

# SOUTH YORKSHIRE REFUGEE LAW AND JUSTICE

England & Wales · Charity number 1199706

## Details

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**Other names** SYRLJ

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** CIO

**Registered** 2022-07-19

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

## Contact

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**Address** Quakers Meeting House  
10 St. James Street  
Sheffield  
S1 2EW

**Phone** 07553233334

**Email** [info@syrjlj.org.uk](mailto:info@syrjlj.org.uk)

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

## Activities

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**Objects:** 1. TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS (AS SET OUT IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT UNITED NATIONS DECLARATIONS AND CONVENTIONS) THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY ALL OR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:A. RELIEVING NEED AMONG THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.B. EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE.C. ELIMINATING INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS2. THE RELIEF OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AMONGST ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AT RISK OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND THEIR DEPENDENTS IN THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE AREA BY THE PROVISION OF FREE LEGAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE.3. THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC ABOUT ASYLUM LAW AND PRACTICE.

**Activities:** SYRLJ supports asylum seekers to mount fresh claims or appeals, mainly by research which produces relevant objective evidence about and from their country of origin. Research is by trained staff, working alongside the asylum seeker. Those who use our services are usually at the end of the legal process, and are destitute. We work with solicitors where possible. Our work is free of charge.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

## Geography

- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- Sheffield City

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£237,044	£241,614	-	-
2024-03-31	£217,071	£179,918	-	-
2023-04-05	£0	£0	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
<b>Gary Leonard Bell M.A.</b>	Chair	2022-07-19
Emma Caroline Rattenbury		2024-09-19
Erika Ann Owens		2026-01-20
Fathima Jehannara Mohideen		2026-01-20
Patricia Anne Hudson		2022-10-04
VICTOR MUJAKACHI		2022-07-19
Victoria Aladum		2026-01-20

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE REFUGEE LAW AND JUSTICE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1199706

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# Accounts

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# South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

(Registered charity number 1199706)

## Financial Statements

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

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<b>Full Name</b>	South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice
<b>Other names by which the charity is known</b>	SYRLJ
<b>Organisation type</b>	CIO
<b>Registered Charity Number</b>	1199706
<b>Principal address</b>	Quaker Meeting House, 10 St James Street, Sheffield S1 2EW

## **Governance and Management**

### **Trustees**

Gary Bell – Chair

Phil Moore – Secretary (Until 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025)

Patricia Anne Hudson – Treasurer

Victor Mujakachi

Christopher Cole

Emma Rattenbury

The Charity was registered on 19th July 2022 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the intention of merging it with an existing unincorporated association of the same name (Registered Charity, number 1146748). Once the legal formalities had been completed, the merger of the two charities was registered by the Charity Commission on 11th December 2023, with a transfer date of 26th June 2023, and the unincorporated association removed from the Register.

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are: vacancies are openly advertised through a variety of targeted avenues; we request a CV, covering letter and reference; an initial informal discussion with the Chair; more formal interview with a panel of existing trustees and employees; successful applicants are invited to observe a board meeting. The proposal to appoint is then considered by existing trustees and if approved, and subject to due diligence, the applicant is invited to join and sign a declaration form.

### **Charitable Objects**

1. To promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations declarations and conventions) throughout the world by all or any of the following means:
  - a. Relieving need among the victims of human rights abuses
  - b. Educating the public about human rights abuse
  - c. Eliminating infringements of human rights
2. The relief of financial hardship amongst asylum seekers, refugees, migrants at risk of human rights abuses, and their dependents in the South Yorkshire area by the provision of free legal advice and assistance.
3. The advancement of education of the public about asylum law and practice.

### **Note regarding our legal status**

SYRLJ was originally founded as an unincorporated charitable association. In 2022, we took the decision to transfer our operations to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The CIO was officially established in July 2022, however the final transfer of assets, liabilities and operations from the unincorporated charity to the CIO took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Our previous charity has now been removed from the Charity Commission website. Copies of our backdated annual accounts can be accessed via our website: [www.syrlj.org.uk/about us](http://www.syrlj.org.uk/about-us)

## **Annual Report**

South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice (SYRLJ) is a grassroots legal charity providing immigration legal services to migrants in South Yorkshire who are at risk of human rights abuses. We offer free legal representation to people whose asylum claims have been refused, we work to increase access to justice across the region, we provide training and qualification routes to practitioners entering the legal profession and pursuing a career in immigration and human rights law, and we advocate for a fair system for all migrants in the UK.

