Pinetree Business Centre