

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

(Company No.: 01720518)

(Charity No.: 287282)

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

MYRUS SMITH
Chartered Accountants

Norman House
8 Burnell Road
Sutton, Surrey
SM1 4BW

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

(Company No.: 01720518)
(Charity No.: 287282)

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TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees

James Blythe, Chair
Mark Kalderon, Treasurer
Rosalind Shaw, Secretary
Manuhar Ali
Derek Maurice Cox
Catherine Tuitt
Maria-Grazia Donvito
Yvonne Kramo
Kathleen Kurilecz (to 30 November 2021)
Philip Bartlett
Tahera Begum (to 22 February 2022)
Robyn Jones (from 18 May 2021)
Zeno Capucci (from 12 October 2021)
Sabrina Jamil (from 22 February 2022)
Stephanie Leung (from 22 February 2022)
Steven Pallett (from 22 February 2022)
Philippa Salewicz (from 22 February 2022)

Senior Managers

Martin South, Chief Executive
Bolaji Bishi, Senior Solicitor

Company Registered Number

1720518

Charity Registered Number

287282

Registered and Principal Office

Unit 1, St Anne Street
Off 789 Commercial Road
London E14 7HG

Independent Examiner

Stephen Jones FCA
% Myrus Smith, Chartered Accountants
Norman House
8 Burnell Road
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 4BW

Bankers

HSBC Plc
75 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1DU

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the financial statements of Tower Hamlets Law Centre (the Law Centre) for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Law Centre comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Law Centre's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in 2019.

The trustees have had regard to the advice of the Charities SORP Committee 'Implications of COVID-19 control measures and charity financial reporting', issued in March 2020.

Objectives and Activities

The Law Centre's main purposes are to relieve poverty and advance education by:

- developing independent Law Centre services for the people of Tower Hamlets and East London.
- providing access to justice and facilitating awareness of legal rights, particularly targeting the most disadvantaged members of the community.

The main activities for the year continued to focus on the following:

- Delivery of specialist legal advice for those most disadvantaged in the local community;
- Provision of second tier support and advice for other generalist advice agencies in Tower Hamlets;
- Delivery of community education work to raise awareness of legal rights amongst local people; and
- Active development of services through partnership with other advice-giving organisations.

The law centre's work has a positive and long-lasting impact on our clients' wellbeing, dignity and human rights. For example:

- We help people fleeing persecution overseas to be granted asylum in this country, including an increasing number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers; help to reunite families separated by international borders; and help women to escape from violence at home.
- We fight to prevent people from being evicted and becoming homeless; help those already homeless to secure accommodation when it has been denied to them; and help people living in unsafe and unhealthy homes to make their landlords repair them.
- We make sure that people get the welfare benefits they are entitled to, including some of the most vulnerable members of society who are fearful and desperate in the face of decisions to withdraw Personal Independence Payments and Education and Support Allowance.
- We help people with all kinds of problems at work, including pay and working conditions, unfair dismissal and redundancy.

The trustees have agreed their Strategic Plan 2019-2022, which builds on the success of its predecessor in restoring the law centre's financial stability and enabling it to begin developing its services. The year ended 31 March 2021 was the final year covered by the Plan, which has been reviewed by the trustees against the criteria that it contains for assessing success. The trustees have prepared a new Strategic Plan for 2022-25 which sets key objectives for the future.

Achievements and performance

The main objectives set by the trustees related to maintaining the charity's activities, and these were successfully met. In particular:

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Delivery of Specialist Legal Advice

We delivered specialist casework in housing, immigration, welfare benefits, and employment law throughout the year. By about the mid-point of the year, our services were delivered principally from our office in St Anne Street, near Westferry DLR, with advice to individuals provided through face-to-face appointments with specialist caseworkers and solicitors. The Covid-19 pandemic, and the national response to it, continued to have a significant impact on service delivery for the year, however, with the end of formal restrictions taking place only in the second quarter of the year and precautions around the safe delivery of services continuing well after that. Our pro-bono evening advice clinics, run in partnership with major City of London law firms and drawing on generous support from them and their staff, continued as telephone services throughout the year.

Throughout the year, we kept our website, www.thlc.co.uk, updated with details of our services as well as useful information about special Government measures that were taken in respect of housing, immigration, welfare benefits and employment law to mitigate the effects of Covid-19.