### **Our Vision, Mission and Values**

All migrants in South Yorkshire have access to justice and their human rights are protected.

Our mission is to increase the provision of good quality immigration legal advice and representation for migrants across South Yorkshire. We currently do this through:

- providing legal representation and advice to refused asylum seekers in South Yorkshire;
- providing training and qualification routes to the next generation of human rights/migrant justice lawyers;
- fighting for meaningful access to justice both locally and nationally; and
- community legal education.

**Solidarity** We stand shoulder to shoulder with our community, with the wider migrant justice movement and with all those who share our commitment to dignity, safety and justice for all.

**Tenacity** We are bold and resourceful in our pursuit of justice - for the individuals we support, for our community, and against the systems that divide, marginalise, and exclude.

**Quality** We hold ourselves to the highest standards of care and professionalism. We provide expert, person-centred legal support that empowers people, upholds their rights, and honours their humanity.

## **Activities**

### **Legal casework and representation**

At the heart of our work is a commitment to providing specialist immigration representation to people seeking sanctuary and migrants facing human-rights-related challenges in South Yorkshire. This is not just a service we deliver - it is a way of standing alongside people whose safety, stability, and future depend on a fair hearing. Our legal casework is driven by a belief that everyone deserves meaningful access to justice, whatever barriers they face.

### **One-off legal advice**

Alongside our longer-term casework, we run regular open-access, face-to-face, drop-in advice sessions in Sheffield and Barnsley for migrants with immigration or human rights concerns. This drop-in model allows people to seek guidance at the point they most need clarity. It reflects our broader commitment to removing barriers, meeting people where they are, and ensuring that reliable legal advice is available within and for our local communities.

### **Training, capacity building and community legal education**

Building the strength and confidence of our sector is a core part of SYRLJ's mission. We invest in the development of our staff and volunteers, creating clear pathways for training and qualification, while also sharing our expertise more widely through external training and collaborative capacity-building. This work is grounded in partnership: we stand alongside community groups, local organisations, and grassroots networks to deepen practical understanding of immigration law and to equip people with the tools they need to navigate complex and often hostile systems. By offering legal guidance to refugee groups, campaigners, and activists, and by creating spaces where knowledge can be exchanged and skills shared, we help foster a stronger, more connected ecosystem of support for the communities we serve.

### **Advocacy – increasing access to justice**

All the work we do and the services we deliver are aimed at expanding access to justice and upholding the human rights of people seeking sanctuary, both locally and nationally. The drive to challenge, improve, and where necessary dismantle harmful systems - and to help build fairer, more supportive ones - is woven into every aspect of how we operate. It shapes the services we choose to offer, the way we deliver them, and the partnerships we build. Our practical work and our values are inseparable, and this connection continues to guide our direction as we grow. We are active members of several networks working to secure systemic change for our client group and our sector at a national level. We are particularly passionate about working to ensure that the experiences of migrants and organisations working to support migrants in small regional contexts are represented in national advocacy and policy work. We work to amplify the experiences and knowledge of our client group and local grassroots legal organisations at a national level.

## **Review of the year**

2024 – 2025 was both a successful and a challenging year for SYRLJ. Our organisation thrived by many measures and our brilliant and dedicated legal team continued to deliver excellent legal services, changing lives and making a significant mark on the landscape of access to justice in our region.

We were particularly proud to take on a legal aid contract, reversing the recent decline of local legal aid services and bringing an important resource back into our region. This was a significant moment in SYRLJ's story, and we were happy to join the fight to preserve the principle that access to justice should be a statutory service available to all, not just those who can afford it.

However, this was against the backdrop of a sobering external landscape with attacks on both our clients and our profession coming from multiple places. Far-right violence flared up over the summer, causing significant and lasting damage to many in our community. Over the year we saw the continued growth of the gap between need and availability of legal services for people seeking sanctuary. During the winter months we witnessed acute levels of hardship including widespread street homelessness in sub-zero temperatures with no safety nets in place.

Through all this our team worked with tenacity and compassion, delivered life-changing legal support to our clients and held fast to the mission and values that SYRLJ was founded by the community to deliver.

## **Key events**

### **May 2024**

The year began against the backdrop of the government's plans to remove people seeking asylum to Rwanda. This created significant fear and uncertainty within our local communities. In response, we worked closely with community groups to ensure people had access to up-to-date, accurate information about their rights and the changing legal situation. We also joined colleagues across the legal sector to advocate for the protection of human rights and the fair treatment of those affected by the scheme.

