

# ASYLUM AID

England & Wales · Charity number 328729

## Details

|                |                                                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Status         | Registered                                              |
| Legal form     | Charitable company                                      |
| Company number | <a href="#">02513874</a>                                |
| Registered     | 1990-07-24                                              |
| Register       | <a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a> |

## Contact

|         |                                                                      |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Website | <a href="http://www.asylumaid.org.uk">www.asylumaid.org.uk</a>       |

## Activities

**Objects:** 2. Objects2.1 The Charity is established for the following purposes for the benefit of the Beneficiaries:2.1.1 to relieve their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including by providing them with legal advice and representation);2.1.2 to preserve and protect their physical and mental health;2.1.3 to advance their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community;2.1.4 to advance public education about the position of and issues relating to the Beneficiaries, including the situations which give rise to refugee movements; and2.1.5 assisting them in such other exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time.2.2 In this Article 2, “Beneficiaries” means individuals who:2.2.1 are seeking asylum or other forms of protection in the UK;2.2.2 have already been granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or other forms of protection status by UK immigration authorities;2.2.3 have insecure immigration status or are stateless;2.2.4 are vulnerable to destitution, exploitation, abuse, trafficking or other forms of human cruelty including but not limited to those outside their country of origin; and2.2.5 the dependants of those mentioned in Articles 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 above.

**Activities:** The provision of legal advice and representation to people seeking asylum in the UK, lobbying and campaigning with the aim of achieving a fairer asylum process in the UK and advancing public and understanding of the position of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.

## Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Defined Groups

## Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

## Finances

| Period end | Income     | Expenditure | Assets     | Employees |
|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 2024-12-31 | £2,275,078 | £1,654,804  | £1,678,363 | 29        |
| 2023-12-31 | £1,723,495 | £1,203,361  | £1,058,089 | 24        |
| 2022-12-31 | £883,372   | £640,499    | £537,955   | 28        |
| 2021-12-31 | £707,506   | £480,331    | £295,082   | 19        |
| 2020-12-31 | £236,025   | £168,118    | -          | -         |

## Trustees

| Name                      | Role | Appointed  |
|---------------------------|------|------------|
| Elizabeth Anne Mottershaw |      | 2022-01-20 |
| John Scampion             |      | 2020-07-27 |
| Katharine Lorenz          |      | 2022-11-07 |
| Novide Refahi             |      | 2025-11-26 |
| Ruth Tanner               |      | 2022-12-01 |
| Shahd Mousalli            |      | 2025-11-26 |
| Sir Nicolas Bratza        |      | 2020-07-27 |
| Yehia Nasr                |      | 2022-12-01 |

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# Accounts

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CHARITY NUMBER: 328729  
COMPANY NUMBER: 02513874



# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 December 2024





Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

## TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Mottershaw – Chair  
Sir Nicolas Bratza  
Kat Lorenz  
Yehia Nasir  
Constantine Partasides  
John Scampion – Treasurer  
Ruth Tanner

## MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES (2024)

Alison Pickup – Executive Director  
Gareth Holmes – Group Executive Director of  
Fundraising and Communications  
Thomas Smith – Group Director of Finance and  
Governance  
Kerry Smith – Chief Executive Officer

**CHARITY NUMBER** 328729  
(registered in England and Wales)

**COMPANY NUMBER** 02513874  
(incorporated in the United Kingdom)

## REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

26 Westland Pl  
London  
N1 7JH

## AUDITOR

Sayer Vincent LLP  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors,  
110 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0TG

## BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

# IN 2024 WE ENSURED THAT MANY MORE PEOPLE RECEIVE PROTECTION AND ARE TREATED FAIRLY AND WITH DIGNITY



## WE CHANGED LIVES

246

clients received vital immigration legal representation including:

108

children and young people (aged 18-25)

82

survivors of trafficking and/or torture

22

stateless people

35

people at risk of rough sleeping

50

clients were granted legal protection

93

new immigration clients were taken on board

3

stateless people were recognised as such and given permission to stay

9

families were reunited

764

individuals received advice in community languages through our involvement in the Westminster Advice Services Partnership



## WE TRANSFORMED SYSTEMS

We ensured that the **Safety of Rwanda Act** is repealed

96%

of judicial review cases brought on behalf of our clients resulted in positive outcomes

**We challenged the Home Office's decision to deem thousands of people inadmissible to the asylum system**, which had left them living in limbo

**We revealed the problems with access to justice** for people held at the asylum camp at RAF Wethersfield

**We fought against delays** in asylum decision-making

**We challenged policies** that make family reunion much harder for two groups of vulnerable people: those living in conflict zones and stateless people

We led a coalition **to champion asylum rights and justice**



## WE BUILT PARTNERSHIPS AND LEGAL CAPACITY

We trained and supervised **our second cohort of Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) Level 2 advisers** to take on more complex asylum and human rights casework

**Our current Justice First Fellow completed her training contract**, working on 20 cases during her training period and qualifying as a solicitor in our public law team

As part of the Migrant Justice Greater London partnership, we **delivered remote supervision to IAA advisers in small community-led organisations across London**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

**2024 was a year of exciting change and consolidation for Asylum Aid. As the final year of working towards the 2022-2024 strategic objectives, we successfully delivered on our commitment to increase our own capacity to provide our much-needed expert legal representation to survivors, taking on 93 new clients across the year. We worked in partnership to increase capacity across legal deserts, partnering with legal advice providers from Devon to Manchester through our innovative model of training and remote supervision. We grew our statelessness project and our casework, enabling us to reach many more survivors.**

The first half of the year was dominated by the continuing fight against the previous government's plans to send people seeking protection thousands of miles away to Rwanda. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling at the end of 2023 that Rwanda would not be safe, the government persisted with its plan. It pushed through draconian legislation in the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024, which undermined the Rule of Law and tried to insulate the government from the scrutiny of the courts. Asylum Aid worked hard, together with our partners and clients, to challenge this horrendous policy through Parliament and in the courts. We were delighted when the new government scrapped the plan within days of being elected and finally, in response to our litigation, committed to repealing the legislation. However, serious harm had already been done to our clients, who experienced high levels of distress and anxiety when faced with the threat of removal to Rwanda. Many had spent months or years in limbo. The impact of years of hostile rhetoric towards our clients was seen in the horrific racist violence across multiple UK cities during the summer.

All of this made the work we do at Asylum Aid even more significant and urgent. We were delighted to grow our services in October thanks to our wonderful new office in central London. We moved into the new Trauma Centre together with our sister charity, the Helen Bamber Foundation. The building's trauma-informed design, equipped with calming consultation rooms, areas for clients to decompress after difficult meetings, and plenty of space for our team to work and meet, has been welcomed by staff, volunteers, clients and partners. We are excited to use this space to increase our collaborations and partnerships with colleagues across the sector.

None of this would be possible without our fantastic and talented team – whose expertise was recognised at the end of 2024 with a rare Peer Review rating of 1 (excellent) from the Legal Aid Agency – our volunteers, funders, partners and supporters. We are excited to be starting work under a new strategic framework, which is an evolution of the objectives we set for the past three years. We remain committed to work hard to achieve our vision and will continue to work collaboratively, to be courageous and act with integrity, to share our expertise and learn from others, and to promote equity.

# WHO WE ARE

Asylum Aid is a leading provider of high-quality legal representation to people with complex cases who are seeking asylum in the UK. For more than 30 years, we have worked with survivors of trafficking and torture, stateless people, unaccompanied children, and other vulnerable people seeking asylum, to help them gain legal protection in the UK. We believe everyone deserves access to protection; we take on the complex cases that others do not; and we provide the necessary support and expertise that such cases require when Legal Aid falls short. Since 2020, Asylum Aid has been part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. In 2023, we were joined by The Migrants' Law Project (MLP), a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

## OUR VISION

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All those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it and are treated fairly and with dignity.

## OUR VALUES

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**Pursuing Excellence:** We strive to be the best we can be in our work. We continuously learn from our clients and share it with others. Our advocacy is rooted in evidence and expertise.

**Courageous:** We advocate bravely for human rights and are not afraid to speak out against injustice. We are courageous in the advice we give, and we persevere in seeking lasting solutions, undaunted by the barriers we encounter and inspired by the bravery of our clients.

**Collaborative:** We proactively seek opportunities for partnerships, for sharing knowledge, and for joint work. We work collaboratively as a team. We listen to our clients and, through our advice, we enable them to get the best outcomes.

**Acting with Integrity:** We are honest, open, respectful and professional in all our dealings with our clients, partners, the Home Office, other government departments, courts, and each other. We fight fearlessly without compromising our ethical duties. We are accountable to these values, and we bring our whole selves to our work.

**Promoting Equity:** We believe that all those seeking protection should have equitable access to a fair system and must be treated equally. We are committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within our organisation and in our dealings with our clients, volunteers and partners.

# ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

## OUR MISSION: WHAT WE DO

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### Objectives for 2022-2024

- Consolidate and grow our capacity to deliver expert advice, direct legal representation, and casework in the most complex cases, enabling more survivors of human cruelty to secure legal status and meaningful protection
- Working in partnership with others, build capacity across the immigration advice sector to deliver expert advice and representation in complex cases
- Increase our capacity to engage in policy advocacy and strategic legal work to make the asylum system fair and dignified, and to improve access to effective and quality advice for those seeking protection
- Achieve financial sustainability, with reserves of between three to six months by 2024
- Ensure that Asylum Aid is a friendly, inclusive and supportive place to work, in which each member of the team feels valued and able to develop to their full potential

# I. WE INCREASED ACCESS TO PROTECTION THROUGH OUR CASEWORK



"I feel compelled to express my deepest gratitude for the extraordinary way you have supported me. Not only have you fought for me with unparalleled skill and dedication, but you have also demonstrated a level of care and thoughtfulness that I will never forget..."

Waleed, a stateless client from Kuwait

In 2024, we successfully expanded our capacity to provide legal representation to many more vulnerable men, women, non-binary people and children. We took on 93 new clients – each with a complex case, requiring the highest quality of legal support, which we are proud to have provided. **Thanks to the commitment and hard work of our team, 50 of our clients were granted protection during the year.**

Our work has not gone unnoticed. Our annual Lexcel audit, a nationally recognised legal practice quality mark awarded by the Law Society, stated that Asylum Aid *"demonstrated outstanding commitment to client care and quality of service"*. **In December 2024, the Legal Aid Agency awarded us a rare 'excellence' (Level 1) rating following a peer review of a sample of our files.**



## SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 18-25)



When Ali, a child survivor of war and trafficking, entered the UK, he was wrongly assessed to be 25 years old, based solely on his appearance. He was placed in shared adult accommodation in a hotel, which was very distressing for him. We quickly took on his case due to his vulnerability and issued a challenge against his age assessment. Sadly, Ali was beaten up outside of the hotel and ran away out of fear of further violence. Ali is illiterate and speaks a language that is rare outside his home country, so when he met an adult who could speak his language, he agreed to travel to another town in the UK with him. We managed to stay in contact with him by exchanging voice messages, and he agreed to share pictures of the park bench he had been sleeping on. We soon identified the town he was in, and we urgently contacted our partner organisation there to organise safe temporary accommodation for him. In the meantime, we sent a pre-action letter to the local authority explaining that we would take legal action if they failed to provide the care he is entitled to as a child. We also discovered that Ali may be neurodiverse, which was adding to his distress and inability to communicate his needs. Our involvement has ensured that Ali is now living in local authority care. As well as gaining the specialised welfare support he needs, Ali has built enough trust with us to tell us his story and engage more confidently with the legal process as we build a strong case for his legal protection.



*Photos and names in the case studies included in this report have been changed to protect clients' privacy.*

Ali is among the many children and young people we have supported in 2024. The work we do with them is uniquely challenging, as unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation. This is due to the complexity of their cases. Many involve histories of trafficking or other trauma, and in all cases, they are coping with the strain of family separation. This inevitably requires extra work and time, for which payment from the Legal Aid Agency is usually only received at the closure of their case. We are proud that we supported **108** children and young people seeking protection in 2024.

- In 2024, around 44% of the clients for whom we provided legal representation were children and young people (aged 18-25), from nationalities such as Albania, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan
- 21% of our child clients and 47% of clients who are young people were also victims of trafficking

## PROVIDING QUALITY LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING AND TORTURE



In 2017, Aza, 27, a non-binary Kurdish political activist for LGBTQIA+ and women's rights, was attending a memorial meeting held in their university to mark the second anniversary of the 10 October 2015 bombing in Ankara. They were detained by the local police for leading a political protest. They were kept for days in a dirty cramped cell, denied access to the toilet and not given any food or water. Four years later, they attended a Kurdish women's open-air event in Ankara, wearing traditional Kurdish female garb, and were targeted by police once again. Aza experienced sexual and gender-based violence by the police, who humiliated them by strip searching them in public and photographing them in a degrading manner. A year later, they were detained for a third time at an LGBTQIA+ Pride event, where they faced extreme psychological violence (using intense light and noise).



Aza soon fled Turkey and arrived in the UK. They were faced with a rude shock as they received poor legal advice and were housed in accommodation unsuitable for a non-binary person. They were referred to Asylum Aid by a panellist appearing at an academic conference. We took on Aza's case and submitted an asylum application on their behalf and supported them in gaining suitable accommodation and the right to work. As a result, Aza now lives in a house that they are happy with and they are working to support themselves. They hope to continue to fight for the rights of sexual and gender minorities while living in the UK.

Like Aza, survivors of trafficking and torture often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the complexity of their cases. Our legal team is trained to work in a trauma-informed way with survivors. We understand that the experience of torture and trafficking can impact survivors' ability to give a coherent and chronological account of their experiences. That's why we spend extensive time with our clients and obtain medical evidence to document the torture and other abuses that our clients have experienced. We support them to access therapy and other assistance required to manage the consequences of their trauma during the asylum process.

- In 2024, 34% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of trafficking and/or torture
- We secured protection for 16 survivors of trafficking and/or torture

## ENSURING STATELESS PEOPLE ARE GRANTED PERMISSION TO STAY IN THE UK



### WALEED

Waleed is a Kuwaiti Bidoon. The Bidoons are a stateless Arab minority descended from the nomadic Bedouin tribes of the Middle East. When Kuwait became independent in 1961, the Bidoons were not included as citizens and were classified as 'illegal residents'. Kuwaiti law bestows nationality only on children with a Kuwaiti father. It is not enough to be born in Kuwait or to have only a Kuwaiti mother. The Bidoons are therefore a largely stateless population who are discriminated against in many ways.

Waleed arrived in the UK in July 2013 and claimed asylum. He had taken part in Bidoon demonstrations in Kuwait and left the country illegally. It took more than two years for the claim to be finally refused at appeal. For the next five years, Waleed lived in limbo with no ability to work, study, or continue with his life in any way. He developed physical and mental health issues.