During the year 2021-22 we worked on 1,572 cases. This number was close to what we expected, following a substantial reduction in the previous year due to Covid-19 (and explained in our report for that year).

Partnership Working, Provision of Second Tier Support and Community Education

We are members of the rota for the Housing Possession Duty Solicitor Scheme at Bow County Court, providing assistance, advice and representation at court to those facing possession proceedings. The scheme resumed operation during the year, when court hearings recommenced following their suspension during Covid-19.

We continued to provide second tier support to other advice agencies in the borough, including advice by telephone and supervision support, but many other activities fell into abeyance as we and other agencies focused on maintaining core services to clients. We continued to participate in the Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network and Advice Tower Hamlets partnerships, which met virtually throughout the year to co-ordinate services and offer mutual support. The borough's Local Link service, in which we were a partner, came to an end following a recommissioning exercise by Tower Hamlets council. It was replaced by Tower Hamlets Connect, a new service in which we are also partners, provided by substantially the same organisations as before.

Short-term funding also allowed us to work during the year with Crisis, the Public Law Project and the Law Centres Network on an innovative project providing social welfare and public law advice to Crisis Skylight centres.

Funding

Earnings from legal aid recovered a little from the amounts in 2020-21, but, as predicted, were still very low in 2021-22 compared to their historical level.

We are immensely grateful for the continuing support of funders like the City Bridge Trust, the Trust for London, the Legal Education Foundation, the London Legal Support Trust and the A.B. Charitable Trust as well as our corporate supporters, including Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Norton Rose Fulbright, and Ince.

Our employment law service was supported by a grant from the Law Centres Network Justice Fund. This helped us to continue to provide the service while we tried to find long-term sustainable funding for it.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Financial Review

The funding environment for advice services has been particularly challenging for the last ten years, and despite achieving surpluses since 2017/18, the law centre's sustainability remains uncertain. We expect inflation, recession and the cost-of-living crisis to put exceptional pressure on public sector funders, who are likely to be expected to make budget savings; and even the generous donations of our corporate supporters and grants from trusts and foundations are likely to come under pressure in challenging economic times.

For the time being, funding from the L. B. Tower Hamlets Local Community Fund (which we receive as part of the Advice Tower Hamlets consortium) is continuing unchanged, but funding for Tower Hamlets Connect (which effectively replaced the Local Link programme from July 2021, and now includes the 'front door' for the council's adult social care services) halved our income from this source from £60,000 p.a. to £30,000 p.a. This significantly reduces the amount of work we can do for Tower Hamlets residents with support needs.

The scope of legal aid is far too narrow to allow access to justice for many people, and the rates of payment for work done are inadequate. This had led to many practitioners abandoning practice. We understand that the Government will soon announce a review of civil legal aid, aimed at developing proposals to ensure the long-term sustainability of the civil legal aid supplier base. The 2018 standard civil contract has been extended to 31 August 2024 in order to allow time for the review to take place. We await the outcome with interest.

Our original projections for 2022-23 were for a deficit, which the trustees agreed to meet from our reserves. We now expect to roughly break even as a result of successful in-year fundraising. The outlook for 2023-24 remains uncertain, however: we currently anticipate a deficit, which we are working to mitigate as far as possible.

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Law Centre is exposed, and, in particular, those related to its operations and finances. A risk register has been established and is updated at least annually. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. The Law Centre's Strategic Plan seeks to mitigate the risks associated with particular sources of funding and ensure the continued viability of the charity. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the centre. The maintenance of the Lexcel Quality Standard and compliance with Solicitors' Practice Rules ensure a consistent quality of delivery for all operational activities of the charity. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the charity. Our risk register was updated to incorporate specific risks relevant to COVID-19, and those were also the subject of a separate, dedicated risk management exercise.

Designated Funds

In their Strategic Plan 2019-2022, the Trustees anticipated that, in order to expand the law centre's services and continue its financial recovery, it would be necessary to move to new, larger premises before the end of March 2022. The trustees designated a fund of £50,000 to deal with the potential costs of moving premises, including the payment of a lease premium, fit-out costs, removal costs (including specialist IT costs) and increased rental costs.