### **July 2024**

We began work on the Legal Advice Solidarity Project – a partnership with City of Sanctuary Sheffield and ASSIST Sheffield. The project aims to strengthen local understanding of the role and importance of good-quality legal services, and to make a clear case for local authority funding in this area. Its first year was hugely successful. We made real progress in demonstrating to local stakeholders the critical need for accessible legal support, as well as the wider benefits this brings to the city. The project has been bolstered by the strong relationships between the partner organisations and our shared vision of Sheffield as a true City of Sanctuary.

### **August 2024**

We witnessed the far-right mobilising on our doorstep, including the infamous riot at the Manvers Hotel in Rotherham, where a hotel housing several of our clients was attacked and set

on fire. This was followed by targeted threats against immigration law firms in our region and across the country.

The rise in far-right activity had direct and immediate impacts: partner services temporarily shut down due to safety concerns, cutting our clients off from support they were desperately reliant on; we witnessed and responded to a palpable increase in anxiety, distress, and poor mental health among our client group during this period. However, we also witnessed a national groundswell of support for our community, resistance to far-right attacks and rhetoric and solidarity from funders and the general public.

### **September 2024**

We became the smallest not-for-profit organisation in England and Wales to hold a legal aid contract. Over the remainder of the year, we focused on training the legal team, and all four of our junior legal staff successfully completed the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme (IAAS) examinations, enabling them to work on legal aid cases.

We passed both our LEXCEL (Law Society legal practice quality mark) and Legal Aid assessments with flying colours and started the considerable task of getting to grips with the world of legal aid, building the systems and processes needed to manage the contract.

We developed new relationships across the Not-for-Profit legal aid sector and were lucky to receive incredibly generous support and guidance from experienced legal aid providers including Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre, Asylum Aid and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit. We also worked to pay this forward through providing peer support, guidance and solidarity to other organisations also new to, or considering, legal aid.

Across the organisation, we continued to open both legal aid and non-legal aid files, in line with our commitment to keeping our service accessible to the communities we were created to support.

### **October 2024**

We began delivering monthly drop-in legal advice sessions as part of an existing multi-agency service in Barnsley, run by the Refugee Council. The sessions were really well-received and have opened the door to new partnership opportunities. Most importantly, this work enabled us to reach more people across South Yorkshire and to embed the services and support we offer within a new community in the region.

### **February 2025**

For the first time in SYRLJ's history, we moved into our own premises, bringing our long-standing co-location with City of Sanctuary Sheffield (CoSS) to an end. This move was essential for the continued functioning of our service and to ensure we have the space needed to meet growing demand. But we were sad to part ways and will always owe a huge debt of gratitude to CoSS for nurturing SYRLJ through a difficult few years and giving us both space and organisational support and enabling us to grow into the organisation we are today.

This move has resulted in an increase in our overheads and has come with new challenges and learning curves: The day to day of managing an office space and navigating safety and risk in an era of increasing hostility; rethinking how we build and maintain partnerships; working more intentionally to stay connected, collaborate effectively, and ensure that joint work with our close partners in the Migrant Justice sector, continues to thrive.

### **Our achievements in numbers:**

- We provided legal representation to 181 clients – an increase from 119 in the previous year.
- We provided one-off advice to 311 clients in Sheffield and Barnsley – an increase from the previous year where we advised 217 clients in Sheffield only
- We submitted 36 applications to the Home Office for leave to remain, securing access to housing and financial support for those clients and their families.
- We secured grants of status for 15 clients (18 people in total including dependents).
- We provided 402 pieces of advice, signposting, and second tier support via phone and email.
- We worked with 7 volunteers, supporting them to gain skills, experience and legal qualifications including IAA accreditation and Qualifying Work Experience for Solicitor qualifications.
- The legal team passed 11 exams and gained 9 new legal qualifications including IAAS Trainee Assistant Caseworker, Solicitors Qualifying Examination 1 (SQE1), and IAAS Senior Caseworker. These achievements demonstrate the dedication of our staff team to excellence and to constantly improve their knowledge and skills to provide the best possible service to our clients. It also highlights the huge amount of individual and organisational capacity that is required to keep a service like ours going.

### **Feedback from clients**

*“I still remember the first time we met at drop-in, how you spoke to me and listened to me. You've given me everything. I'm moving into my own flat today and life is good. You should feel very proud of the work your charity is doing - you are saving people.”*

*“I am feeling much better. Once I thought you guys were taking care of the case, I felt lighter, more energised, more lively”*

*“You're doing a great job! Keep it up – I'm so proud of you”*

## **Financial position**

Income for the year was £237,044 of which £130,791 was unrestricted and £106,253 was restricted. Total expenditure was £241,614 of which £145,547 was unrestricted and £96,067 was restricted.