Waleed was referred to Asylum Aid in September 2022. Our pro bono partner Dentons worked with us to prepare Waleed's case. He had made a previous statelessness application, but without specialist advice, and the application was refused. It took Asylum Aid and Dentons more than a year to prepare the case. We visited the Embassy of Kuwait with Waleed, took detailed witness statements and compiled information about Bidoons. It took another year to get a decision. Initially, the Home Office refused this second application, but following our intervention, they reconsidered and granted statelessness leave in December 2024, without Waleed having to go through the long process of applying for Administrative Review. After 12 years of living in limbo, he finally got his life back.



**"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for changing my life. It is the beginning of a new chapter where I can finally feel safe and hopeful for the future. Your dedication will always be a light in my life, and I will be eternally grateful to all of you."**

Waleed's experiences are shared by many stateless people who have no documents, no rights and no state protection. They are often invisible. This takes a huge toll on their mental health and denies them a meaningful life. If they are given only basic state support, they cannot choose where they live or even what they eat. All of this makes them particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

We are among the very few organisations in the UK that specialise in this area of law. We offer free representation as there is usually no legal aid for applications on grounds of statelessness. We are supported by 10 corporate firms: Akin, Ashurst, Cooley, Dentons, Freshfields, Morrison Foerster, O'Melveny & Myers, Orrick, Reed Smith and Skadden.

Applications are complex and generally take more than a year to prepare. To prove statelessness, a person must exhaustively try to establish their nationality or right of admission to any relevant country. This takes vast amounts of work, and we are immensely proud of the achievements of our statelessness project, given the limited capacity we have within our charity to drive forward this strand of legal work.

- Three people were granted statelessness leave, and six cases are awaiting a decision
- We worked on **24** statelessness cases through the year, including seven new cases
- A mother and a child of a stateless client were **granted a family reunion** visa
- **57** volunteers from our partner firms worked with us on our statelessness cases pro bono

## REUNITING FAMILIES



### FATIMA

Fatima is a young Sudanese refugee seeking reunion with three of her siblings, now aged nine, 13 and 16. She had been taking care of them after her parents disappeared, but fled Sudan when she was 14, fearing for her safety, and took a risky and traumatic journey across Libya and Europe to the UK, where she has faced often difficult experiences. She turned 18 in 2023 and had to leave her foster family.

After many years in which she was unable to reach her own family, Fatima found that her siblings had been taken to Niger by their father. After her father passed away, her brother Abdi (then aged 13) disappeared, and it is feared that he has been kidnapped by an Islamist group. The other three were sheltered by a woman in Niger. However, they did not know her name or speak the same language as her, and she was abusive, hitting them and making them do household chores. Fatima's siblings were aged just seven, 11 and 14 at the time.



A key issue was that the UK government would not reunite the family without biometrics, yet there were no facilities in Niger. The Migrants' Law Project (MLP) raised £5,000 in 2023, including from a crowdfunder, to send biometric equipment and staff from Ghana to Niger to get the children's biometric data. However, just as arrangements were being made, there was a coup in Niger and the private company taking the biometrics cancelled the trip. The children and Fatima became increasingly distressed as the delays mounted. We continued to work on the case, but it was only in 2025 that we were able to reunite the siblings, coordinating with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to evacuate them from Niger. We reallocated the crowdfunded income to pay for this expensive process.

In 2024, we reunited families like that of Fatima thanks to our partnership with The Migrants' Law Project (MLP), which has gone from strength to strength. A small, strategic legal project that seeks to protect and promote the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants through strategic legal work, the MLP has expanded our work on family reunions significantly. Throughout the year, the MLP reunited refugees and vulnerable migrants with their families who were locked out of mainstream family reunion policies.

In a significant case, the MLP successfully won a legal challenge against a Home Office refusal to allow a Palestinian refugee's family in Gaza to apply for UK visas without fingerprints. We took action on behalf of our client after officials rejected his request for his wife and children to be exempt from the usual rules because of the situation in Gaza. Court said the Home Office must allow the family to apply without biometrics, securing a major win for our client and his family. We have helped four Palestinian families, comprising more than 20 individuals, to leave Gaza with a view to join their families in the UK.

- In 2024, The Migrants' Law Project reunited six families
- The MLP contributed to a briefing with HBF, Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL) and Together Now on family reunion for people in Sudan seeking to join family members in the UK

# II. OUR PARTNERSHIPS: WE BUILT CAPACITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION IN COMPLEX CASES

## WE GREW CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

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With a goal to extend our high-quality legal service to many more individuals in need of protection, we continued to build on our 'grow your own' model in 2024. We trained and developed new advisers within Asylum Aid with programmes such as the Justice First Fellowship – a grant that helped us recruit and train an aspiring solicitor – and a partnership with Justice Together Initiative to provide training, supervision, and shadowing opportunities to Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) Level 2 advisers working in organisations in 'advice deserts' across the UK. Through programmes such as these, we continue to grow capacity not just within our charity but also the immigration and asylum sector at large.

### BUILDING FUTURE LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIP

Funded by the Legal Education Foundation, the Justice First Fellowship is a route to a long and rewarding career using law as a tool for social justice. We are proud to be a host in this programme, which enables us to offer a two-year training contract to an aspiring solicitor. Our first Justice First Fellow completed her training contract in 2024, working on 20 cases during her training period, and is now a solicitor in our public law team. She has successfully taken on several complex cases including asylum, trafficking and family reunion cases, and supported a client to move out of the asylum camp at RAF Wethersfield.



**"The Justice First Fellowship at Asylum Aid has been the most incredible opportunity to pursue my career in the area of law that I really care about. The charity and legal aid sectors are sadly often unable to take on trainees due to funding limitations, but the Fellowship provides a mutually beneficial relationship between host and fellow."**

Justice First Fellow, cohort 2023-2025

At the end of 2024, we launched the recruitment for our next Justice First Fellow, starting in April 2025. We were delighted to recruit our new Justice First Fellow, working in our asylum team, to carry forward this partnership.

## COMPASS: THE ASYLUM AID ADVISOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

This ambitious project in partnership with Justice Together Initiative aims to build capacity and confidence of IAA Level 2 advisers to take on more complex asylum and human rights casework, contributing significantly to the availability of legal support in 'advice deserts' across the UK. In 2024, we provided training and supervision to our second cohort of advisers, who come from various frontline organisations, some led by people with lived experience, in South Wales, Devon, Manchester, Halifax and South London. Underpinning this flagship programme is a goal to establish a pipeline of high-quality legal advisers in the immigration and asylum system. We have already seen great success in fulfilling this vision, as participants have stayed within the sector after completing the programme and have contributed significantly to their organisations.



**"Working with Asylum Aid has hugely improved my knowledge, skills and confidence in complex asylum and immigration work. Since the project started, I've gained my IAAS Senior Caseworker qualification and am now IAA Level 3 in Immigration and Asylum and Protection, meaning I can work on clients' appeals under Legal Aid. This is thanks to the training and supervision from Asylum Aid and support of the JTI project."**

A cohort 2 trainee

## MIGRANT JUSTICE GREATER LONDON (MJGL) PROJECT

We have partnered with charities Refugee Action and Praxis to deliver remote supervision to IAA advisers in small community-led organisations across London. The project aims to increase the availability and quality of immigration support services for vulnerable migrant communities by better equipping advisers with knowledge of complex immigration cases.

After a successful first year of this project in 2024, we are now delivering supervision to partner organisations such as Sufra NW London and Children and Families Across Borders.

In 2024, our training sessions on topics such as domestic violence and legal aid were exceptionally well attended by advisers across the organisations. These sessions are crucial in equipping individuals to handle a host of complex issues.



**"The MJGL project has been pivotal in our development, enabling us to improve service delivery, build organisational confidence, and refine our case management practices to better serve our community and uphold the highest standards of diligence and care."**

Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations, a partner charity

## WE INCREASED CAPACITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

We know that good quality legal representation is life-saving for our clients, and that by working together with other charities and organisations, we can help more people. We collaborate with other organisations to change policies and practices that affect those who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity. We share best practice and seek to build capacity through training, second-tier support, and the publication of resources.

### PROVIDING LIFE-CHANGING WELFARE ADVICE



Kira arrived in the UK from Algeria with her two children (both under five-years-old) to seek asylum. Having fled her home country, she experienced depression and mental health problems. Her condition worsened as the Home Office placed her in a Westminster hotel, where she struggled to provide good quality food for her children. The food provided at the hotel lacked nutrition, was very spicy for her young children, and was often rotten. As a result, the family's health severely deteriorated. We provided Kira with food vouchers at a drop-in session and kept in touch with her.

After six months in the hotel, Kira and her children were moved far outside Westminster after a fire broke out. Kira lost all of the support network she had managed to build. She was moved to a completely new area and could not afford the travel costs of taking her children to their school in Westminster.

We supported Kira in applying for a hardship fund grant of £300 for her family, which helped her a lot during these tough times. When the fire broke out, Kira had to leave the family's already scarce belongings behind, so they needed clothes and shoes. We signposted her to different pop-up charity events and other charities that help with providing clothes to children in need. Kira told us that she felt less stressed and more empowered after our calls, as we spoke to her in Arabic, her native language, and she could truly express her concerns and feelings.

Kira is among the hundreds who benefitted from our partnership with Westminster City Council. Our Welfare Advice Services Partnership (WASP) team provides high-quality advice to migrant communities in Westminster on a range of welfare issues. Most of the people we support do not have English as a first language. Our advisers and volunteers are multilingual, and we work with volunteer community interpreters to support some of the most vulnerable people in Westminster.



#### In 2024:

- Our welfare advice team provided vital support to 764 individuals
- More than 80% of those receiving welfare advice from Asylum Aid were migrants and/or people of colour, and 58% declared a disability or long-term ill health
- In 67% of cases, advice was given in a community language, of which it was predominantly Arabic language (48%) and a significant number of clients speaking Farsi (8%) or Kurdish (7%)

## DELIVERING A ROUTE OUT OF HOMELESSNESS



### ANWAR

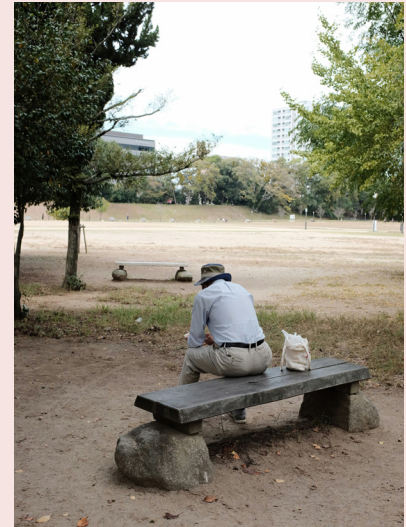
After being arrested at a peaceful anti-government demonstration in Egypt in 2017, Anwar was beaten by the Egyptian authorities and detained for four months. During his time in detention, he was tortured and interrogated on approximately five occasions. He was blindfolded and tied to chairs, beaten with rifle butts and belts, stripped and electrocuted. He was kept in cells that were so overcrowded that the inmates had to take turns to lie down to sleep, was denied visitors, and received no medical treatment for the beatings he suffered from his interrogators.

Shortly after he was released from detention, Anwar fled Egypt. He initially travelled to Libya, where he was again detained, tortured and exploited for labour by the people who facilitated his journey. After fleeing Libya, he continued his journey across Europe. Soon after his arrival in the UK in 2022, he discovered that he had been sentenced in absentia by an Egyptian court to life imprisonment, for his attendance at the 2017 demonstration.

Anwar claimed asylum upon his arrival in the UK but was initially unable to find legal representation. He was homeless and lost contact with and was treated as an absconder by the Home Office. He was referred to Asylum Aid through our partnership with the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL).

We made submissions to the Home Office on Anwar's behalf, stating that we were in the process of having court documents from Egypt translated in support of his asylum claim. However, the Home Office refused his asylum claim on all grounds, partly because Anwar had not provided the evidence that the Home Office was aware was in the process of being translated.

We lodged an appeal on behalf of Anwar and arranged for expert medical and country reports to be prepared in support of this. The evidence for this appeal was submitted to the Home Office and the First-tier Tribunal. Shortly before Anwar's appeal hearing, the UK authorities conceded the appeal and granted him asylum in the UK. He has now begun the process of rebuilding his life in the UK and is recovering from his traumatic experiences.



Since 2022, we have been working in partnership with RAMFEL to provide immigration advice to people like Anwar, who have slept on the streets or were at risk of doing so. Regularising immigration status can be a route out of homelessness, as it enables individuals to access accommodation, financial support, and vital medical care while their applications are pending. Eventually, by securing their stay, they can access housing, benefits and the labour market.

More than half of the clients referred to us under this partnership have significant mental and/or physical health issues. They often have a history of trafficking, exploitation, abuse or criminal records (often directly or indirectly linked to their lack of an immigration status within the UK). Their cases are often particularly complex, with long histories of rejection by the immigration system, making them especially vulnerable.

Under the partnership with RAMFEL, Asylum Aid takes up to 30 referrals a year to investigate eligibility for legal aid in asylum, humanitarian protection, trafficking, statelessness, and complex human rights cases. If eligible, we provide them with advice and representation on their asylum and immigration matters. Since the project started in October 2022, we have taken on 44 cases, with five clients securing immigration status to date following our advice, and many more with applications still pending decisions.

# III. WE INFLUENCED SYSTEMIC CHANGES THROUGH STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK AND POLICY ADVOCACY

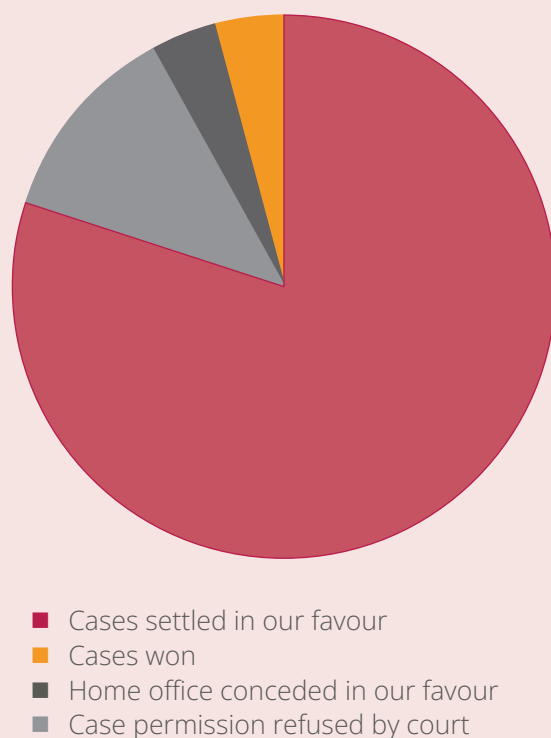
Over three decades, Asylum Aid has successfully changed policies that affect hundreds of people seeking protection, using strong evidence and client testimonies. Through our expertise and experience of working with vulnerable people, we encourage other organisations and charities to take on complex cases. We influence the government to deliver humane and effective asylum and immigration systems that uphold human rights.