The trustees intend to review the need for larger premises in the light of the introduction of 'hybrid' working by the law centre and many other organisations in the wake of Covid-19. They have not yet arrived at a final view, but have negotiated a new lease of the existing premises, from which we are unlikely to move until at least December 2025, when it expires. If the trustees decide that larger premises are no longer necessary, the designation of this fund will be removed.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Reserves Policy

The Trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. For the moment, the reserves target is unchanged. Budgeted expenditure for 2023-24 is a little over £600,000. The target for reserves is therefore £200,000.

The amount of unrestricted reserves held by the charity at 31 March 2022 was £274,137. The Trustees anticipate that it will be necessary to draw upon these reserves over the course of the next few years in order to mitigate the effects of inflation, recession and the cost-of-living crisis in the UK. These will increase the cost of running the law centre at the same time as increasing demand for our services. At the same time, the historical underfunding of legal aid is likely to continue, and public sector funders, in particular, will be placed under increasing budgetary pressure.

Plans for the Future

The Trustees have agreed the Law Centre's Strategic Plan 2022-2025. In order to improve our focus on the things we most want to achieve, they have selected just four priorities for strategic development. Our three trustees' committees (Finance, Personnel and Development) will each lead on one of the priorities, ensuring that progress is regularly reviewed and any blockages managed. The fourth priority, which concerns community engagement, will be led by the full Board of Trustees, reflecting its central importance in our plans. The four priorities are:

Priority One: A High-Performing Organisation

Lead Committee: Finance

We will drive high performance at all levels of the organisation.

Priority Two: A Well-Funded Organisation

Lead Committee: Development

We will continue to grow and diversify our sources of income.

Priority Three: A Modern, Inclusive Employer of Choice

Lead Committee: Personnel

We will be an organisation that people want to work for, enjoy working for, stay and progress in

Priority Four: A Fully Engaged Voice for the East End Community

Lead: Full Board of Trustees

We will understand our community better, and build links so that our work reflects the needs and priorities of the people we serve.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The Law Centre is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 14 March 1983. The Memorandum of Association established the objects and powers of the charitable company and it is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

The Law Centre's purposes, as set out in its governing document, are:

- The relief of poverty amongst persons resident or working in Greater London and in particular the London borough of Tower Hamlets ("the benefit area") by providing such persons with legal services which they could not otherwise obtain or which it would not be reasonably practicable or appropriate to obtain elsewhere;
- The advancement of education amongst persons resident or working in the benefit area;
- The advancement of such other charitable purposes as are beneficial to the community for persons resident or working in the benefit area.

In December 2016, revised Articles of Association were adopted, but they made no substantive changes to the Law Centre's purposes, which were simply moved from the Memorandum to the Articles.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. The management of the Law Centre is the responsibility of the Trustees, who are appointed and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association one third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire at each Annual General Meeting, at which time they may be reappointed if eligible.

The Trustees may co-opt any individual, provided the total number of Trustees does not exceed the number allowed by the Articles. Co-opted Trustees hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting, at which time they may be reappointed if eligible.

When more Trustees are needed, the Trustees advertise vacancies widely in order to draw in appropriately qualified individuals to support the development of the Law Centre. Appropriate qualifications may include specific skills, experience and contacts as well as knowledge of the local community. A recruitment process during the year to 31 March 2022 has resulted in the appointment of four new trustees.

Trustee Induction and Training

New Trustees are given the opportunity to visit the Law Centre during a working day and meet staff members and volunteers, as well as existing Trustees. All new Trustees receive an induction pack that includes general information about the Law Centre as well as recent copies of minutes, management accounts and senior management reports and a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees are invited to attend an individual meeting with the Chief Executive to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. This meeting covers:

- The roles and responsibilities of Trustees
- An overview of the governing document and key policies including equal opportunities and financial management
- The current financial position of the organisation, including an introduction to key funders and their requirements
- An overview of the Business Plan, focusing on future plans and objectives
- An overview of the current Risk Assessment

Related Parties

At a national level, provision and procurement of quality legal advice is ensured principally through the Legal Aid Agency and the Law Society. The charity engages with these bodies through the maintenance of the Lexcel Quality Standard and through compliance with Solicitors' Practice Rules. The charity also maintains membership of the Law Centres Network, which provides important links to wider policy issues and support for the organisation in management practice and strategic development. Locally, the charity is represented on the Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network, a group of advice agencies working in the borough.

