



**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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**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 11/1/25

**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:

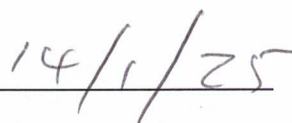
1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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



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**

		2024
<b>Cash assets</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>£</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
	<b>86000</b>	<b>92567</b>	<b>178567</b>

**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)	-
	<b>13500</b>	<b>49004</b>	<b>(54187)</b>	<b>8317</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>				
General funds	143439	124504	(78167)	189776
	<b>143439</b>	<b>124504</b>	<b>(78167)</b>	<b>189776</b>



## 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.