Expenditure increased by 34% on the previous year, representing in the main, an increase in our service delivery expenditure and staffing costs as the organisation grew, as well as an increase in overheads towards the end of the year when we moved into our own office space. Another significant financial outlay during this year was the costs associated with managing our legal aid contract. These included disbursements on legal aid files as well as the cost of organisational and individual practitioner assessments, qualifications and professional membership fees. During the 7 months of 2024-2025 where we operated a Legal Aid Contract, we brought in no income from this contract. This was due to the nature of the casework we do as well as wide scale structural issues over which we have no control – such as delays in immigration processing systems which then delay payments on files. As with many similar organisations we continue to face challenges with securing sustainable funding, and operating largely on a year-to-year basis.

We would like to thank our funders and donors for their invaluable support, without which we would not be able to undertake this critical work.

## **Reserves Policy**

The Board of Trustees has set out that the organisation should hold reserves to cover a minimum of 3 months', up to a maximum of 6 months', operating costs, and to keep this figure under regular review. At the end of 2024 –25 the reserves were £88,327.95 - equivalent to 4 months' operating costs.

## **Our Funders**

Our funders during 2024 – 2025 were as follows:

Access to Justice Foundation  
ASSIST (Evan Cornish)  
Brelms Trust  
British Red Cross Strategic Displacement and Migration Partnership  
Disrupt  
Jubilee Foundation/This Day  
Lloyds Bank Foundation  
Lloyds bank Foundation – Local Collaborations Fund  
Sheffield City Council

**Signed by one trustee on behalf of all the trustees:**



GARY BELL, CHAIR

Date: 15/1/26



**Section A Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31/03/25	<b>Charity no (if any)</b>	1199706
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**Set out on pages**

1 and 2  
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/25**.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

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

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

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

FCCA DChA

**Address:**

4 Marigold Drive  
Bisley  
Surrey GU24 9SF



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice	No (if any) 1199706
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CC16a

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date 01/04/2024	To	Period end date 31/03/2025
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations & fundraising	26,640	-	-	26,640	27,212
Grants	101,500	106,253	-	207,753	178,567
Gift aid received	-	-	-	-	6,511
Services	2,061	-	-	2,061	4,781
Other income	590	-	-	590	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>130,791</b>	<b>106,253</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>237,044</b>	<b>217,071</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>130,791</b>	<b>106,253</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>237,044</b>	<b>217,071</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Staff costs	111,024	85,566	-	196,590	148,678
Office & premises costs	1,410	7,080	-	8,490	6,690
Service delivery costs	16,774	10,268	-	27,042	14,903
Organisational costs	7,701	1,150	-	8,851	9,257
Volunteer costs	641	-	-	641	390
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>137,550</b>	<b>104,064</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>241,614</b>	<b>179,918</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>137,550</b>	<b>104,064</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>241,614</b>	<b>179,918</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 6,759</b>	<b>2,189</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 4,570</b>	<b>37,153</b>
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	189,776	8,317	-	198,093	160,940
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>183,017</b>	<b>10,506</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>193,523</b>	<b>198,093</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Co-operative Current Account	96,540	10,506	-
	Co-operative Savings Account	86,000		-
	Petty Cash	477	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>183,017</b>	<b>10,506</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Restricted funds to nearest £</b>	<b>Endowment funds to nearest £</b>
	Prepayments	1,078	-	-
	Accrued income	18,395	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which asset belongs</b>	<b>Cost (optional)</b>	<b>Current value (optional)</b>
	Laptops	Unrestricted	12,800	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Fund to which liability relates</b>	<b>Amount due (optional)</b>	<b>When due (optional)</b>
	Accruals	Unrestricted	3,778	
	Independent examination fee	Unrestricted	1,080	
	PAYE	Unrestricted	4,784	
			-	

## Section C Grants and Donations

C1 Grants and Donations	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Access to Justice Foundation (IOTLS)		57996.32	57996.32
Access to Justice Foundation (SSJS)		4000	4000
ASSIST (Evan Cornish)	3000		3000
Brelms Trust		5000	5000
British Red Cross SDMP		9486.85	9486.85
Disrupt	25000	3000	28000
Jubilee Foundation/This Day	30000		30000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	27500		27500
Lloyds bank Foundation – LCF		26770	26770
Sheffield City Council	16000		16000
<b>Total</b>	<b>101500</b>	<b>106253.17</b>	<b>207753.17</b>