Public Benefit

In planning and reviewing the following activities, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit. We are satisfied that in the management of resources to deliver legal advice services we can demonstrate that our work benefits not only our clients but also to the wider community.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Organisational Structure and Decision Making

The Law Centre's members elect its Trustees, who are responsible for the strategic direction of the law centre and oversight of its work and finances.

The Trustees delegate day-to-day responsibility for the provision of services to the Chief Executive and the Senior Solicitor. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the secure financial management and administration of the charity and the Senior Solicitor is responsible for ensuring the quality of the services delivered. Effective management and supervision of the staff team is the responsibility of both the Chief Executive and the Senior Solicitor.

Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The remuneration of the charity's key management personnel, the Chief Executive and the Senior Solicitor, is set by the Board of Trustees, taking into account the charity's financial position and the amount paid for comparable roles in comparable organisations.

Volunteers

The Law Centre is grateful for support of its volunteers. In particular, we are indebted to the trainee solicitors from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Norton Rose Fulbright, Ashurst, and Ince, who offer pro bono advice on housing, employment, welfare benefits and immigration.

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees (who are also directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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Independent Examiner

Stephen Jones of Myrus Smith Chartered Accountants was appointed as our independent examiner at the Annual General Meeting in November 2020. He has expressed his willingness to accept appointment and a resolution to appoint him for 2021/22 will be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Small Company Exemptions

This report is prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 29/11/2022 and signed on its behalf, by:



Mark Kalderon
Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of:

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 11 to 23.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.



Stephen Jones FCA
% Myrus Smith, Chartered Accountants
Norman House
8 Burnell Road
Sutton, Surrey
SM1 4BW

1 December 2022

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating Income and Expenditure Account)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:					
Donations	2	95,152	178,547	273,699	194,508
Charitable activities	3	187,131	176,335	363,466	360,191
Investments	4	23	-	23	91
Total		<u>282,306</u>	<u>354,882</u>	<u>637,188</u>	<u>554,790</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	211,984	354,882	566,866	548,623
Total		<u>211,984</u>	<u>354,882</u>	<u>566,866</u>	<u>548,623</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		<u>70,322</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>70,322</u>	<u>6,167</u>
Transfer between funds	15				
Net movement in funds		<u>70,322</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>70,322</u>	<u>6,167</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	15	203,815	-	203,815	197,648
Total funds carried forward	15	<u>£274,137</u>	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£274,137</u>	<u>£203,815</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all recognised gains and losses.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
(A company limited by guarantee)

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	11		7,812		13,743
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	61,926		92,682	
Cash at bank and in hand		271,681		183,169	
		<u>333,607</u>		<u>275,851</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	13	67,282		68,593	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>266,325</u>		<u>207,258</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>274,137</u>		<u>221,001</u>
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after more than one year	14		-		17,186
NET ASSETS	16		<u><u>£274,137</u></u>		<u><u>£203,815</u></u>
FUNDS					
Restricted	15		-		-
Unrestricted - Designated	15		50,000		50,000
Unrestricted - General	15		224,137		153,815
	15		<u><u>£274,137</u></u>		<u><u>£203,815</u></u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2022. The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 29/11/2022 and signed on its behalf by:

James Blythe
Trustee and Chair



The notes form part of the financial statements.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
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CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net movement in funds	70,322	6,167
Adjustments for:		
Interest receivable	(23)	(91)
Depreciation charges (note 11)	4,162	6,379
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	30,756	(27,458)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(18,497)	22,859
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>86,720</u>	<u>7,856</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Interest received (note 4)	23	91
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	-	(15,041)
Disposal of tangible fixed assets	1,769	-
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>1,792</u>	<u>(14,950)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	88,512	(7,094)
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	183,169	190,263
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	<u>£271,681</u>	<u>£183,169</u>
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2022	2021
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>£271,681</u>	<u>£183,169</u>

The notes form part of the financial statements.

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019, Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis and under the historical cost convention. The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Income recognition

Items of income are recognised in the financial statements when all of the following criteria are met:

- The charity has entitlement to the funds;
- any performance conditions have been met or are fully within the control of the charity;
- there is sufficient certainty that receipt of the income is considered probable; and
- the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure recognition

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount can be measured reliably. Expenditure on charitable activities comprises the costs associated with delivering specialist legal advice.