In 2024, we saw a shift in political power with the election of the Labour government. Soon after taking office, it announced some much-needed reforms to the asylum system, including tackling the backlog of asylum cases. It committed to repeal the Safety of Rwanda Act in response to Asylum Aid's legal challenge and is proposing to repeal a significant amount of the Illegal Migration Act, which aimed to strip those fleeing war, persecution, and human rights abuses of their right to seek safety in this country. However, the government also introduced measures that we continue to oppose, such as the suspension of decision-making in Syrian asylum cases, and tough new guidance that makes it harder for refugees to obtain British citizenship and fully integrate.

Our public law work was instrumental in 2024, delivering positive outcomes for our clients and bringing about systemic changes. In more than half of the cases (57%) in which we sent a pre-action letter in a public law case, the Home Office conceded before we got to court. Of the judicial review cases (43%) that did go to court, the overwhelming majority (24 out of 25) resulted in a positive outcome for our client – with only one case refused permission. A judicial review is a type of court case in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body and is an influential mechanism through which we bring about systems change.

To maximise our capacity to do strategic litigation work and policy advocacy, we developed internal systems for identifying trends in our casework. This allowed us to address emerging issues and provide robust evidence to influence policy and advocacy. Our regular engagement with the UK and international media raised our profile significantly among key influencers including MPs and ministers.

**Judicial Review 2024 Outcomes Chart**



We led the sector in its joint response to systemic harms by working in coalitions such as the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (we co-chair the refugee working group and are active participants in the Strategic Litigation Advisory Committee), and the European Network on Statelessness. We continue to host the Refugee Legal Group UK, an online group with approximately 1,750 members that is a vital forum for sharing information and support on legal, policy and practical developments in the field.

## WE ENSURED THAT THE SAFETY OF RWANDA ACT IS REPEALED

Since 2022, when the previous government announced its Rwanda scheme, we were absolutely determined to ensure that this plan was never implemented. We are proud that we accomplished that goal. In response to our legal challenge to the Rwanda plan, the Home Secretary confirmed that the government would repeal the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024. After coming to power, the new government announced that no one would be sent to Rwanda, but the Safety of Rwanda Act (which declares the country to be 'safe' despite the opposite finding by the Supreme Court) remained on the statute books. It undermined the constitutional role of the Courts and damaged the UK's international reputation. It is important that the Act is repealed and not simply left unimplemented. We therefore carried on our fight against the Rwanda plan until we received confirmation in January 2025 that the Safety of Rwanda Act 2024 would be repealed.

## WE CHALLENGED AND CHANGED POLICIES AFFECTING FAMILY REUNION FROM GAZA

The Migrants' Law Project team secured a significant win for families in Gaza seeking to reunite with their loved ones in the UK. On behalf of our client, and together with partners at Islington Law Centre, we challenged the Home Office's refusal to decide on family reunion applications from families in Gaza without biometric data, including fingerprints and photographs. The Upper Tribunal found that this policy was unlawful. The judge ruled that the Home Office's decisions were irrational and a 'disproportionate interference' in applicants' right to a family life. We ensured that the Home Office complies with this judgment, amends its policies and approach, and adopts a lawful approach to the biometric enrolment requirement, so that more families from Gaza and elsewhere are not unlawfully deprived of decisions on their entry clearance applications.



## WE FOUGHT AGAINST DELAYS IN ASYLUM DECISION-MAKING

As a result of Asylum Aid's legal challenge, a 52-year-old man from Cote d'Ivoire seeking protection in the UK received an apology and compensation from the Home Office for waiting four years and two months for a decision on his asylum claim. This was a vital legal challenge. Asylum Aid has been fighting against one of the UK asylum system's biggest problems: delayed decisions on claims.

These delays, and a lack of clarity on timeframes, not only take a huge toll on the mental health and recovery of those who have survived some of the worst forms of cruelty, but also have a knock-on effect on the availability of legal aid solicitors in taking on other cases. According to statistics published by the Home Office on 28 November 2024, there were 83,888 asylum applicants awaiting an initial decision for more than six months. Our legal challenge, therefore, had wide implications for thousands of vulnerable people seeking protection in the UK.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br><b>Home Office</b>                                                                                                      | <b>UK Visas and Immigration</b><br>1st Floor Link House<br>Melbourne Street<br>Newcastle<br>NE1 2JQ<br><b>Tel</b> 0300 790 6268<br>Please refer to <a href="https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk">www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk</a><br><b>Web</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/uk-visas-immigration">www.gov.uk/uk-visas-immigration</a> |
| Asylum Aid<br>Derry House<br>Church Street Estate<br>LONDON<br>NW8 8HJ                                                                                                                                       | <b>Our Ref</b> [REDACTED]<br><b>Your Ref</b><br><b>Case ID</b> [REDACTED]<br><b>Date</b> 6 December 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Dear Sirs,                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Re:</b> [REDACTED] <b>Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)</b> [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| I write on behalf of the Secretary of State in relation to your above-named client, in accordance with the Judicial Review Consent Order sealed on 15 November 20204, relating to JR-[REDACTED].             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| I would like to apologise for the casework errors which contributed to the time taken to resolve your client's asylum claim. We will reflect on the lessons learnt from the handling of your client's claim. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Yours faithfully,                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| [REDACTED]                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Asylum Chief Caseworker<br>Asylum and Human Rights Operations<br>On behalf of the Secretary of State                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## WE LED A COALITION TO CHAMPION ASYLUM RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

In partnership with the Public Law Project, since 2023, we convene a coalition of NGOs to respond to the threats posed by the Illegal Migration Act and the Rwanda plan. After the general election, the coalition considered what role we might play under the new government and in a significantly changed policy context. We recognised the benefits of working together to respond through legally-informed advocacy and, where necessary, strategic legal work to pursue common aims.

The coalition has adopted three objectives for 2025, on which we will continue to work collaboratively with each other and with the wider sector:

- Defending the right to territorial asylum
- Promoting a fair, effective and humane asylum system
- Resisting the use and expansion of detention and quasi-detention

## WE SUCCESSFULLY FOUGHT FOR FAMILY REUNION OF STATELESS PEOPLE

In a major win for stateless people and their families, the High Court found in a case brought by Asylum Aid that the previous government's changes in Immigration Rules, which made it significantly harder for stateless people to reunite with their families, are unlawful and unreasonable. We were delighted by the judgment.

Stateless people are particularly disadvantaged, and especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Statelessness can result in the separation, often prolonged, of families if some members are unable to obtain citizenship or legal residency status, to the detrimental wellbeing of the stateless persons and their families. The changes to the family reunion rules pushed an already disadvantaged group of people further into despair. The High Court decision was a huge relief for stateless people and their families.

## WE PROVIDED VITAL EVIDENCE ON THE HARM CAUSED BY ASYLUM HOTELS AND WETHERSFIELD CAMP

Along with our sister charity, the Helen Bamber Foundation (HBF), we worked tirelessly to highlight the harm caused to survivors housed in hotels and ex-military sites. We published a briefing examining the existing barriers to accessing quality legal advice in Wethersfield. We advocated for the urgent need to address the broader systemic problems that prevent people seeking protection from accessing justice. We published a report with HBF highlighting the harm caused by asylum hotels on people seeking protection in the UK who are forced to live in these spaces, and urged the government to house people in communities, not hotels and camps.

## WE PUBLISHED VITAL RESEARCH ON THE CRIMINALISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

As a result of a two-year research collaboration between Commons Law CIC and The MLP, we published a significant report on the criminalisation of young people seeking asylum in the UK, who are often particularly vulnerable due to their life experiences before, during and after migration. The report was launched at an event at Doughty Street Chambers, igniting a lively discussion on this complex and relevant topic.

# IV: WE SECURED FINANCIAL STABILITY

2024 was a year of strengthening our financing. We improved our certificated billing procedures to ensure a smooth flow of income from our judicial review and higher court work. With the goal to diversify our income sources, we successfully held our first philanthropy event in our new office. At the end of the year, we were delighted that the government had announced an increase in legal aid rates for immigration, which were last revised three decades ago. However, a 10% increase in hourly rate is still not close to inflationary.

Going forward, we hope to grow sustainable income and test new ways of supporting donor engagement and commitment in 2025.

More information about our financial position is provided in the Financial Review below.

# V: WE BUILT A FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK CULTURE

**Moving to a spacious and comfortable new office in central London has provided a significant boost to the team's morale and productivity. It has enabled us to work closely as a team and in collaboration with our partners at the Helen Bamber Foundation.**

Working with some of the most vulnerable people in the UK asylum system can be extremely challenging and emotionally draining for our team. In the first half of 2024, we faced unprecedented challenges with the previous government rushing through its Rwanda plan and detaining people seeking asylum. Its impact on our clients, and the fear and distress it has caused, has inevitably had an impact on our team as well. We provided access to monthly group clinical supervision for all caseworkers, as well as additional 1:1 sessions for individuals experiencing particular challenges. We had a team event in May focused on looking after ourselves when working with trauma, led by the HBF's Director of Therapy. Our legal administrator shared key learnings from a training she had attended on handling suicidal conversations.

Team building is vital for us, and we regularly participate in events that bring us together. For example, we attended the London Legal Walk in June, sporting new Asylum Aid 'Protection from Persecution' T-shirts. Providing a friendly, inclusive and supportive environment continues to be of utmost importance to the charity.

# OUR FUTURE

Asylum Aid is at an exciting juncture of ambitious organisational growth, kickstarting a new strategy (from 2025 to 2027). In this period, we commit to:

1. **Drive quality legal support for all survivors:** By 2027, we will substantially increase the number of specialist caseworkers at Asylum Aid through our 'grow your own model' so that we have the capacity to provide specialist casework and legal representation to more survivors.
2. **Champion collaboration to increase impact:** Through partnerships, training and supervision, we will increase the availability of expert legal advice and representation for all survivors in the UK.
3. **Challenge harmful systems:** Using evidence and expertise, we will challenge and secure policy changes on the risk of re-trafficking and the impact of worsening mental health driven by a harmful system. Our work with lived-experience experts is vital to achieving this goal.



4. **Transform access to legal support:** We will work towards democratising provision of advice by supporting legal education activity and working toward the simplification of protection and welfare systems.
5. **Deliver best practice for our team and supporters:** The welfare and wellbeing of our team is of utmost importance to us – and will remain a priority going forward. We also aim to increase our income sustainably and test new ways to support donor engagement and commitment.

**Your continued support and generosity are fundamental to achieving these goals and ensuring that survivors have access to justice and fairness and are treated with dignity. Thank you to all our supporters and patrons from the entire Asylum Aid team and all our clients!**

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Asylum Aid has had a successful year in 2024, which ended in a surplus. This is as a result of the donations kindly made by our supporters, our ability to respond to urgent situations and take forward new projects and collaborations, as well as income from the Legal Aid Agency for work undertaken. As we go forward, we will further grow the income generated for Asylum Aid in order to increase the impact of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group as a whole, and sustain financial stability.

## DESIGNATED FUNDS

### 1. Casework in Progress

Our casework work in progress (WIP) designated fund (£1,066,761) reflects future income recognised in our accounts, but which is an illiquid asset that cannot be relied upon as part of our reserves policy. As casework is a source of unrestricted income, we show our WIP as a designated fund in order to avoid misleading funders that these funds are available to invest in our charitable activities. For instance, in 2025, we are currently budgeting to bring in £350,000 cash from Legal Aid work, which represents 35% of our total WIP. However, we recognise that the value of this WIP is a helpful indicator of future legal aid income and helps ensure that the organisation remains a going concern. Finally, we cannot bill for legal aid work until the case is completed. This means that delays in Home Office decision-making and in hearing appeals, which have remained an issue, have a direct impact on our ability to convert our WIP into cash.

### 2. The Migrants' Law Project Restricted Fund

The Migrants' Law Project (MLP) is a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the UK. The MLP was hosted by Islington Law Centre (ILC) until July 2023, at which point it moved to Asylum Aid. The MLP is hosted as a separate project within Asylum Aid. Its work is currently focused on supporting young refugees to reunite with their family members.

The MLP has joined Asylum Aid for a trial period of three years. During this period Asylum Aid's Trustees have agreed that in addition to the restricted funds mentioned above, 80% of any legal aid income and inter partes costs received by Asylum Aid in respect of work done by the MLP lawyers will be put into a designated fund to be used towards meeting the MLP's running costs and will not be available to Asylum Aid. £22,726 of legal aid cash income received in 2024 falls to be designated in this way, and £269,862 of the Designated Casework in Progress fund relates to work done by MLP solicitors, 80% of which will be designated to the MLP when realised.

Asylum Aid's budgeting assumption is that the funds allocated to the MLP will gradually be spent by the project during the trial period, thus reducing the amounts in the restricted fund.

## RESERVES POLICY

Our Group reserves policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. This target level of reserves is kept under review by the trustees. It has been set to provide the charity with sufficient funds to accommodate potential cost of identified risks, without being excessive and reducing funds available to further Asylum Aid's charitable objects. Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Given the importance of being confident that Asylum Aid can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aimed to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund in order to ensure that the minimum level of reserves was met throughout the year by 2024. This has been achieved and in December 2024, Asylum Aid ended the year with an increased reserve level at £408,759 (2023: £257,103), the equivalent to three months, which is within our reserves policy.

## RISKS

The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are:

- The challenge of the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding due to delays in decision making and therefore closure of cases.
- and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that arises from the significant level of demand for the services of the organisation, while delays in decision-making impact capacity.
- The continuing impact of the hostile and external environment, despite some positive developments in 2024 following the change in government, which are causing real anxiety and harm to our clients while also complicating the provision of advice. The new government's increased focus on efficiency means quicker decisions which, while positive for many clients, also means more survivors at risk of being removed without having had meaningful access to legal advice.
- The continuing challenging economic context and cost of living crisis mean that despite the change in government following the general election, there is little scope for any extra central government funding for legal advice or to invest in the wider asylum system. These economic impacts make an already hostile environment more challenging for our clients and therefore for our work more generally.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring and application of the reserves policy.

In our 2023 annual report we identified the lack of appropriate space for staff to work and meet clients as a significant risk. This risk has been addressed in 2024 following our move to the Trauma Centre which provides a wonderful space for our staff, clients and partners to meet and work in a trauma-informed home.

## SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN

The contract for Westminster Advice Services Partnership was due to end in September 2025 but in May 2025 we received confirmation that we have been successful in being awarded a new contract for an initial period of 5.5 years at an increased annual rate for Asylum Aid of £98,000, thus securing the future of our welfare advice service.

The Legal Aid Agency suffered a major cyber incident in spring 2025 which has led to their online systems for legal aid applications and billing being taken offline for an extended period. Asylum Aid has been able to mitigate the impact of this on its work and cashflow through the contingency arrangements provided by the LAA and a focus on inter partes billing, which is unaffected.

Having regard to these developments and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the accounts.

## REMUNERATION POLICY

The objectives of HBF Group's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high-calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level taking account of external market rates – the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

## FUNDRAISING

Asylum Aid is supported by the same fundraising team as the Helen Bamber Foundation as part of the Group structure, with its own dedicated fundraiser. An annual income generation strategy is produced, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and trustees. In 2024, Asylum Aid secured fundraised income of £996,080. We are incredibly grateful to the funders who have supported Asylum Aid over the years, enabling us to grow since joining HBF Group. Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on our websites, [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk) and [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org). The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2024 did not involve external professional fundraisers or commercial participators.

Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. Registration represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, Asylum Aid commits to the Regulator's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on five key pledges that reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF Group's strong commitment to recognise sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation have received any complaints with regard to our fundraising activities in 2024.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to its stated aims and objectives. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee status and their dependents are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including providing them with legal advice and representation);
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community;
- the advancement of public knowledge on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and on the conditions that give rise to refugee movements, as well as on all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the impact on people who experience such suffering;
- assisting them in other such exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time.

## STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid 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 that 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;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the finance statements;
- Prepare the finance statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Helen Bamber Foundation is the sole member of the charity. As such it guarantees to contribute an amount not exceeding £5 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 15 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by

**John Scampion**  
Treasurer

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM AID

## OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of Asylum Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006

## BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Asylum Aid's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## OPINIONS ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

## MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- The directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' annual report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

## CAPABILITY OF THE AUDIT IN DETECTING IRREGULARITIES

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management, and the audit and risk committee, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity's policies and procedures relating to:
- Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the charity from our professional and sector experience.

- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## USE OF OUR REPORT

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Joanna Pittman (Senior statutory auditor)**

26 September 2025

for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor

110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

## Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 December 2024 Company no. 02513874

|                                                          | Note | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2024 Total<br>£  | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2023 Total<br>£  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Income from:</b>                                      |      |                   |                 |                  |                   |                 |                  |
| Donations and legacies                                   | 2    | 594,835           | 401,245         | <b>996,080</b>   | 305,301           | 403,473         | 708,774          |
| Charitable activities                                    |      |                   |                 |                  |                   |                 |                  |
| Legal Aid Services                                       | 3    | 244,401           | -               | <b>244,401</b>   | 155,115           | -               | 155,115          |
| Other Legal Aid Services (Work in progress)              | 3    | 583,520           | -               | <b>583,520</b>   | 247,699           | -               | 247,699          |
| Ramfel                                                   | 3    | 38,147            | -               | <b>38,147</b>    | 57,318            | -               | 57,318           |
| Westminster CAB                                          | 3    | 124,745           | -               | <b>124,745</b>   | 117,191           | -               | 117,191          |
| MLP Income                                               | 3    | -                 | 251,104         | <b>251,104</b>   | -                 | 398,461         | 398,461          |
| Other income                                             |      | 37,081            | -               | <b>37,081</b>    | 38,937            | -               | 38,937           |
| <b>Total income</b>                                      |      | <b>1,622,729</b>  | <b>652,349</b>  | <b>2,275,078</b> | <b>921,561</b>    | <b>801,934</b>  | <b>1,723,495</b> |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                   | 4a   |                   |                 |                  |                   |                 |                  |
| Raising funds                                            |      | 69,983            | -               | <b>69,983</b>    | 46,545            | -               | 46,545           |
| Charitable activities                                    |      |                   |                 |                  |                   |                 |                  |
| Legal Aid Services/Westminster CAB                       |      | 900,743           | 684,078         | <b>1,584,821</b> | 600,154           | 556,662         | 1,156,816        |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                 |      | <b>970,726</b>    | <b>684,078</b>  | <b>1,654,804</b> | <b>646,699</b>    | <b>556,662</b>  | <b>1,203,361</b> |
| <b>Net income for the year and net movement in funds</b> | 5    | <b>652,003</b>    | <b>(31,729)</b> | <b>620,274</b>   | <b>274,862</b>    | <b>245,272</b>  | <b>520,134</b>   |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>                          |      |                   |                 |                  |                   |                 |                  |
| Total funds brought forward                              |      | 765,343           | 292,746         | <b>1,058,089</b> | 490,481           | 47,474          | 537,955          |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                       |      | <b>1,417,346</b>  | <b>261,017</b>  | <b>1,678,363</b> | <b>765,343</b>    | <b>292,746</b>  | <b>1,058,089</b> |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 12a to the financial statements.

## Balance sheets

As at 31 December 2024

Company no. 02513874

|                                                      | Note | £                     | 2024<br>£                      | £                | 2023<br>£               |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Fixed assets:</b>                                 |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Tangible assets                                      | 8    |                       | 23,708                         |                  | 13,184                  |
|                                                      |      |                       | <u>23,708</u>                  |                  | <u>13,184</u>           |
| Current assets:                                      |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Work in progress                                     |      | 1,066,760             |                                | 483,240          |                         |
| Debtors                                              | 9    | 106,830               |                                | 76,843           |                         |
| <b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>                      |      | <u>1,001,531</u>      |                                | <u>966,018</u>   |                         |
|                                                      |      | <b>2,175,121</b>      |                                | <b>1,526,101</b> |                         |
| <b>Liabilities:</b>                                  |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year       | 10   | <b>(462,291)</b>      |                                | <b>(481,196)</b> |                         |
|                                                      |      |                       | <u><b>1,712,830</b></u>        |                  | <u>1,044,905</u>        |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                            |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Creditors: amounts falling due in more than one year |      | (58,174)              |                                |                  |                         |
|                                                      |      |                       | <u>1,678,363</u>               |                  | <u>1,058,089</u>        |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                                    |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
|                                                      |      |                       | <u><u>1,678,363</u></u>        |                  | <u><u>1,058,089</u></u> |
| <b>The funds of the charity:</b>                     | 11a  |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Restricted income funds                              |      | -                     | <b>261,017</b>                 | -                | 292,746                 |
| <b>Unrestricted income funds:</b>                    |      |                       |                                |                  |                         |
| Designated funds (Work in Progress)                  |      | <b>1,066,761</b>      |                                | 483,240          |                         |
| Designated Funds – Rent Free Period                  |      | <b>(58,174)</b>       |                                | -                |                         |
| Designated- New Premise Fund                         |      | -                     |                                | 25,000           |                         |
| General funds                                        |      | <u><b>408,759</b></u> |                                | <u>257,103</u>   |                         |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b>                      |      |                       | <u><b>1,417,346</b></u>        |                  | <u>765,343</u>          |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>                           |      |                       | <u><u><b>1,678,363</b></u></u> |                  | <u><u>1,058,089</u></u> |

Approved by the trustees on 15 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by

**John Scampion**  
Treasurer

## Statement of cash flows

As at 31 December 2024

|                                                                                                     |           | 2024             |           | 2023     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|----------|
|                                                                                                     | £         | £                | £         | £        |
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>                                                         |           |                  |           |          |
| Net income for the year and net movement in funds<br>(as per the statement of financial activities) | 620,274   |                  | 520,134   |          |
| Depreciation charges                                                                                | 5,514     |                  | 2,554     |          |
| (Increase) in debtors                                                                               | (613,507) |                  | (284,713) |          |
| Increase in creditors                                                                               | 39,270    |                  | 174,081   |          |
| <b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>                                                    |           | <b>51,551</b>    |           | 412,056  |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>                                                        |           |                  |           |          |
| Purchase of fixed assets                                                                            | (16,038)  |                  | (13,122)  |          |
| <b>Net cash (used in) investing activities</b>                                                      |           | <b>(16,038)</b>  |           | (13,122) |
| <b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>                                              |           | <b>35,513</b>    |           | 398,934  |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year                                              |           | <b>966,018</b>   |           | 567,084  |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>                                             |           | <b>1,001,531</b> |           | 966,018  |

## Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt

|                                        | At 1 January 2024 | Cash flows | Other non-cash changes | At 31 December 2024 |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|                                        | £                 | £          | £                      | £                   |
| Cash at bank and in hand               | 966,018           | 35,513     | -                      | 1,001,531           |
| <b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b> | 966,018           | 35,513     | -                      | 1,001,531           |

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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For the year ended 31 December 2024

## **1 Accounting policies**

### **a) Statutory information**

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office address and principal place of business is 26 – 30 Westland Place, London, N1 7JH

### **b) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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) (effective 1 January 2019)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include the estimation of the value of the work in progress.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

As of July 2023, the activities of the Migrant Law Project (MLP) were transferred to Asylum Aid from Islington Law Centre. The transfer included staff working on the project, £200,000 in unrestricted funds to fund the next two years of the project, unspent restricted project funding allocated to the project, and work in progress on project files totalling approximately a further £200,000.

### **c) Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company.

### **d) Income**

Income is recognised when:

- 1) The charity has entitlement to the funds
- 2) Any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- 3) It is probable that the income will be received
- 4) The amount can be measured reliably.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

We recognise work done under the legal aid contract where the criteria for entitlement to payment under the legal aid regulations are met.

### **e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

### **f) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

### **g) Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

### **h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

### **i) Allocation of support costs**

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

### **j) Tangible fixed assets**

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £250. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Office equipment 25% straight line basis

### **k) Work in progress**

Work in progress is valued at the average hourly rate paid by the Legal Aid Agency less any necessary provisions.

### **l) Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### **m) Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

### **n) Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

### **o) Pensions**

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Pensions Trust Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

## Notes to the financial statements

### 2. Income from donations and grants

|                                  | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2024 Total<br>£ | 2023 Total<br>£ |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Donations</b>                 |                   |                 |                 |                 |
| Individual donations             | 68,715            | -               | <b>68,715</b>   | 100,547         |
| Corporate donations              | 50,000            | 92,000          | <b>142,000</b>  | 159,150         |
| Legacies                         | 300,000           | -               | <b>300,000</b>  | -               |
| <b>Grants</b>                    |                   |                 |                 |                 |
| Strategic Legal Fund             | -                 | 14,040          | <b>14,040</b>   | 30,000          |
| The Legal Education Foundation   | -                 | 53,000          | <b>53,000</b>   | 46,000          |
| Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust | -                 | 2,500           | <b>2,500</b>    | 10,000          |
| London Legal Support Trust       | 10,000            | -               | <b>10,000</b>   | -               |
| Trust for London (Statelessness) | -                 | 28,850          | <b>28,850</b>   | 17,920          |
| National Lottery Community Fund  | -                 | -               | <b>-</b>        | 9,653           |
| Disrupt Foundation               | 50,000            | -               | <b>50,000</b>   | 50,000          |
| Unbound Philanthropy             | 20,000            | -               | <b>20,000</b>   | 25,000          |
| Open Society Foundation          | 60,000            | 20,000          | <b>80,000</b>   | 80,000          |
| Good Law Ltd                     | -                 | -               | <b>-</b>        | 29,040          |
| Choose Love                      | -                 | 50,000          | <b>50,000</b>   | -               |
| Justice Together Initiative      | -                 | 95,855          | <b>95,855</b>   | 88,860          |
| Society of the Holy Child Jesus  | 20,000            | -               | <b>20,000</b>   | -               |
| BBC Children In Need             | -                 | 25,000          | <b>25,000</b>   | -               |
| Evan Cornish                     | -                 | 12,000          | <b>12,000</b>   | -               |
| Anonymous                        | 15,000            | 8,000           | <b>23,000</b>   | 61,500          |
| Other                            | 1,120             | -               | <b>1,120</b>    | 1,104           |
|                                  | <b>594,835</b>    | <b>401,245</b>  | <b>996,080</b>  | 708,774         |

(2023 Unrestricted £305,301, Restricted £403,473)

### 3. Income from charitable activities

|                                                | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2024 Total<br>£  | 2023 Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Legal Aid Claims                               | 244,401           | -               | <b>244,401</b>   | 155,115         |
| Other Legal Aid Claims Work in Progress        | 583,521           | -               | <b>583,521</b>   | 247,699         |
| Ramfel                                         | 38,147            | -               | 38,147           | 57,318          |
| Westminster CAB Project                        | 124,745           | -               | 124,745          | 117,191         |
| MLP Income                                     | -                 | 251,104         | 251,104          | 398,461         |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>990,814</b>    | <b>251,104</b>  | <b>1,241,918</b> | <b>975,784</b>  |

(2023: Unrestricted £577,323, restricted £398,461)

#### 4a. Analysis of expenditure (current year)

|                               | Basis of allocation | Raising funds        | Charitable Activities<br>Legal Aid Services | Governance costs | Support costs   | 2024 Total              |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Staff costs (Note 6)</b>   | Staff time          | 46,040               | 959,702                                     | 19,966           | 81,718          | <b>1,107,426</b>        |
| Direct costs                  | Direct              | 6,713                | 297,748                                     | -                | -               | <b>304,461</b>          |
| Premises costs                | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 131,538         | <b>131,538</b>          |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 8,855           | <b>8,855</b>            |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | 1,284            | 85,176          | <b>86,460</b>           |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 5,514           | <b>5,514</b>            |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | 10,550           | -               | <b>10,550</b>           |
|                               |                     | <u>52,753</u>        | <u>1,257,450</u>                            | <u>31,800</u>    | <u>312,801</u>  | <u>1,654,804</u>        |
| Support costs                 |                     | 15,640               | 297,161                                     | -                | (312,801)       | -                       |
| Governance costs              |                     | 1,590                | 30,210                                      | (31,800)         | -               | -                       |
| <b>Total expenditure 2024</b> |                     | <u><b>69,983</b></u> | <u><b>1,584,821</b></u>                     | <u><b>-</b></u>  | <u><b>-</b></u> | <u><b>1,654,804</b></u> |

(2023 Unrestricted £577,323, restricted £398,461)

#### 4b. Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

|                               | Basis of allocation | Raising funds        | Charitable Activities<br>Legal Aid Services | Governance costs | Support costs   | 2023 Total              |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
|                               |                     | £                    | £                                           | £                | £               | £                       |
| <b>Staff costs (Note 6)</b>   | Staff time          | 34,984               | 693,005                                     | 19,250           | 31,212          | <b>778,451</b>          |
| Direct costs                  | Direct              | 2,354                | 288,877                                     | -                | -               | <b>291,231</b>          |
| Premises costs                | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 39,325          | <b>39,325</b>           |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 15,414          | <b>15,414</b>           |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | 808              | 64,778          | <b>65,586</b>           |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | -                | 2,554           | <b>2,554</b>            |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time          | -                    | -                                           | 10,800           | -               | <b>10,800</b>           |
|                               |                     | <u>37,338</u>        | <u>981,882</u>                              | <u>30,858</u>    | <u>153,283</u>  | <u>1,203,361</u>        |
| Support costs                 |                     | 7,664                | 145,619                                     | -                | -153,283        | -                       |
| Governance costs              |                     | 1,543                | 29,315                                      | -30,858          | -               | -                       |
| <b>Total expenditure 2023</b> |                     | <u><b>46,545</b></u> | <u><b>1,156,816</b></u>                     | <u><b>-</b></u>  | <u><b>-</b></u> | <u><b>1,203,361</b></u> |

## 5 Net income for the year

| This is stated after charging | 2024  | 2023  |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
|                               | £     | £     |
| Depreciation                  | 5,514 | 2,554 |
| Auditor's remuneration:       |       |       |
| Audit fees                    | 9,400 | 9,000 |
| Corporation Tax Fees          | 1,150 | -     |