## Section D Funds Analysis

### D1 Restricted Funds

	Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments	Closing Balance
Access to Justice Foundation (IOTLS)	4817	57996.32	62813.32	0
Access to Justice Foundation (SSJS)	0	4000	2000	2000
Brelms Trust	0	5000	5000	0
British Red Cross SDMP	0	9486.85	9486.85	0
Disrupt	0	3000	3000	0
Hilden Charitable Trust	3500	0	3500	0
Lloyds bank Foundation – LCF	0	26770	18264	8506

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval



GARY BELL

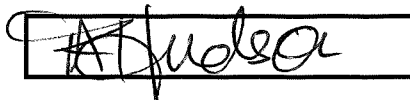
15/1/26

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval



PA HUDSON

16/1/26

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE REFUGEE LAW AND JUSTICE**

England & Wales - Charity number 1199706

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# Accounts

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**South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice**  
(Registered charity, number 1199706)  
**Financial statements**  
**for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

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8	Receipts & payments account
9	Statement of assets & liabilities
10-11	Notes to the accounts

**South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice  
Trustees' annual report  
for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

**Full name** South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

**Other names by which the charity is known** SYRLJ (Working name)

**Organisation type** CIO

**Registered charity number** 1199706

**Principal address**

The Sanctuary, 37-39 Chapel Walk, Sheffield, S1 2PD

**Trustees**

Gary Bell, Chair

Phil Moore, Secretary

Patricia Anne Hudson, Treasurer

Victor Mujakachi

Christopher Cole

Emma Rattenbury, from 19/09/2024

Peter Veal, until 26/03/2024

**Independent examiner**

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

**Governance and management**

The Charity was registered on 19th July 2022 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the intention of merging it with an unincorporated association of the same name (Registered Charity, number 1146748).

Once due diligence had been completed, the merger of the two charities was subsequently registered by the Commission on 11th December 2023, with a transfer date of 26th June 2023, and the unincorporated association removed from the Register.

The methods adopted for the recruitment and appointment of new trustees are: we request a CV and reference, which is then followed by an initial interview by the Chair and due diligence. The proposal to appoint is then considered by existing trustees and if approved the applicant is invited to join and sign a declaration form.

## South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

### Objectives and activities

1. To promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations declarations and conventions) throughout the world by all or any of the following means:
  - a. Relieving need among the victims of human rights abuses
  - b. Educating the public about human rights abuse
  - c. Eliminating infringements of human rights
2. The relief of financial hardship amongst asylum seekers, refugees, and their dependants in the South Yorkshire area by the provision of free legal advice and assistance
3. The advancement of education of the public about asylum law and practice

South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice is a grassroots legal charity providing immigration legal services to migrants in South Yorkshire who are at risk of human rights abuses. We offer free legal representation to people whose asylum claims have been refused, we work to increase access to justice across the region, we provide training and qualification routes to practitioners entering the legal profession and pursuing a career in immigration and human rights law, and we advocate for a fair system for all migrants in the UK.

### Our vision

All migrants in South Yorkshire have access to justice and their human rights are protected.

### Our mission

Our mission is to increase the provision of good quality immigration legal advice and representation for migrants across South Yorkshire. We currently do this through

- providing representation to refused asylum seekers in South Yorkshire;
- providing direct one-off immigration advice to migrants, via 'drop in' sessions;
- providing both paid and voluntary opportunities to undertake training and gain experience in the field of human rights law;
- providing best practice training to stakeholders and partners.

### Our values

**Respect** We treat all clients, volunteers and staff with respect and dignity, and without judgement.

**Compassion** We work with each client in the way that best suits them. We adapt our service around the specific challenges and different experiences that our clients face whilst navigating the legal system.

**Tenacity** We work alongside our clients to explore all legal options and fight to ensure they get justice.

**Quality** We maintain high standards and are committed to providing an excellent quality of service to those we work with.

## **South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice**

### **Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit**

#### **Legal casework and representation**

Our core service is the provision of immigration legal representation to refused asylum seekers and migrants with human rights related legal issues who are living in South Yorkshire.

We offer in-depth ongoing legal representation to those who often have complex legal cases and face multiple barriers to engaging with legal services. We aim to secure long term resolution of our clients' cases.

#### **One-off legal advice**

We provide one-off face to face legal advice through a local drop-in service. This service is open-access and is available to all migrants with human rights related immigration matters. We provide this service in Sheffield and Barnsley.