Expenditure includes those costs of a direct nature which can be allocated to a specific activity. It also includes indirect costs, including governance costs that do not relate to a specific activity but are necessary to support those activities. Support costs are apportioned to each activity on the basis of staff time.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted general funds are freely available for use in furtherance of the objects of the charity and which have not been designated for particular purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds set aside by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which can only be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donor or which have been raised for a particular purpose.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible assets costing more than £500 are capitalised. Depreciation is provided so as to write off the cost of each asset over its estimated useful life at the following annual rates:

Fixtures and fittings	20% straight line
Computer equipment	25% straight line

TOWER HAMLETS LAW CENTRE
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (cont'd)

Leases

Operating lease rentals are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Pensions

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable under the scheme are charged the Statement of Financial Activities in the year to which they relate.

The charity also has ongoing historic obligations under a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme and it therefore accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

Debtors and creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairments are recognised in expenditure.

2. DONATIONS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Grants	15,000	178,547	193,547	122,115
Donations	80,152	-	80,152	72,393
	<u>£95,152</u>	<u>£178,547</u>	<u>£273,699</u>	<u>£194,508</u>

Of the £194,508 recognised in 2021, £87,393 was unrestricted and £107,115 was restricted.

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Grants and contracts:				
Legal Aid Agency	38,326	-	38,326	32,200
London Borough of Tower Hamlets/East End Citizens Advice Bureau	-	97,335	97,335	102,335
Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme	10,296	-	10,296	288
Trust for London	-	46,000	46,000	45,000
Real DPO Limited	51,799	-	51,799	53,631
Crisis Hub Agreement	-	15,000	15,000	5,000
Justice Fund	-	18,000	18,000	-
COVID-19 Specialist Advice Services	-	-	-	100,000
Fees from private clients	86,710	-	86,710	21,737
	<u>£187,131</u>	<u>£176,335</u>	<u>£363,466</u>	<u>£360,191</u>

Of the £360,191 recognised in 2021, £107,856 was unrestricted funds and £252,335 was restricted funds.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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4. INVESTMENT INCOME	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Bank interest	£23	£Nil	£23	£91

All of the £91 recognised in 2021 was unrestricted funds.

5. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	Direct costs £	Support costs £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Housing	99,848	56,076	155,924	170,789
Employment	41,390	22,430	63,820	16,646
Immigration	131,320	84,113	215,433	220,448
Welfare	86,829	44,860	131,689	140,740
	<u>£359,387</u>	<u>£207,479</u>	<u>£566,866</u>	<u>£548,623</u>

Of the £548,623 expenditure recognised in 2021, £182,505 was charged to unrestricted funds and £366,118 was charged to restricted funds.

6. ANALYSIS OF DIRECT COSTS	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Staff costs	355,164	329,249
Other direct costs	4,223	7,929
	<u>£359,387</u>	<u>£337,178</u>

7. ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT COSTS	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Staff and freelance costs	137,061	145,091
Office costs	44,723	40,656
Premises costs	22,245	22,248
Governance costs (see Note 8)	3,450	3,450
	<u>£207,479</u>	<u>£211,445</u>

8. GOVERNANCE COSTS	2022 £	2021 £
Independent examiner's fees - Examination	2,200	2,200
SRA audit	1,250	1,250
	<u>£3,450</u>	<u>£3,450</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022
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9. NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2022 2021

The net income/expenditure for the year is stated after charging:

Operating lease rentals	£17,532	£17,532
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	£4,989	£6,379
Independent Examiner's remuneration	£2,200	£2,200
Pension contributions (defined contribution schemes)	£11,734	£9,646
	<u>£11,734</u>	<u>£9,646</u>

During the year Trustees received no remuneration (2021: £Nil) or reimbursed expenses (2021: £Nil).

10. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS 2022 2021
£ £

Staff costs were as follows:

Wages and salaries	434,170	415,012
Social security costs	37,513	33,542
Pension costs	11,734	9,646
Pension deficit contributions	(12,311)	-
	<u>£471,106</u>	<u>£458,200</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 16 (2021: 17).

No employee received total benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to more than £60,000 in either year.