## 6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

| Staff costs were as follows:                                    | 2024             | 2023           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
|                                                                 | £                | £              |
| Salaries and wages                                              | 976,128          | 686,357        |
| Social security costs                                           | 95,521           | 64,707         |
| Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes | 35,777           | 27,387         |
|                                                                 | <b>1,107,426</b> | <b>778,451</b> |

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension and employer's national insurance (of between £70,000 and £80,000). (2023: none)

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £119,529 (2023: £111,961).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2023: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2023: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

### Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

|                       | 2024      | 2023      |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                       | No.       | No.       |
| Raising funds         | 2         | 2         |
| Charitable activities | 25        | 20        |
| Support & Governance  | 2         | 2         |
|                       | <b>29</b> | <b>24</b> |

## 7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

## 8 Tangible fixed assets

|                               | Office equipment<br>£ | Total<br>£           |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Cost</b>                   |                       |                      |
| At the start of the year      | 16,791                | <b>16,791</b>        |
| Additions in year             | 16,037                | <b>16,037</b>        |
| At the end of the year        | <u>32,828</u>         | <u><b>32,828</b></u> |
| <b>Depreciation</b>           |                       |                      |
| At the start of the year      | 3,606                 | <b>3,606</b>         |
| Charge for the year           | 5,514                 | <b>5,514</b>         |
| At the end of the year        | <u>9,120</u>          | <u><b>9,120</b></u>  |
| <b>Net book value</b>         |                       |                      |
| <b>At the end of the year</b> | <u>23,708</u>         | <u><b>23,708</b></u> |
| At the start of the year      | <u>13,185</u>         | <u>13,185</u>        |

## 9 Debtors

|                | 2024<br>£             | 2023<br>£     |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Trade debtors  | <b>67,523</b>         | 56,795        |
| Other debtors  | -                     | 385           |
| Prepayments    | <b>21,807</b>         | 9,663         |
| Accrued income | <b>17,500</b>         | 10,000        |
|                | <u><b>106,830</b></u> | <u>76,843</u> |

## 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                                         | 2024<br>£             | 2023<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Trade creditors                         | <b>104,296</b>        | 12,034         |
| Taxation and social security            | <b>48,305</b>         | 19,289         |
| Other creditors                         | <b>84,500</b>         | 25,948         |
| Amounts owed to Helen Bamber Foundation | <b>54,090</b>         | 65,095         |
| Accruals                                | <b>24,220</b>         | 40,219         |
| Deferred income                         | <b>146,880</b>        | 318,611        |
|                                         | <u><b>462,291</b></u> | <u>481,196</u> |

## 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (continued)

### Deferred income

|                                       | 2024           | 2023           |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                       | £              | £              |
| Balance at the beginning of the year  | 318,611        | 69,061         |
| Amount released to income in the year | (191,333)      | (69,061)       |
| Amount deferred in the year           | 19,602         | 318,611        |
|                                       | <b>146,880</b> | <b>318,611</b> |

Deferred income comprises grants received from Corporates and Trusts and foundations in the current year which relate to a future period. It also contains the Migrant Law Project grant which will fund that

## 11a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

|                                                      | General unrestricted | Designated       | Restricted     | Total funds      |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
|                                                      | £                    | £                | £              | £                |
| Tangible fixed assets                                | 23,708               | -                | -              | 23,708           |
| Net current assets                                   | 385,051              | 1,066,761        | 261,017        | 1,712,829        |
| Creditors: amounts falling due in more than one year | -                    | (58,174)         | -              | (58,174)         |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2024</b>                | <b>408,759</b>       | <b>1,008,587</b> | <b>261,017</b> | <b>1,678,363</b> |

## 11b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

|                                       | General unrestricted | Designated     | Restricted     | Total funds      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                                       | £                    | £              | £              | £                |
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 13,184               | -              | -              | 13,184           |
| Net current assets                    | 243,919              | 508,240        | 292,746        | 1,044,905        |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2023</b> | <b>257,103</b>       | <b>508,240</b> | <b>292,746</b> | <b>1,058,089</b> |

## 12a Movements in funds (current year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2024 | Income & gains   | Expenditure & losses | At 31 December 2024 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                                 | £                 | £                | £                    | £                   |
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                   |                  |                      |                     |
| Legal Aid Services              | 79,288            | 401,245          | 480,533              | -                   |
| Migrants' Law Project           | 213,458           | 251,104          | 203,545              | <b>261,017</b>      |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>292,746</b>    | <b>652,349</b>   | <b>684,078</b>       | <b>261,017</b>      |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                   |                  |                      |                     |
| General funds                   | 257,103           | 1,039,208        | 887,552              | <b>408,759</b>      |
| Designated – Rent Free Period   | -                 | -                | 58,174               | <b>(58,174)</b>     |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | 483,240           | 583,521          | -                    | <b>1,066,761</b>    |
| Designated -New premise fund    | 25,000            | -                | 25,000               | -                   |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>765,343</b>    | <b>1,622,729</b> | <b>970,726</b>       | <b>1,417,346</b>    |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>1,058,089</b>  | <b>2,275,078</b> | <b>1,654,804</b>     | <b>1,678,363</b>    |

## 12b Movements in funds (prior year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2024 | Income & gains   | Expenditure & losses | At 31 December 2024 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                                 | £                 | £                | £                    | £                   |
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                   |                  |                      |                     |
| Legal Aid Services              | 47,474            | 404,134          | 372,320              | <b>79,288</b>       |
| Migrants' Law Project           | -                 | 397,800          | 184,342              | <b>213,458</b>      |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>47,474</b>     | <b>801,934</b>   | <b>556,662</b>       | <b>292,746</b>      |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                   |                  |                      |                     |
| General funds                   | 229,940           | 673,862          | 646,699              | <b>257,103</b>      |
| Designated – Rent Free Period   | 235,541           | 247,699          | -                    | <b>483,240</b>      |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | 25,000            | -                | -                    | <b>25,000</b>       |
| Designated -New premise fund    | 25,000            | -                | 25,000               | -                   |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>490,481</b>    | <b>921,561</b>   | <b>646,699</b>       | <b>765,343</b>      |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>537,955</b>    | <b>1,723,495</b> | <b>1,203,361</b>     | <b>1,058,089</b>    |

## **Legal Aid Services**

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects, including the Migrant Law Project. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people against the backdrop of an ever more challenging external environment

### **13 Legal status of the charity**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

### **14 Related party transactions**

The total amount of donations received in 2024 from Trustees or parties related to them was £0. (2023: £5,000 from 1 trustee).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

### **15 Ultimate Controlling Party**

The company's ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party is Helen Bamber Foundation, a registered charity (charity number 1149652) and company limited by guarantee (company number 08186281). Copies of the financial statements are available from Companies House and the Charity Commission.





Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# Accounts

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CHARITY NUMBER: 328729  
COMPANY NUMBER: 02513874



# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 December 2023



Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

## TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Mottershaw – Chair  
Sir Nicolas Bratza  
Kat Lorenz  
Yehia Nasr  
Constantine Partasides  
John Scampion – Treasurer  
Ruth Tanner

## MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES

Alison Pickup – Executive Director  
Gareth Holmes – Group Executive Director of  
Fundraising and Communications  
Anne Muthee – Group Director of Finance and  
Operations (until September 2023)  
Kerry Smith – Chief Executive Officer

**CHARITY NUMBER** 328729  
(registered in England and Wales)

**COMPANY NUMBER** 02513874  
(incorporated in the United Kingdom)

## REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

Bruges Place  
15-20 Baynes Street  
London  
NW1 0TF

Derry House  
20 Penfold Street  
London  
NW8 8HJ

## AUDITOR

Sayer Vincent LLP  
Joanna Pittman FCA  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
110 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0TG

## BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

# INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM AID

Asylum Aid is a committed, professional and collaborative organisation dedicated to protecting people from persecution by providing legal representation and access to justice for refugees, people seeking asylum (including children, survivors of trafficking, torture, and gender-based violence, as well as stateless people). It also provides welfare advice to refugees, migrants and other members of the local community in Westminster whose first language is not English. In 2023, we were delighted to be joined by the Migrants' Law Project, a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

**Asylum Aid's vision is that all those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it, and are treated fairly and with dignity.**

We know that good quality legal representation is lifesaving for our clients, and that by working together with other charities and organisations, we can help more people. We believe everyone deserves access to protection, and we take on the complex cases that others do not. We collaborate with other organisations to change policies and practices that affect those who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity. We share best practice and seek to build capacity through training, second tier support, and the publication of resources.

## OUR WORK REFLECTS OUR VALUES:

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**Pursuing Excellence:** We strive to be the best we can be in our work. We continuously learn from our clients and share it with others. Our advocacy is rooted in evidence and expertise.

**Courageous:** We advocate bravely for human rights and are not afraid to speak out against injustice. We are courageous in the advice we give, and we persevere in seeking lasting solutions, undaunted by the barriers we encounter and inspired by the bravery of our clients.

**Collaborative:** We proactively seek opportunities for partnerships, for sharing knowledge, and for joint work. We work collaboratively as a team. We listen to our clients and through our advice, we enable them to get the best outcomes.

**Acting with Integrity:** We are honest, open, respectful, and professional in all our dealings with our clients, partners, the Home Office, other government departments, courts and each other. We fight fearlessly without compromising our ethical duties. We are accountable to these values, and we bring our whole selves to our work.

**Promoting Equality:** We believe that all those seeking protection should have equitable access to a fair system and must be treated equally. We are committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within our organisation and in our dealings with our clients, volunteers and partners.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the second year of working towards our 2022-2024 strategic priorities, 2023 was an exciting year of growth for Asylum Aid. But we also faced challenges from many directions: a government hostile both to our clients and to our work; a crisis in the availability of legal aid representation for people seeking asylum, as a result of years of underfunding and the declining sector; a constant cycle of new and complex legislation that seeks to restrict the right to asylum; and a failing system of accommodation and support for those prohibited from working that leaves many in appalling living conditions and surviving on barely adequate subsistence.

Against this context, we are delighted to share this report, which showcases the real progress that Asylum Aid has made over the last year. We are now in a position to help more people get the protection they need; we have increased our partnerships with others in the sector, improving the advice that those fleeing persecution can get elsewhere; and we have demonstrated leadership and courage in taking forward legal challenges to unfair, unsafe and unworkable policies.

We are particularly proud of our new partnership with the Migrants' Law Project, which joined us in July. This has strengthened our capacity to deliver specialist representation, to enable young refugees to be reunited with families from whom they have been separated during their flight from persecution. Collaboration and engagement have been critical to our successes in a year in which we launched our pilot to build capacity across the UK to deliver specialist advice on asylum, trafficking and human rights cases through training and remote supervision, and partnered with Praxis and Refugee Action on a programme to provide remote supervision across London. We worked consistently with colleagues at the Helen Bamber Foundation to drive much-needed change in policies regarding the huge delays in asylum decision-making and the assessment of age for unaccompanied children.

One of our most notable successes was in our legal challenge to the Rwanda policy, where we were the only charity granted permission to appeal from the High Court. Our legal challenge to the fast-track process adopted by the Home Office for sending people to Rwanda resulted in significant findings by the Court of Appeal about the minimum requirements for a fair procedure, underscoring the importance of effective access to legal advice for those facing removal. Furthermore, the Upper Tribunal agreed to hear our client's case on the systemic delays behind the asylum backlog. Our team's hard work also uncovered a secret policy of denying leave to remain – and with it, stability and security – to recognise survivors of trafficking.

Underpinning this impact is the hard work of our dedicated team. The support of our partners has enabled us to create a more secure financial base for our work, and we continue to focus on professional development, wellbeing and team cohesion to foster sustainability. We are grateful for the fantastic support we have received from you all – funders, corporate partners, members of the public who donated to our Rwanda campaign and sent messages of support, as well as other NGOs and legal professionals with whom we have collaborated. But most of all, we are incredibly proud of what our small, expert and hard-working team has achieved.



**Kerry Smith**  
CEO of Asylum Aid



**Alison Pickup**  
Executive Director of Asylum Aid

# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## ASYLUM AID'S STAFF & VOLUNTEERS: A COMMUNITY EFFORT

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2023 was a year of growth for Asylum Aid, as part of our strategy to sustainably increase impact. We started with the full-time equivalent of 11.5 members of staff and ended the year with 20.4 (including 3.8 working as part of the Migrants' Law Project). Our welfare advice service was supported by nine volunteers, who provided interpreting and language support and gateway assessments, and supported a drop-in at our offices in Westminster and a local library. We also recruited volunteers to help with administration for the legal service, and a coordinator for our Ukraine pro bono project.

## MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

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Asylum Aid is a charity in its own right and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. The day-to-day management of the charity is by a Management Group made up of the Group Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Asylum Aid, the Executive Director of HBF Group Fundraising and Communications, and the Director of HBF Group Finance and Operations. The Helen Bamber Foundation Group Finance and Fundraising Committee is composed of Trustees of both Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation and includes the Director of Asylum Aid. Management Team members of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation meet at least monthly to provide financial and fundraising, safeguarding and executive oversight.

Asylum Aid has seven Trustees, who meet every quarter. Three of them, including the Chair and Treasurer, also serve on the Helen Bamber Foundation Board to ensure strong governance and joint strategic alignment while ensuring independent decision-making. New Trustees are recruited externally, and their appointment is approved by Asylum Aid's Board of Trustees and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group Board. Asylum Aid Trustees also sat on the HBF Finance and Fundraising Committee and the People and Governance Committee which was created at the end of 2023.

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th June 1990, and registered as a charity on 24th July 1990.

The company was established under a memorandum of association that established the objects and powers of the charitable company, and is governed under its articles of association.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. No expenses were reclaimed from the charity during the year. We are very grateful to our Trustees for their continued support of, and engagement in, Asylum Aid's work.

This report is for the twelve-month period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

In 2023, asylum remained high on the political agenda. The government sought to push forward its Rwanda plan and introduced new, even more draconian, legislation in the Illegal Migration Act, passed by Parliament at the end of July, in pursuit of its goal to “stop the boats”.

Behind the headlines are some of the most vulnerable people who have come to the UK seeking protection, believing this to be a place where human rights are respected. They are expected to navigate a complex and constantly changing system. They experience long delays, during which nothing will seemingly happen, and then a flurry of activity when they are expected to meet short deadlines or risk having their claims treated as “withdrawn”. This is made worse by an increasing crisis in the availability of specialist immigration legal advice and representation under the legal aid system. One study estimates that more than half of people seeking asylum are now unable to find a legal aid lawyer.

In response we have successfully grown Asylum Aid’s capacity to deliver specialist legal representation. In 2023 the legal team provided legal representation to 193 people, while our welfare team helped over 800 people, the vast majority of whom are refugees or have a refugee or migrant background, to navigate the complex welfare and housing system.