#### **Training and capacity building**

A key aim for SYRLJ is to build capacity in the sector. This includes providing training and qualification routes internally for our staff and volunteers as well as the provision of external training and capacity building. We work closely with local partners and community groups to increase understanding of immigration law in practice. We support refugee organisations, campaigning and community groups and local activist groups by providing legal expertise and guidance. We also create local spaces and networks for skills sharing and knowledge exchange within the legal sector.

#### **Advocacy**

We are active members of several networks working to secure systemic change for our client group and our sector at a national level. We are particularly passionate about working to ensure that the experiences of migrants, and of organisations working to support migrants in small regional contexts, are represented in national advocacy and policy work. We work to amplify the experiences and knowledge of our client group and local grassroots legal organisations at a national level.

#### **Background**

South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice formed as an unincorporated charitable association in April 2012. It was founded in response to community concerns about the gap in local legal provision for people whose asylum claims had been refused.

Between 2019 and 2021 SYRLJ faced a significant crisis. Our founder and Chair of Trustees Gina Clayton passed away following a period of illness and we lost several other board members as well as our Coordinator who had been with the organisation for 10 years. These challenges, alongside the impact of the Covid pandemic, took SYRLJ to a point where we had to question whether we could continue operating. However, knowing how critical the need for this service was, we resolved to meet these challenges head on. We have been able to build a stronger and more resilient organisation with a growing reputation for high quality legal work, excellent client care and a tenacious drive to improve access to justice for migrants across South Yorkshire and beyond.

## **South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice**

In 2022 we expanded our service to include one-off immigration advice, open on a monthly basis to all migrants, including those who do not meet the remit for our substantive casework service.

### **Public benefit statement**

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

The public gain greater knowledge and understanding of the asylum system, refugee protection and human rights. The quality of advice and representation is improved, speeding up the process, promoting more just and sustainable outcomes, which reduces pressure on public resources.

### **Review of the year**

Over the period covered by this report we created three additional roles, growing to a staff team of eight and with support from our small team of volunteers we were able to deliver an excellent service providing high quality legal representation and advice. Our two trainee legal advisers and our paralegal continued to gain experience and legal qualifications including OISC qualifications and Solicitor's Qualifying Work Experience. We also recruited a Senior Legal Adviser who we supported to gain his Immigration & Asylum Accreditation Scheme (IAAS) Senior Supervisor qualification. This is part of our ongoing commitment to increasing access to justice and improving the quality of legal services through training and support for the next generation of social justice lawyers. We also provide training opportunities and qualification routes to our volunteers. A high proportion of people who volunteered with us went on to secure paid work in the legal sector.

We are proud to play an active role in our community, building solidarity in the face of far-right attacks and the hostile environment. Over the year we worked closely with local partners and played a key role in building relationships between small legal charities across the north to share learning and resources and combine our experience, expertise and strength to tackle some of the bigger structural challenges facing our sector.

Following our decision in March 2023 to apply for a legal aid contract, we moved ahead with our application and with developing and updating our internal office and casework systems in line with requirements. Our application was successful and marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the development of SYRLJ. As part of this process, we also successfully secured a Lexcel Quality Standard mark. Our hope is that in undertaking this work we can both enhance the legal support we are able to offer our clients and stand alongside other legal aid providers in the fight to protect this vital public service and uphold the principle of access to justice for all.

In March 2024 we were able to expand our one-off immigration advice service to offer two sessions per month.

## South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice


### Summary of our achievements

- We provided legal representation to 119 clients - an increase of 35% on the previous year. We also worked on improving the quality of our service delivery undertaking organisation wide training on trauma-informed working and suicide prevention.
- We submitted 37 applications on behalf our clients, enabling them and their dependents to exit destitution and access accommodation and financial support. This represents a 54% increase on the previous year.
- We secured status for 13 clients and their dependents and appeal rights for a further 11 clients.
- We represented people from 31 different countries.
- We provided 217 people with one-off legal advice – an increase of 76% on the previous year. With the ongoing crisis in legal advice this service has become increasingly important. Our drop-in advice is provided in multi-agency community settings that are well known and used and both service users and stakeholders have feedback to us on the importance of legal advice being available in these settings. We have increased our provision in this area based on this feedback.
- We supported our staff team to gain four new legal qualifications ranging from becoming an OISC Level 1 adviser to becoming a qualified IAAS Senior Supervising Caseworker.
- We worked with 9 volunteers over the course of the year, 6 of whom secured paid work in the legal sector. They also gained a range of legal qualifications from OISC accreditation through to becoming qualified immigration solicitors.
- We provided signposting and second tier advice to 191 service users and agencies. People caught up in the system as well as those working to support them are often passed from pillar to post and can find it very difficult to find the right services. Whilst this work is not a central part of our service offer, we always want to share our knowledge and improve access to services where we can. We use our team's extensive knowledge and connections throughout the sector to signpost and advise effectively including sending resources and contact and referral information via text, WhatsApp and email.
- We secured a Lexcel Quality Standard Mark and were successful in securing a legal aid contract which will commence in the coming year.