Total employee benefits received by key management amounted to £29,073 (2021: £29,082). Under FRS 102, employee benefits includes gross salary, employer's NIC, employer's pension contributions and benefits in kind.

11. FIXED ASSETS

	Office & Computer Equipment £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
Cost at 1 April 2021	24,307	1,510	25,817
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	1,769	-	1,769
At 31 March 2022	<u>22,538</u>	<u>1,510</u>	<u>24,048</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2021	10,866	1,208	12,074
Charge for the year	4,687	302	4,989
Eliminated on disposal	(827)	(-)	(827)
At 31 March 2022	<u>14,726</u>	<u>1,510</u>	<u>16,236</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2022	<u>£7,812</u>	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£7,812</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>£13,441</u>	<u>£302</u>	<u>£13,743</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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12. DEBTORS	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	14,423	21,613
Prepayments and accrued income	44,003	67,569
Other debtors	3,500	3,500
	<u>£61,926</u>	<u>£92,682</u>

13. CREDITORS – Amounts falling due within one year	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	18,810	36,323
Accruals and deferred income (see below)	23,389	20,719
Taxation and social security	25,083	11,551
	<u>£67,282</u>	<u>£68,593</u>

DEFERRED INCOME	Balance Brought Forward £	Additions in Year £	Released to Income £	Balance Carried Forward £
Grants	10,750	15,000	10,750	15,000

Deferred income reflects grant income received in advance for the following financial year, to be expended in accordance with specified or implied timeframes and agreed budgets.

14. CREDITORS – Amounts falling due after more than one year	2022 £	2021 £
Pension deficit	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£17,186</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022
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15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

2022	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers Between Funds £	Carried Forward £
Restricted funds					
Specialist Welfare Advice Partnership	-	97,335	(97,335)	-	-
Immigration Advice Service	-	46,000	(46,000)	-	-
Capacity Building	-	43,750	(43,750)	-	-
Justice First Fellowship Scheme	-	45,511	(45,511)	-	-
EU Settlement Scheme	-	39,424	(39,424)	-	-
Crisis Hub Agreement	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
Justice Fund	-	18,000	(18,000)	-	-
London Community Response	-	49,862	(49,862)	-	-
	-	354,882	(354,882)	-	-
Unrestricted funds					
General	153,815	282,306	(211,984)	-	224,137
Designated - Premises	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
	203,815	282,306	(211,984)	-	274,137
Total Funds	£203,815	£637,188	£(566,866)	£Nil	£274,137

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS /contd...

Specialist Welfare Advice Partnership

The Specialist Welfare Advice Partnership fund represents MainStream Grant funding from Tower Hamlets Council for the provision of specialist welfare advice services.

Immigration Advice Service

Funding received towards provision of legal advice and support to women across East London suffering domestic violence, complicated by immigration and asylum issues.

Capacity Building

The Law Centre has received funding towards the costs of developing its fundraising capacity and also towards salaries and overheads.

Justice First Fellowship Scheme

This is funded by the Legal Aid Foundation for the training of Fellow solicitors.

EU Settlement Scheme

This is funded by the Home Office to support vulnerable EU citizens with completing their EUSS applications.

ROMA

This is funded by the Law Centre Network to provide housing advice to Roma migrants.

Crisis Hub Agreement

Support for Crisis's "Skylight Centres" and other frontline organisations.

London Community Response

This was money for and spent on computer equipment.

Designated fund – Premises

The Trustees have designated £50,000 towards the potential costs associated with moving to new premises including payment of a lease premium, fit-out costs, removal costs (including Specialist IT costs) and increased rental costs.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022
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15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS /contd...

Comparative information for the net movement in funds in the previous year is as follows:

2021	Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers Between Funds £	Carried Forward £
Restricted funds					
Access to Justice	-	6,000	(6,000)	-	-
Specialist Welfare Advice Partnership	-	102,335	(102,335)	-	-
Immigration Advice Service	-	45,000	(45,000)	-	-
Solicitor Training	6,668	-	(6,668)	-	-
Capacity Building	-	18,750	(18,750)	-	-
Justice First Fellowship Scheme	-	39,273	(39,273)	-	-
EU Settlement Scheme	-	31,351	(31,351)	-	-
Crisis Hub Agreement	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
COVID-19 Specialist Advice Services	-	100,000	(100,000)	-	-
London Community Response	-	11,741	(11,741)	-	-
	<u>6,668</u>	<u>359,450</u>	<u>(366,118)</u>		
Unrestricted funds					
General	140,980	195,340	(182,505)	-	153,815
Designated - Premises	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
	<u>190,980</u>	<u>195,340</u>	<u>(182,505)</u>		<u>203,815</u>
Total Funds	<u>£197,648</u>	<u>£554,790</u>	<u>£(548,623)</u>	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£203,815</u>