We know that we can only ever meet a fraction of the need ourselves. This is why our strategy seeks to increase capacity across the UK, and to influence change in the system. As this annual report shows, in 2023 we made significant strides forward in both of these areas. We delivered our first pilot programme of intensive training and remote supervision of immigration lawyers and caseworkers, and engaged in policy work and strategic litigation across some of the most pressing issues facing our clients: the Rwanda policy, the systemic delays in the asylum system, the unfair process for assessing age, and the challenges of accessing legal advice from remote accommodation sites. Our work challenging the secret policy of denying leave to remain to recognised victims of trafficking will benefit hundreds of people.

We also know that it is only through collaboration that we can make the necessary difference. By bringing the Migrants’ Law Project into Asylum Aid we were able to increase our capacity to deliver expert representation to young refugees seeking family reunion and to undertake strategic legal work. Our partnership with Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL) enabled us to reach people who are sleeping rough, delivering expert advice to this hard-to-reach population.

I am very proud of all that Asylum Aid has achieved in a challenging year and know that we couldn’t have done it without our supporters, our amazing team, and the volunteers who provide much needed help. There is much more work to be done but we know that through partnerships and collaboration in delivering systemic change we will create a more humane asylum system for all.



**Elizabeth Mottershaw**  
Chair of Asylum Aid

# ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

## OUR MISSION – WHAT WE DO:

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### OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2024

- Consolidate and grow our capacity to deliver expert advice, direct legal representation, and casework in the most complex cases, enabling more survivors of human cruelty to secure legal status and meaningful protection.
- Working in partnership with others, build capacity across the immigration advice sector to deliver expert advice and representation in complex cases.
- Increase our capacity to engage in policy advocacy and strategic legal work to make the asylum system fair and dignified, and to improve access to effective and quality advice for those seeking protection.
- Achieve financial sustainability, with reserves of between three to six months by 2024.
- Ensure that Asylum Aid is a friendly, inclusive and supportive place to work, in which each member of the team feels valued and able to develop to their full potential.

## I. INCREASING ACCESS TO PROTECTION: OUR CASEWORK



*"Asylum Aid helped put my life together and back on track. They were very kind and proactive in solving my legal troubles, informing me of what my rights are. Now I am living like I am supposed to, in education and work as well."*

We significantly increased our capacity to provide expert advice and representation in 2023, enabling us to take on 85 new clients during the year. As a result of our hard work, 62 of our clients were granted protection during the year. Our approach to increasing our capacity has been to adopt a 'grow your own' model, training and developing new advisers within Asylum Aid. A Justice First Fellowship grant allowed us to offer a two-year training contract to an aspiring solicitor, and a grant from Westminster City Council's cost of living fund enabled the creation of two traineeships for advisers in our welfare advice team. Our former administrator and billing coordinator obtained accreditation as a senior caseworker, and we were able to create a new role for her thanks to our partnership with the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL). Finally, we were delighted to welcome the Migrants' Law Project (MLP), which moved to Asylum Aid in July 2023 from their previous home at Islington Law Centre, adding three expert solicitors to our team and allowing us to further expand our capacity to provide expert legal advice and representation.

### IN 2023:



**193 clients**

were provided legal representation.



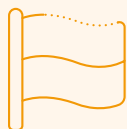
**62 clients**

were granted protection in 2023.



**85 new clients**

were taken onboard.



**41 clients**

received access to advice through our Ukraine project.



**800+ individuals**

were given advice through our Westminster Advice Services Partnership.



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

During 2023, around 14% of Asylum Aid's clients were children, and a quarter were young people (aged 18-25), from nationalities such as Eritrea, Albania, Sudan and Afghanistan. 22% of our child clients and 54% of young people were also victims of trafficking. Unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation because their cases are often complex: many involve histories of trafficking or other trauma, and in all cases, they are coping with the strain of family separation. This inevitably requires extra work and time for which payment is usually only received at the closure of their case.

In partnership with Humans for Rights Network, the Helen Bamber Foundation and Garden Court Chambers, we also challenged the lawfulness of the Home Office's age screening process that children seeking asylum undergo upon arrival in the UK. The Home Office has wrongly determined many minors to be adults, placing them at significant risk and denying them their rights. After we successfully challenged these decisions, our clients were taken out of adult hotels and suitably accommodated by local authorities.



**NADIA**

In her late teens, Nadia was trafficked from Albania to the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation under the pretext of providing her employment. When she entered the UK, the Home Office apprehended her. She claimed asylum, initially as a dependent and later in her own right and was referred into the National Referral Mechanism as a potential victim of human trafficking. A children and young people's charity referred her to Asylum Aid for legal advice and representation in relation to her asylum and trafficking claims and helped her successfully apply for asylum support.

We took the time to gain her trust so that she felt comfortable disclosing the full details of what had happened to her. This enabled us to make a strong case for her asylum and trafficking claims, resulting in a positive Conclusive Grounds decision that confirmed her as a recognised victim of trafficking. She could now access wide-ranging welfare support and get discretionary leave to remain while her asylum claim was pending. However, her asylum claim was refused, initially without a right of appeal.

After we challenged that decision through a judicial review, the Home Office accepted to withdraw its decision and reconsider the client's asylum claim. This has also safeguarded the continuity of her discretionary leave to remain as a victim of trafficking while her asylum claim remains pending. Our legal action has ensured that Nadia remains safe from her traffickers and able to pursue her claim for international protection. This case is particularly notable considering the current political climate, in which the UK government has repeatedly claimed that Albania is a safe country, resulting in many Albanian nationals' asylum claims being (wrongly) certified on the basis that their claims are 'clearly unfounded', contrary to the Home Office's relevant policy on recognised female victims of trafficking from Albania.

*All names and images of clients have been changed in this report to protect their identity.*



## SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING AND TORTURE

During 2023, 38% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of trafficking and/or torture. They often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the complexity of their cases. We understand that the experience of torture and trafficking can impact survivors' ability to give a coherent and chronological account of their experiences. Due to our partnership with the Helen Bamber Foundation, which developed the Trauma Informed Code of Conduct, our legal team are trained to work in a trauma-informed way with survivors. We obtain medical evidence to document the torture and other abuses that our clients have experienced and support them to access therapy and other support to manage the consequences of their trauma during the asylum process.



### AHMED

As a teenager, Ahmed was abducted by an armed militia in Sudan, held captive and forced to do hard physical labour. They fed him only once a day and kept him tied up with other abducted children at night. Somehow, Ahmed managed to escape and after an extremely onerous journey across North Africa and Europe, he reached the UK and claimed asylum.

Ahmed's troubles were far from over. Upon arrival in the UK, the Home Office incorrectly assessed him to be an adult, based on his appearance. He was placed in shared adult accommodation without effective access to the appropriate healthcare, legal support, education and care that he needed as a traumatised child.

A charity found Ahmed in complete isolation and distress and referred him to Asylum Aid. We took the time and care to build a relationship of trust with him so that he felt safe disclosing his experiences, enabling us to build a strong case for his asylum, trafficking and age-dispute claims. We challenged the incorrect assessment of his age, resulting in the Home Office attributing a better-informed age to him. We secured his transfer from inappropriate Home Office adult accommodation to a safe house that meets his recovery needs as a potential victim of human trafficking. We helped him access welfare support by referring him to services offering specialised mental healthcare, and support accessing welfare benefits.

Ahmed today has refugee status, safe accommodation and a strong support system, and enjoys going to school.



## STATELESS

Stateless people are often invisible. They have no documents, no rights and no state protection, which takes a huge toll on their mental health and denies them a meaningful life. They cannot work, marry, study, open a bank account or drive. If they are given basic state support, they cannot choose where they live or even what they eat. They are especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Yet it is estimated that statelessness affects over 500,000 people in Europe and millions worldwide. We were instrumental in the development of a statelessness determination procedure in the UK that gives stateless people an opportunity to regularise their status and to ultimately gain citizenship. It was implemented in 2013 and incorporated into Appendix Statelessness on 31st January 2024.

We are one of only two organisations in the UK that specialise in this area of law and we offer free representation, as there is usually no legal aid for applications on grounds of statelessness. During 2023, we represented 26 people in the statelessness procedure. Applications are complex and generally take more than a year to prepare. More than a quarter of our cases are still outstanding more than three years after we started work on the case. Three have been waiting for five years or more. Three of our clients were granted statelessness leave, each of whom we had represented for more than three years.

Our statelessness project is possible because of our partnership with 11 corporate law firms whose lawyers provide their time free of charge. The firms that worked with us in 2023 are: Akin, Ashurst, Cooley, Dentons, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Morrison & Foerster, O'Melveny, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe, Reed Smith, Skadden and White & Case. To prove statelessness, a person must exhaustively try to establish their nationality or right of admission to any relevant country. This takes a lot of detailed work: the teams of lawyers provided by our partners go through huge amounts of evidence, draft letters and representations, and accompany clients to embassies. We are very grateful to them for their work and for the financial support they give to the project.



ALI

Born in Iran, Ali's Iranian mother and Afghani father could not have an official marriage as his father had entered Iran illegally. The law in Iran at the time of Ali's birth did not allow a child to be registered solely by their mother without a marriage certificate. The only identity document Ali had was a card that identified him as an Afghan national with temporary residency status in Tehran. He was expelled from university and often told to "go back to his country". But he had no other country to go back to. He could not get Afghan identity documents as his father had left the family home when he was five, and Ali did not know where he was.

As is the case with many stateless people, discriminatory nationality laws made it impossible for Ali to be accepted in his native country. Ali had no future in Iran because he was not recognised as a citizen, and in 2011 he left. He made asylum claims in the UK on the basis of this discrimination but was unsuccessful as the discrimination did not reach the level of persecution required to qualify as a refugee. His initial claim was made in 2011, prior to the establishment of a Statelessness Determination Procedure in the UK. Ali came to Asylum Aid for advice in 2020 and working with our pro bono partners at Orrick, we made further attempts with both the Iranian and Afghan embassies to establish Ali's right of admission to either country. Asylum Aid was able to instruct an expert on Iranian law and practice to confirm Ali's account. The Red Cross was also instructed to try to trace his father, but was unable to do so.

Ali's application was submitted in 2021. After we repeatedly contacted the Home Office for updates on his case, Ali was finally granted statelessness leave to remain in 2023. He had been in the UK for 12 years with no right to work or move on with his life. He is now able to do so and is currently on an Access to Higher Education course so that he can finally enter university.

Ali says: ***"I sometimes still don't believe that I finally got the status and can do all of this. 12 years of waiting for the status and not being able to do anything was such a long time that all this feels surreal now. I'm really happy that I can finally work, study, travel, and live a normal life, thanks to Asylum Aid."***

## FAMILY REUNION – THE MIGRANTS’ LAW PROJECT

The Migrants’ Law Project (MLP) joined Asylum Aid in July 2023. The MLP is a small, strategic legal project that seeks to protect and promote the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants through strategic legal work. This includes direct casework provision to develop strategic legal action, including litigation, interventions and other avenues, as well as capacity-building, including training, supporting policy advocacy and giving one-to-one advice and support to other organisations.

Since joining Asylum Aid, the MLP has continued its work on family reunion for refugees and vulnerable migrants locked out of mainstream family reunion policies. MLP’s clients have had 11 grants of family reunion, and with Safe Passage International and Islington Law Centre, we have been exploring how to use the MLP’s expertise in this area to reunite the families of people trapped in Gaza. We have provided training in partnership with Doughty Street Chambers on family reunion and continue to explore potential strategic legal work to improve process and policy in this area. We have also continued to work with Commons Legal on a project on the criminalisation of young asylum seekers, and hope to release the findings of this work in reports in 2024.



### THE HASSAN FAMILY

The Hassan family, originally from Syria, have been separated for years, torn apart by war. The father and one son live in poverty and fear of deportation in Lebanon, having fled there to avoid being forced to fight in Syria. The mother and younger children live in Syria, while their two oldest boys were sent to England, to avoid being forced conscripts. During their arduous journey to Europe, the boys were separated; both managed to reach the UK but were desperately worried about the safety of the rest of the family.

MLP took on the case to reunite the family, using its expertise in these complex cases. Family reunion cases for those who arrive as children, like the Hassan brothers, are not within the remit of mainstream family reunion rules. Instead, a complex and time-consuming application must be made ‘outside the rules’. This is further complicated by the logistics of preparing witness statements and gathering documentation from multiple countries, which becomes even more challenging when family members are living in war zones. We gathered more evidence of the need to reunite the family for the wellbeing of each member, including statements from the family, reports from psychiatrists and social workers on the impact of separation, and evidence of the risks faced by the family members in Lebanon and Syria. Our knowledge and understanding of the law also helped us to find appropriate precedents to make our case. Although the case was initially refused by the Home Office (as happens routinely in ‘outside the rules’ applications, no matter how strong the application), we appealed, and in 2023, the appeal judge at the immigration tribunal found in our favour. The family were finally reunited in February 2024.



## II. OUR PARTNERSHIPS: BUILDING CAPACITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION IN COMPLEX CASES

### Increasing capacity through training and remote supervision

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#### JUSTICE TOGETHER INITIATIVE (JTI) PROJECT

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We launched our Justice Together Initiative (JTI) Project in 2023 to further our objective of building capacity across the immigration advice sector. This was made possible by a grant from the Justice Together Initiative. As part of the project, we provided training, supervision, and shadowing opportunities to OISC level 2 advisors working at organisations in 'advice deserts' across the UK. The aim of the project is to build advisors' capacity and confidence to take on more complex asylum and human rights casework. They undergo a four-week training programme, have opportunities to shadow experienced caseworkers, and receive 12 weeks of intensive one-on-one supervision from an experienced supervisor at Asylum Aid. Recognising that building capacity is a long-term commitment, the project also creates a permanent peer support network across three cohorts of trainees and works with managers at partner organisations to support wider organisational development. Trainees also benefit from monthly group clinical supervision with a psychologist to support their wellbeing and help them to develop self-care techniques.



*"I feel that this has been a pivotal moment in my career. It's been a total game changer – it's given me confidence, it's given me a network, I feel like I'm part of something. And obviously it's been demanding but the flexibility shown and the support we've had from everybody has allowed it, and made it so worth it."*

**Trainee, 2023 cohort**

#### MIGRANT JUSTICE GREATER LONDON (MJGL) PROJECT

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In October 2023, in partnership with Praxis and Refugee Action, we began delivering remote supervision to OISC advisers in London through the Migrant Justice Greater London (MJGL) project, which aims to increase the number of OISC-accredited organisations providing specialist immigration advice across the city. MJGL has connected caseworkers at POMOC, LAWRS, Release, Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers and Sufra with each other through weekly clinics, group training and an in-person networking event.

Asylum Aid and Praxis provide intensive supervision through weekly feedback on file reviews and casework, and formal written feedback to trainees to support their development alongside the project learning plan. MJGL has also provided wider operational support through advice on best practice, organisational operating procedures and running an immigration advice service. Looking ahead, the project hopes to support several of its caseworkers in attaining OISC L1/L2 accreditation as part of building capacity in the immigration advice sector.

## UKRAINE: A LIFELINE FOR PEOPLE STRANDED IN THE UK

In May 2022, in response to the mass displacement of Ukrainians following the full-scale invasion, we formed the Ukraine Collaborative Pro Bono Project (UCBPB) with commercial law firms DLA Piper, Eversheds Sutherland, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe and White & Case.