### Reserves Policy

At its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, the Board agreed that the organisation would hold reserves to cover a minimum of 3 months' operating costs, rising to a maximum of 6 months, and to keep this figure under regular review.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed   
Gary Bell, Trustee

Date 11/125

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of  
South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice  
for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

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


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

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed  Date 14/1/25  
John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCIE  
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

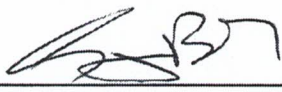
**South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice  
Receipts & payments account  
for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £
Note			
<b>Receipts</b>			
Donations & fundraising	27212	-	27212
Grants	2 86000	92567	178567
Gift aid received	6511	-	6511
Services	4781	-	4781
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>124504</b>	<b>92567</b>	<b>217071</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
Staff costs	54304	94374	148678
Office & premises costs	3795	2895	6690
Service Delivery costs	10421	4482	14903
Organisational costs	9257	-	9257
Volunteer costs	390	-	390
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>78167</b>	<b>101751</b>	<b>179918</b>
<b>Net receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>46337</b>	<b>(9184)</b>	<b>37153</b>
Cash funds at start of this period	143439	17501	160940
<b>Cash funds at end of this period</b>	<b>189776</b>	<b>8317</b>	<b>198093</b>

**South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice  
Statement of assets and liabilities  
at 31 March 2024**

	Note	2024 £
<b>Cash assets</b>		
Bank accounts		197938
Cash in hand		<u>155</u>
		<b><u>198093</u></b>
 <b>Other monetary assets</b>		
Debtors	4	<u>6839</u>
		<b><u>6839</u></b>
 <b>Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>		
General equipment.		
 <b>Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	5	<u>(2762)</u>
		<b><u>(2762)</u></b>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed  Dated 14/1/25  
Gary Bell, Trustee

**South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice**  
**Notes to the accounts**  
**for the period 6 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

**1. Receipts & payments accounts**

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

The CIO was officially established in July 2022, however the final transfer of assets, liabilities and operations from the unincorporated charity to the CIO took place on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023. As the charity was formed through a merger, the financial statements cover the financial period from 6/4/2023 to 31/3/2024. Comparative figures for the old charity for the year to 5/4/23 are not available as accounts were not prepared for that period.

**2. Grants & donations**

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Disrupt	20000	-	20000
The Brelms Trust	-	5000	5000
British Red Cross	-	38563	38563
Access to Justice Foundation	-	42004	42004
Hilden Charitable Trust	-	7000	7000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25000	-	25000
Gina Clayton Legacy Fund	25000	-	25000
Sheffield City Council	16000	-	16000
	<u>86000</u>	<u>92567</u>	<u>178567</u>

**3. Funds analysis**

	Opening balance £	Receipts (Payments) £		Closing balance £
	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted funds</b>				
The Brelms Trust fund	-	5000	(5000)	-
NLCF (SMDP Partnership)	4001	38563	(42564)	-
Access to Justice (IOLTS)	-	42004	(37187)	4817
Hilden Charitable Trust fund	3500	7000	(7000)	3500
Open Philanthropy fund	10000	-	(10000)	-
	<u>13500</u>	<u>49004</u>	<u>(54187)</u>	<u>8317</u>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General funds	143439	124504	(78167)	189776
	<u>143439</u>	<u>124504</u>	<u>(78167)</u>	<u>189776</u>

## South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

### 4. Debtors

	£
HMRC	5179
Insurance prepayment	1660
	<u>6839</u>

### 5. Creditors

	£
HMRC balance owed for M12	(1261)
Professional fees	(876)
IT and payroll	(625)
	<u>(2762)</u>

### 6. Trustees remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

### 7. Glossary of terms

**Debtors:** These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

**Creditors:** These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid in the accounting period.

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# Accounts

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**South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice**  
(Registered Charity, number 1199706)

**Financial statements  
for the year ended 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

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4	Receipts & payments account
5	Statement of assets & liabilities
6	Notes to the accounts

# South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice

## Board of Trustees' annual report for the year ended 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### Main address

