



South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice

(Registered charity number 1199706)

Financial Statements

For the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

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

Governance and Management

Trustees

Gary Bell – Chair

Phil Moore – Secretary (Until 18th 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 26th 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

Charity no
(if any)

1199706

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:

FJ Wilde

Date:

21/01/26

Name:

FJ Wilde

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

CC16a

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/04/2024		31/03/2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
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	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	130,791	106,253	-	237,044	217,071
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	130,791	106,253	-	237,044	217,071
A3 Payments					
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
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	137,550	104,064	-	241,614	179,918
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	137,550	104,064	-	241,614	179,918
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 6,759	2,189	-	- 4,570	37,153
A5 Transfers between funds					
	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	189,776	8,317	-	198,093	160,940
Cash funds this year end	183,017	10,506	-	193,523	198,093

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 £
B1 Cash funds	Co-operative Current Account	96,540	10,506	-
	Co-operative Savings Account	86,000		-
	Petty Cash	477	-	-
	Total cash funds	183,017	10,506	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
	Prepayments	1,078	-	-
	Accrued income	18,395	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Laptops	Unrestricted	12,800	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	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
Total	101500	106253.17	207753.17

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