Stéphane Gentili of Gentili Stark Solicitors trained, guided and supervised pro bono volunteers from these firms. The UCPBP assisted Ukrainians and their family members in the UK who were unable to return to Ukraine. Between May 2022 and November 2023, **the UCPBP provided advice in 41 cases affecting at least 90 individuals.** With Good Law Project funding an additional asylum and protection caseworker at Asylum Aid, we were also able to provide free specialist legal representation to 14 clients who wanted to pursue an international protection claim. Of the clients assisted by UCPBP and Asylum Aid:

- One Russian family was granted asylum.
- Four Ukrainian families were granted humanitarian protection.
- Another family who had previously fled to Ukraine from Afghanistan were granted indefinite leave to remain.
- Four Ukrainian families were granted leave under the Ukraine Extension Scheme.
- Four Ukrainian families were granted leave under the Ukraine Family Scheme.
- One Ukrainian client was granted in country family reunion.
- One child born in the UK was granted British citizenship and his Ukrainian family granted 30 months' leave to remain.

In November 2023 we took the difficult decision to close the UCPBP. The Home Office's approach to applications under the Ukraine Schemes had become more restrictive, and with cases becoming more complex, and legal aid potentially available, a pro bono project involving non-specialist lawyers was no longer suitable.



### VOLODYMYR

We started representing Volodymyr, his wife and three children in August 2022. They had been in the UK for some years, but their two eldest children were living with their grandmother in Ukraine at the time of the full-scale invasion. Their grandmother helped the children escape Ukraine and get to the UK, where they were reunited with their parents.

However, as the family were not eligible for protection under any of the government's Ukraine schemes, their ability to stay in the UK, safe from the war, was uncertain. We helped Volodymyr apply for humanitarian protection for his family, and then asked the Home Office to make a quick decision, given the family's clear need for protection. Unfortunately, the Home Office refused to expedite their claim, leaving the parents with no certainty about their or their children's future.

During this time, the family were living in privately-rented accommodation, but without the right to work, they could no longer afford it, and the landlord was threatening to evict them. We supported them to get suitable asylum accommodation. As the immigration rules allow some people seeking protection to work after their claim has been pending for over a year, we asked the Home Office to grant Volodymyr permission to work in construction, a job on the shortage occupation list. This was granted, enabling Volodymyr to start providing better support for his family while they waited. The family was eventually granted humanitarian protection, but the Home Office did not inform them until months later, so we sent a pre-action letter challenging the absence of a decision letter. Volodymyr and his family finally have safety and stability, and have made the UK their home.

## Increasing capacity through partnerships

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### TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING

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Since 2022, we have been working in partnership with the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL) to provide immigration advice to people sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping. Regularising immigration status can be a route out of homelessness as it enables individuals to access accommodation, financial support and vital medical care while their applications are pending. Eventually, by securing their stay, they can access housing, benefits and the labour market.

More than half of the clients referred to us under this partnership have significant mental and/or physical health issues. They often have a history of trafficking, exploitation, abuse or criminal records (often directly or indirectly linked to their lack of an immigration status within the UK). Their cases are often particularly complex, with long histories of rejection by the immigration system, making them especially vulnerable.

Under the partnership with RAMFEL, Asylum Aid takes up to 30 referrals a year to investigate eligibility for legal aid in asylum, humanitarian protection, trafficking, statelessness, and complex human rights cases. If eligible, we provide them with advice and representation on their asylum and immigration matters. **Since the project started in October 2022, we have taken on 25 cases, with three clients securing immigration status to date following our advice.**



An elderly woman from Ghana with complex physical and mental health problems, Joy was trafficked to the UK in 2004 and was exploited in domestic servitude for several years. She has been living on the street since she escaped her traffickers, and has been relying on help from strangers and the church for her basic needs for years. She has no family in the UK and is unable to read or write.

With the help of a friend, she sought help from a law firm in 2021 to make an application to the Home Office for leave to remain in the UK. Despite informing the Home Office about her history of trafficking, her application was rejected, with no action taken to investigate Joy's human trafficking claim and no steps to support or protect her.

In September 2022, Joy claimed asylum, having learned from a stranger that this was an option open to her. Though she again told the Home Office about her experiences of exploitation and abuse in the UK, for a long time it did nothing to investigate her claim and did not, protect or support her, and Joy remained on the streets. Eventually, Joy was referred into the National Referral Mechanism for her human trafficking claim to be considered. However, despite receiving an initial positive decision, the Home Office still did not provide her with any support or accommodation and took no action to protect her, although they were aware of her history of exploitation, vulnerabilities and medical conditions.

When her temporary accommodation was about to end, RAMFEL referred Joy to Asylum Aid. We made urgent representations to the Home Office, asking for Joy to be provided with safe and suitable accommodation and appropriate support. When the Home Office still took no action to safeguard Joy, we informed them that we would make an urgent application for judicial review, challenging their failure to act. As a result, Joy was provided with a safe accommodation and necessary support from the Home Office. She was conclusively recognized as a victim of human trafficking and was granted leave to remain in the UK. With the support of our legal representation, Joy received financial compensation from the Home Office for the breach of her human rights.

## WELFARE ADVICE SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

Our welfare advice team specialises in providing advice to migrant communities in Westminster, many of whom do not have English as a first language. Our advisers and volunteers are multilingual and we work with volunteer community interpreters. In 2023, through a grant we received from the Westminster City Council's cost-of-living fund, we recruited two new trainee advisers, both of whom are local residents and speak community languages including Farsi and Arabic. They receive both theoretical and practical "on the job" training, shadowing and working alongside our expert advisers to increase our capacity to provide support to local residents in Westminster who do not have English as a first language.

### IN 2023:

- Our welfare advice team provided advice to more than 820 individuals through the Westminster Advice Services Partnership.
- More than 90% of those receiving welfare support from Asylum Aid were migrants and/or people of colour, and half had a disability or long-term ill health.
- In 65% of cases, advice was given in a community language, predominantly Arabic (40%), with significant numbers of clients speaking Farsi (14%) or Kurdish (11%).
- Asylum Aid secured more than £545,000 in additional support or reduced debts for its clients.



### SOFIA

Sofia, 70, is originally from Latvia and has lived in the UK for nearly 20 years. She had a good life in Latvia with her husband and three children. Unfortunately, after her husband's death, she couldn't cope financially so she came to the UK as a low-skilled agricultural worker. Her son soon joined her, successfully graduated from college and found a good job in London. But her entire life was once again taken away from her when she met with an accident at work and her son was stabbed to death in London.

Completely devastated, she lived in poverty in run-down accommodation in Westminster, which consisted of a tiny room with a small bathroom, a sofa to sleep on and a microwave to cook with. She had no access to laundry, nor a sink to do the dishes. Sofia felt trapped, as the landlord told her that if she left, she would be street homeless, having broken the tenancy agreement.

Despite reaching out to the council and multiple support services, Sofia was unable to access help as she does not speak English, and due to her health issues, she gets confused easily. She was referred to us because of our expertise in working with vulnerable people with complex communication needs. We helped Sofia understand her housing rights and supported her to contact the Department of Environmental Health. A new inspection was carried out, which concluded that her flat was unfit to live in. We found that the council had effectively abandoned her homelessness case. After multiple attempts to progress this with the council, we helped Sofia make a complaint, which was upheld. The council accepted her homelessness application and agreed that there had been numerous failures in her case.

The council placed Sofia in temporary accommodation that meets her health needs while they help her find longer-term housing, and she received compensation for their failure. Today, Sofia says she has the courage to hope again, thanks to our support.

### III. ADDRESSING INJUSTICE IN THE SYSTEM: STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK AND POLICY ADVOCACY

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At Asylum Aid, we know that our work can achieve greater impact if shared beyond those whom we directly help. We have a long history of successful policy change work based on evidence and client testimonies. Our responsibility, and our mission, remains to use the expertise gained through working with clients to encourage others to take on complex cases and to deliver a humane and effective system for individuals seeking refuge and for survivors of trafficking. Our relationship with the Helen Bamber Foundation further amplifies our voice and enables us to draw on the Foundation's expertise in working with survivors of trafficking, torture and other severe human rights violations.

Throughout 2023, we continued to participate in policy influencing forums despite having no dedicated capacity within Asylum Aid for this. We contributed to the work of the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (we co-chair the refugee working group and are active participants in the Strategic Litigation Advisory Committee), and the European Network on Statelessness. We have attended stakeholder meetings with the Home Office on statelessness, decision-making, and children, and have contributed to Ministry of Justice consultations on changes to legal aid and to the Tribunal procedure rules. Going forward, we will develop our systems for monitoring trends in our casework so that we can identify emerging issues and provide robust evidence to support our policy influencing and campaigns.

We also know that we have a lot to share with fellow practitioners from our experience working on complex cases and with survivors. We continue to host the Refugee Legal Group, a Google group with more than 1,500 members that is a vital forum for sharing information and support on legal, policy and practical developments in the field. In 2023, in partnership with the Electronic Immigration Network (EIN) and Doughty Street Chambers, we contributed to a comprehensive update of the Best Practice Guide on Asylum and Human Rights Appeals (published at [www.ein.org.uk](http://www.ein.org.uk)). This included new chapters on remote hearings (developed following a roundtable with practitioners to discuss best practice) and costs in the First-tier Tribunal. We published a comprehensive online guide to the statelessness procedure on our website. We also delivered training to other practitioners, including on delays in the asylum system, inadmissibility procedures, the Illegal Migration Act, and family reunion.



## STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK

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We know that sometimes it is necessary to bring litigation to achieve real change for our clients and we want to grow our capacity to do so in a way that makes the best use of our resources to drive system change for the benefit of all those in need of protection in the UK. We also believe in the importance of working collaboratively by sharing information and knowledge with others in the sector to ensure effective deployment of resources.

During 2023, we continued to make progress in this area:

### Rwanda and fair procedure

In December 2022, the High Court dismissed our challenge to the procedure used to decide who to send to Rwanda, as well as upholding the lawfulness of the policy of sending inadmissible asylum seekers to Rwanda under the Migration and Economic Development Partnership. In 2023, we were the only NGO to be granted permission to appeal against the High Court's judgment, arguing that the Home Office's policy was unlawful because it denied asylum seekers a fair chance to make their case against removal. In its June 2023 judgment in our case, the Court of Appeal made important findings about what is necessary for a procedure to operate fairly in the context of removals to a third country. The Court upheld our arguments: that most people need effective access to legal advice in order to make representations against removal; that they should be able to make representations on all aspects of the decision to remove (including the general safety of the destination); and that seven days will not normally be enough time for people to have a fair chance to do these things. The Court of Appeal found that the Home Office could make the procedure operate fairly by adopting and publishing a policy that recognises these minimum requirements and that makes clear that extensions should be granted whenever this is necessary to ensure fairness. We have continued to press the Home Office to adopt and publish such a policy, and to ensure that people have a fair opportunity to put their case against removal.

The Court of Appeal also upheld the case that it would not be lawful to send asylum seekers to Rwanda as, due to systemic deficiencies in the asylum system, people could be sent back from Rwanda to countries where they fear persecution. The Supreme Court upheld that judgment in December 2023 and as a result no-one has yet been sent to Rwanda. The government has now agreed a new Treaty with Rwanda and in April 2024 Parliament adopted the Safety of Rwanda Act declaring Rwanda to be safe. We have been watching the legislative process and implementation of the policy closely and stand ready to uphold the rights of asylum seekers to be treated fairly and with dignity, and to be protected from refoulement.

### Delays in the asylum system

Despite the Prime Minister's commitment to "clear" the backlog of asylum decisions by the end of 2023, delays continued to plague the asylum system. Our clients have been left facing long periods of uncertainty, unable to work, travel, be joined by their family, or get on with their lives. Although the Home Office claimed to have met its target at the end of the year, it did so by focusing resources on applications made before 28 June 2022 (so-called 'legacy' cases), thus creating a new backlog of people who have applied since that date. There are also 4,537 legacy cases, for which no decision had been taken by the end of 2023, and in a large number of cases, the Home Office treated applications as 'impliedly withdrawn', meaning there was no substantive consideration of the case nor any right of appeal. What's worse, we know from colleagues in the sector that many of these 'withdrawal' decisions were deeply unfair – for example, resulting from non-attendance at an interview when the invitation to attend had been sent to an old address.

In 2023, we secured permission from the Upper Tribunal to bring a challenge to the systemic problems underpinning these delays, on behalf of one of our clients who waited more than four years for a decision on his case. We argue that the Home Office has failed to put in place a system to allow it to comply with the requirement (in the Immigration Rules) to take a decision as soon as reasonably practicable, and to provide a (meaningful) timescale on request or if a person has been waiting more than six months for a decision. We provided evidence to the Upper Tribunal about the widespread delays faced by our clients, and the routine problem of providing timescales that are repeatedly not met and appear to have no real basis.

### Secret policy to deny leave to victims of trafficking

In a case brought on behalf of one of our clients, Amar, our public law team uncovered a secret policy under which the Home Office had denied leave to remain to recognised victims of trafficking who were waiting for a decision on their asylum claim.

A young survivor of trafficking and modern slavery from Albania, Amar was enslaved in Albania as a child by a gang who beat his mother, kidnapped him from his family home, forced him to sell drugs, and threatened to kill his family if he refused. Amar eventually managed to flee, and claimed asylum in the UK four years ago as a child.

More than two years later, Amar was recognised as a victim of human trafficking, meaning that he was eligible for discretionary leave to remain while his asylum claim was pending. However, 18 months on, he had still not been granted leave, despite us contacting the Home Office multiple times. For Amar, this was devastating. *"This delay has made me feel hopeless and powerless,"* he said. *"I am unable to move on, and am stuck in the memories of what has happened to me."*



By looking at evidence across our casework and from other practitioners, we discovered that Amar was not alone. The Home Office had denied leave to at least 1,500 survivors of trafficking and modern slavery, leaving them destitute and vulnerable to exploitation. We pursued a judicial review against the Home Office on behalf of Amar. In January 2024, the High Court ruled that the Home Office operated a secret policy to frustrate the right to leave to remain of confirmed victims of trafficking and modern slavery like Amar. It stated that this secret policy only came to light because of Asylum Aid's work in 'diligently' gathering evidence.

As a result of our legal action, Amar has finally been granted discretionary leave to remain – and more than 1,500 people like him can now access their right to safety. He has now been recognised as a refugee following his asylum appeal and can now begin his recovery from trauma.

## IV. ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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We seek to maximise the income from our legal aid work while recognising that without substantial increases in the rates paid by the Legal Aid Agency, it will never be enough to meet the costs of delivering our service. With that in mind, we also worked with the fundraising team at the Helen Bamber Foundation to raise funds for our service, and recruited a dedicated Asylum Aid fundraiser, who started in January 2023.

More information about our financial position is provided in the Financial Review below.