The Sanctuary, 37-39 Chapel Walk, Sheffield S1 2PD

### Board of Trustees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>	<u>Date Left</u>
Gary Bell (Chair)	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	
Christopher Cole (Vice-Chair)	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	
Patricia Anne Hudson (Treasurer)	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	
Phil Moore (Secretary)	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	
Victor Mujakachi	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	
Peter Veal	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	
Ibtisam Al-Farah	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
Muhammad Bary	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	25 <sup>th</sup> August 2022
Susan Burgess	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
John Donkersley	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2022

### Bankers

The Co-Operative Bank, PO Box 150, Delf House, Skelmersdale WN8 6GG

### Governance and management

The Charity is governed according to the rules set out in a Foundation Model Constitution, which was approved on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and ratified on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

The Board of Trustees meets formally every two months, to consider issues raised by the staff team and make any decisions required. The Director submits a Report covering a range of standing items and detailing any required decisions, along with the rationale. This Report, together with the Management Accounts and any associated papers, are circulated to the Board at least one week prior to the meeting. Minutes of the proceedings are captured, along with any decisions taken by the Board. A full Budget with variations is considered and approved on a quarterly basis. A secure messaging facility is used on those occasions where decisions may be urgently required outside the normal meeting cycle, with special general meetings called if necessary.

Apart from the first Charity trustees, every trustee is appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Charity trustees.

### Aims and objectives

1. To promote human rights throughout the world by all or any of the following means:

- a. Relieving need among the victims of human rights abuses
- b. Educating the public about human rights abuse

c. Eliminating infringements of human rights

2.The relief of financial hardship amongst asylum seekers, refugees, and their dependants in South Yorkshire by the provision of free legal advice and assistance.

3.The advancement of education of the public about asylum law and practice.

**Summary of the main achievements during the period**

See the *Chair's Explanatory Note* on Page 6.

Signed on behalf of the Board:

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'GB'.

Signed

Dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

Gary Bell, Chair

## South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice

### Receipts & payments account for the year ended 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

	£
<b>Receipts</b>	
<i>Grants</i>	0
<i>Donations</i>	0
<i>Bank interest</i>	0
<i>Other receipts</i>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<u><b>0</b></u>
<b>Payments</b>	
<i>Wages</i>	0
<i>Staff travel</i>	0
<i>Volunteer expenses</i>	0
<i>Rent</i>	0
<i>Utilities</i>	0
<i>Equipment</i>	0
<i>Activities</i>	0
<i>Insurance</i>	0
<i>Hospitality</i>	0
<i>Other payments</i>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<u><b>0</b></u>
Net receipts/(payments)	<u><b>0</b></u>
Bank and cash at the start of the period	0
Bank and cash at the end of the period	<u><b>0</b></u>

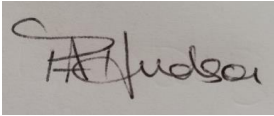
# South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice

## Statement of assets and liabilities at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

	£
<b>Cash assets</b>	
<i>Current account</i>	0
<i>Deposit account</i>	0
<i>Petty cash</i>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total cash assets</b>	<u><u>0</u></u>
<b>Other assets</b>	
<i>Nil</i>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<i>Nil</i>	

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the organisation by:

Signed



Dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

Patricia Anne Hudson, Treasurer

# South Yorkshire Refugee Law & Justice

## Notes to the accounts for the year ended 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023

### 1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts are statements that summarise the movement of cash into and out of the organisation during the financial year. In this context “cash” includes cash equivalents, for example, bank accounts where cash can be readily withdrawn to pay for debts as they become due.

### 2. Grants & Donations

Nil

### 3. Board members’ remuneration

Nil

### 4. Chair’s Explanatory Note

The Charity was registered on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the intention of merging it with an existing unincorporated association of the same name (Registered Charity, number 1146748). The CIO remained dormant for the 2022-23 financial period – with no activities, income or expenditure - while a number of steps were taken to facilitate the merger, including:

- a. Obtaining an Order from the Charity Commission to authorise the transfer of the unincorporated association assets and liabilities and grant an indemnity under Section 105 of the Charities Act 2011.
- b. Informing existing donors and stakeholders of the proposed transfer and making additional undertakings where required.
- c. Setting up banking, insurance, pension and tax facilities for the CIO.
- d. Obtaining permission from the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner to transfer registration to the CIO.
- e. Drafting a Deed of Transfer for the assets and liabilities of the unincorporated association.

Once due diligence had been completed, the merger of the two charities was subsequently registered by the Commission on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with a transfer date of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023, and the unincorporated association removed from the Register.