16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
2022			
Fixed Assets	7,812	-	7,812
Current assets	318,607	15,000	333,607
Current liabilities	(52,282)	(15,000)	(67,282)
Non-current liabilities	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2022	<u>£274,137</u>	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£274,137</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS /contd...

Comparative information for the analysis of net assets between funds at the end of the previous year is as follows:

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
2021			
Fixed Assets	13,743	-	13,743
Current assets	265,101	10,750	275,851
Current liabilities	(57,843)	(10,750)	(68,593)
Non-current liabilities	(17,186)	-	(17,186)
As at 31 March 2021	<u>£203,815</u>	<u>£Nil</u>	<u>£203,815</u>

17. COMPANY STATUS

Tower Hamlets Law Centre is a private company limited by guarantee with no share capital and is registered in England and Wales. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the company being wound up. The registered office of the company is given in the Reference and Administrative Details of the Trustees' Annual Report.

18. TAXATION

As a registered charity, Tower Hamlets Law Centre is exempt from taxation under Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 and Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992.

19. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Due within one year	8,994	9,242
Due within one to five years	-	744
	<u>£8,994</u>	<u>£9,986</u>

20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Pension Trust – The Growth Plan

The charity participates in the above multi-employer pension scheme which provides benefits to some 1,300 non-associated participating employers. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme in the UK. It is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme. Therefore it accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme.

The scheme is subject to the funding legislation outlined in the Pensions Act 2004 which came into force on 30 December 2005. This, together with documents issued by the Pensions Regulator and Technical Actuarial Standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, set out the framework for funding defined benefit occupational pension schemes in the UK.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES/contd...

The scheme is classified as a 'last-man standing arrangement'. Therefore the charity is potentially liable for other participating employers' obligations if those employers are unable to meet their share of the scheme deficit following withdrawal from the scheme. Participating employers are legally required to meet their share of the scheme deficit on an annuity purchase basis on withdrawal from the scheme.

A full actuarial valuation for the scheme was carried out at 30 September 2017. This actuarial valuation showed assets of £795m, liabilities of £926m and a deficit of £131m. To eliminate this funding shortfall, the trustees and the participating employers have agreed that additional contributions will be paid to the scheme. The recovery plan contributions are allocated to each participating employer in line with their estimated share of the Series 1 and Series 2 scheme liabilities.

The charity's share of the recovery plan contributions amounts to £5,488 per annum, increasing by 3% each year until 31 January 2025. The total amount due under the original recovery plan amounting to £40,179 was recognised as a liability in the balance sheet in the year ended 31 March 2016. The liability has not been discounted to net present value on the grounds of immateriality.

As a result of changes to the recovery plan, effective from 1 April 2019, an additional liability of £6,484 was recognised in the 31 March 2019 accounts.

The estimated debt on withdrawal from the scheme is **£83,208 (effective date 30 September 2020)** and it is anticipated that this will reduce over time as a result of the recovery plan contributions and investment returns.

21. CONTINGENT ASSETS

The charity has been awarded some multi-year grants with specified or implied timeframes which preclude recognition of the full amount. The following contingent assets are therefore disclosed as at 31 March 2022:

London Borough of Tower Hamlets/ East End Citizens Advice Bureau	£97,336	(Specialist Welfare Advice Partnership)
Legal Education Fellowship	£72,959	(Justice First Fellowship Scheme)
Home Office & Law Centres Network	£5,000	(EU Settlement Scheme)
City Bridge Trust	£75,000	(Contribution towards Running Costs)
Trust for London	£94,000	(Immigration Advice Service)

22. CLIENT MONIES

In addition to the assets and liabilities included in these financial statements the charity also holds client money amounting to £35,046 as at 31 March 2022 (£95,994 as at 31 March 2021) in a separate client bank account.