## V. A FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK CULTURE

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We know that working with some of the most vulnerable people in the UK asylum system can be extremely challenging and emotionally draining for our team. We aim to provide a friendly, inclusive and supportive environment in which each person who works at, or volunteers for, Asylum Aid can thrive. We prioritise learning and personal development opportunities for our team, aiming to support sustainable careers.

All frontline staff are provided with monthly group clinical supervision with an external psychologist, to support them in processing the difficult aspects of the work. We have regular face-to-face team meetings and one-to-one supervision sessions, as well as making use of technology to facilitate hybrid working. During 2023, we participated in team building and social events with our colleagues at the Helen Bamber Foundation, participated in the London Legal Walk in June, held an away day in July when MLP joined us, and successfully hosted our second Great Legal Quiz in December 2023 to raise money and build our community.

We have invested in developing our team, supporting our billing coordinator to qualify as a senior caseworker, and one of our solicitors to qualify as an accredited legal aid supervisor. We were able to offer our legal administrator a training contract through a Justice First Fellowship and supported two caseworkers to undertake studies for the Solicitors Qualifying Exam. All team members participated in anti-oppression training alongside HBF colleagues in summer 2023, and further training on trauma informed working was provided by the HBF.

## OUR FUTURE

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The success of the Supreme Court's judgment that sending asylum seekers to Rwanda would be unlawful looks likely to be short-lived, with the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act stating that Rwanda is in fact safe despite all evidence to the contrary. We continue to work collaboratively with others in the sector to consider what challenges should and can be made to ensure the safety of our clients. We are preparing for the implementation of the Illegal Migration Act and government plans to start removals to Rwanda. In a deliberately feverish political context in which the fate of our clients is frequent headline news, and with a general election in the summer of 2024, there is even greater uncertainty about what the future holds for the protection of refugees and others fleeing serious human rights violations in the UK. The impact upon the mental health of the people we work with cannot be overstated.

At the same time, we are facing unprecedented demand for our services as the immigration legal aid system strains under the impact of long-term underinvestment and excessive bureaucracy, making legal aid practice largely unsustainable for those who depend on legal aid income. Advice deserts are growing, and those few firms that remain are stretched to breaking point. We know that access to expert legal advice can be the key to unlocking legal protection and there is a need for creative solutions to the current crisis.

Our clients are left living in extreme uncertainty about their future, in very poor accommodation and with barely enough money to meet their essential needs. We are seeing increasing numbers held in completely unsuitable large-scale accommodation sites, such as Wethersfield in Essex, as well as the effects of the 'maximisation' policy requiring room sharing with strangers in overcrowded hotels.

Against this extremely challenging policy context, we must maintain a clear-eyed focus on our vision: that those in need of protection from persecution and other serious human cruelty in the UK can obtain it, and be treated fairly and with dignity.

### THEREFORE IN 2024, ASYLUM AID WILL:

- Increase the number of people we help directly, especially survivors of trafficking and torture, children, and stateless people, so that we reach 100 new clients.
- Ensure that good quality legal advice is provided to those in need of protection, including by building partnerships, delivering remote supervision and sharing best practice.
- Develop partnerships to ensure that children and survivors of trafficking and torture who are seeking asylum across the UK, including those held in accommodation centres and detention, have access to high-quality legal representation, both remotely and face-to-face.
- Leverage our evidence and experience to challenge regressive policies that seek to undermine human rights and access to justice, particularly those that aim to deny or delay access to protection for those who seek it here, and to improve the asylum system and national referral mechanism alongside the Helen Bamber Foundation.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

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Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Asylum Aid has had another successful year in 2023, which ended in a surplus. This is as a result of our fundraising activities as well as increasing income from the Legal Aid Agency for work undertaken, and our ability to respond to urgent situations and take forward new projects and collaborations, including bringing the Migrants' Law Project into Asylum Aid. As we go forward, we need to grow and diversify the income generated for Asylum Aid in order to increase financial stability and maintain our reserves as well as to support the ambitious strategy to increase the impact of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group as a whole.

## DESIGNATED CASEWORK IN PROGRESS FUND

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Our casework work in progress (WIP) designated fund (£483,240) reflects income recognised in our accounts, but which is an illiquid asset that cannot be relied upon as part of our reserves policy. This has increased by £247,699 during 2023, in part due to the arrival of the Migrants' Law Project (see below) who also hold WIP. We have also increased our Judicial Review work in our Public Law team and had some significant successes leading to inter partes costs orders in our favour, which has led to an increase in our WIP, although the realisation of this income often takes longer. Critically, our ability to realise our legal aid income for advisory and Tribunal work has not been aided by the fact that in the majority of cases, we cannot bill for legal aid work until the case is completed (and even where stage billing is possible, we can only recover fixed fees). This means that delays in Home Office decision-making and in hearing appeals, which have increased during and after the pandemic, have a direct impact on our ability to convert our WIP into cash. As casework is a source of unrestricted income, we show our WIP as a designated fund in order to ensure transparency for our funders that these funds are not a liquid asset that is available to invest in our charitable activities, but rather a helpful indicator of future legal aid income, as well as an indicator that the organisation remains a going concern. For instance, in 2024, we are currently budgeting to bring in £200,000 cash from Legal Aid work, which represents 41% of our total WIP. With a focus on realising income from our casework and no further planned growth to the casework team, we do not currently anticipate the level of WIP to increase substantially during the course of 2024, apart from the work of MLP.

## MIGRANTS' LAW PROJECT RESTRICTED FUND

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The Migrants' Law Project (MLP) is a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the UK. The MLP was hosted by Islington Law Centre (ILC) until July 2023, at which point it moved to Asylum Aid. MLP is hosted as a separate project within Asylum Aid. Its work is currently focused on supporting young refugees to reunite with their family members.

When Asylum Aid assumed responsibility for the MLP, the ILC made a restricted grant to Asylum Aid, from funds which had been previously donated to MLP while it was at ILC. This grant will help support the running costs of MLP during the first two years after its transfer to Asylum Aid. The ILC also agreed to the transfer of a number of restricted grants, and to pay by way of a restricted grant additional sums equivalent to legal aid and inter partes income received by ILC for work done by the MLP solicitors prior to the transfer of MLP to Asylum Aid. In 2023 the total amount received by way of restricted grant from ILC was £368,462 and Asylum Aid received £30,000 in other grants restricted to MLP after its transfer to Asylum Aid.

MLP has joined Asylum Aid for a trial period of three years. During the trial period Asylum Aid's Trustees have agreed that in addition to the restricted funds mentioned above, 80% of any legal aid income and inter partes costs received by Asylum Aid in respect of work done by the MLP lawyers will be put into a designated fund to be used towards meeting the MLP's running costs and will not be available to Asylum Aid. None of the legal aid cash income received in 2023 falls to be designated in this way, but £44,823 of the increase in the Designated Casework in Progress fund relates to work done by MLP solicitors, 80% of which will be designated to MLP when realised.

Asylum Aid's budgeting assumption is that the funds allocated to MLP will gradually be spent by the project over the next two or three years thus reducing the amounts in the restricted fund.

## RESERVES POLICY

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Forming part of our reserves, the unrestricted general fund is the working fund of the charity. Unlike the other funds, it is not restricted or designated for a defined purpose. The unrestricted general fund provides for activities not funded by earned income or restricted funding and for the general administration of the charity. It also provides working capital for operations and helps to provide resources to ensure that the charity is able to continue with its obligations.

Currently our group policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Given the importance of being confident that Asylum Aid can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aim to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund in order to ensure that the minimum level of reserves is met throughout the year by 2024. We are currently on track to achieve this, and in December 2023, Asylum Aid ended the year with an increased reserve level at £257,103 (2022: £229,940).

With the organisational growth taken place during 2023, and planned increases for 2024, the gross expenditure for 2024 is expected to increase by approximately 20%. However, a significant (23%) portion of this relates to the full costs of the MLP, which as detailed above, is fully funded for the next year. When taking into account the restricted funding already secured, the level of unrestricted free reserves continues to represent three months of expenditure cover.

## RISKS

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The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are considered to be:

- The challenge of ensuring that funds are raised to fill the gap left by the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding, primarily due to delays in closure of cases, and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that can arise from the significant level of demand for the services of the organisation, while at the same time as cases are not being closed, and there is little capacity for new clients.
- Lack of appropriate space for staff to work and meet clients in our current offices impacts upon service delivery and impedes recruitment /growth of the organisation to meet clear needs, as well as the time and resources needed to move into more suitable offices impacting on capacity within the organisation and potentially impacting on reserves.
- The impact of the hostile and external environment including the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and Rwanda plan, together with the ongoing effects of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Home Office accommodation policy, which are causing real anxiety and harm to our clients while also complicating the provision of advice
- The challenging economic context and cost of living crisis mean that even if a change in government following the general election leads to a change in political direction, there is unlikely to be any extra central Government funding for legal advice or to invest in the wider asylum system. These economic impacts will make an already hostile influencing environment more challenging for our clients and therefore for our work more generally.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring as well as application of the reserves policy.

## SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN

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Although the Home Office sought to clear the existing backlog of asylum cases by the end of 2023, this commitment only related to claims made before June 2022. Home Office policy and delays in the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act and Illegal Migration Act have led to the creation of new backlogs, while a large number of decisions taken in the latter part of 2023 has overwhelmed the Tribunal system. The Trustees have put in place measures to mitigate the risks to Asylum Aid from the ongoing delays in the closure of cases resulting in delayed receipt of payment from the Legal Aid Agency for work done, by focusing on fundraised income. We have also invested in capacity to ensure prompt and timely billing where possible and with the increase in Judicial Review work undertaken by our Public Law team, we have reviewed our systems to support better realisation of income from the Judicial Review Work In Progress designated fund. Having regard to these steps and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the accounts.

## REMUNERATION POLICY

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The objectives of HBF Group's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high-calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level taking account of external market rates - the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

## FUNDRAISING

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Asylum Aid is supported by the same fundraising team as the Helen Bamber Foundation as part of the group structure. Since January 2023 Asylum Aid has had its own dedicated fundraiser who sits within the Helen Bamber Foundation Group fundraising team. An annual income generation strategy is produced, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and trustees. In 2023, Asylum Aid secured fundraised income of £708,774, part of which was due to the synergy between Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation as a group. Asylum Aid's/Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on the HBF's website [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org). The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2023 did not involve external professional fundraisers or commercial participators.

Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. Registration represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, Asylum Aid commits to the Regulator's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on six key pledges that reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF Group's strong commitment to recognise sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation have received any complaints with regard to its fundraising activities in 2023.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

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In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to its stated aims and objectives. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee status and their dependents are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including providing them with legal advice and representation);
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community;
- the advancement of public knowledge on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and on the conditions that give rise to refugee movements, as well as on all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the impact on people who experience such suffering.
- assisting them in other such exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time

## STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

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The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid 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 that 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;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the finance statements;
- Prepare the finance statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 December 2023 was seven. The Trustees are members of the charity, entitling them to voting rights, but they have no beneficial interest in the charity.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The Trustees' annual report has been approved by the Trustees on [DATE TBC] and signed on their behalf by Elizabeth Mottershaw Chair of the Board of Trustees.

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM AID

## OPINION

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We have audited the financial statements of Asylum Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006

## BASIS FOR OPINION

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We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

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In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Asylum Aid's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## OTHER INFORMATION

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The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## PRIOR YEAR UNAUDITED

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The financial statements of Asylum Aid for the year ended 31 December 2022 were unaudited. An independent examination was performed which expressed an unmodified opinion on those statements

## OPINIONS ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

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In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

## MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

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In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- The directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' annual report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

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As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

## CAPABILITY OF THE AUDIT IN DETECTING IRREGULARITIES

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In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management, and the audit and risk committee, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity's policies and procedures relating to:
- Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the charity from our professional and sector experience.
- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.

- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## USE OF OUR REPORT

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This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Joanna Pittman (Senior statutory auditor)

Date

for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor

110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

# Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

Company no. 02513874

For the year ended 31 December 2023

|                                                              | Note | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2023<br>Total<br>£ | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Income from:</b>                                          |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Donations and legacies                                       | 2    | 305,301           | 403,473         | <b>708,774</b>     | 363,247           | 277,343         | 640,590            |
| Charitable activities                                        |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services                                           | 3    | 155,115           | -               | <b>155,115</b>     | 129,157           | -               | 129,157            |
| Other Legal Aid Services<br>(Work in progress)               | 3    | 247,699           | -               | <b>247,699</b>     | 25,692            | -               | 25,692             |
| Ramfel                                                       | 3    | 57,318            | -               | <b>57,318</b>      | 26,627            | -               | 26,627             |
| Westminster CAB                                              | 3    | 117,191           | -               | <b>117,191</b>     | 61,306            | -               | 61,306             |
| MLP Income                                                   | 3    | -                 | 398,461         | <b>398,461</b>     | -                 | -               | -                  |
| Other income                                                 |      | 38,937            | -               | <b>38,937</b>      | -                 | -               | -                  |
| <b>Total income</b>                                          |      | <b>921,561</b>    | <b>801,934</b>  | <b>1,723,495</b>   | <b>606,029</b>    | <b>277,343</b>  | <b>883,372</b>     |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                       |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Raising funds                                                | 4a   | 46,545            | -               | <b>46,545</b>      | 25,856            | -               | 25,856             |
| Charitable activities                                        |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services/<br>Westminster CAB                       |      | 600,154           | 556,662         | <b>1,156,816</b>   | 366,633           | 248,010         | 614,643            |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                     |      | <b>646,699</b>    | <b>556,662</b>  | <b>1,203,361</b>   | <b>392,489</b>    | <b>248,010</b>  | <b>640,499</b>     |
| <b>Net income for the year and<br/>net movement in funds</b> | 5    | <b>274,862</b>    | <b>245,272</b>  | <b>520,134</b>     | <b>213,540</b>    | <b>29,333</b>   | <b>242,873</b>     |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>                              |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Total funds brought forward                                  |      | 490,481           | 47,474          | <b>537,955</b>     | 276,941           | 18,141          | 295,082            |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                           |      | <b>765,343</b>    | <b>292,746</b>  | <b>1,058,089</b>   | <b>490,481</b>    | <b>47,474</b>   | <b>537,955</b>     |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 12a to the financial statements.

## Balance sheet

As at 31 December 2023

|                                                |      |                  | 2023             |           | 2022    |
|------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|
|                                                | Note | £                | £                | £         | £       |
| <b>Fixed assets:</b>                           |      |                  |                  |           |         |
| Tangible assets                                | 8    |                  | <b>13,184</b>    |           | 2,616   |
|                                                |      |                  | <b>13,184</b>    |           | 2,616   |
| <b>Current assets:</b>                         |      |                  |                  |           |         |
| Work in progress                               |      | <b>483,240</b>   |                  | 235,541   |         |
| Debtors                                        | 9    | <b>76,843</b>    |                  | 39,829    |         |
| Cash at bank and in hand                       |      | <b>966,018</b>   |                  | 567,084   |         |
|                                                |      | <b>1,526,101</b> |                  | 842,454   |         |
| <b>Liabilities:</b>                            |      |                  |                  |           |         |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 10   | <b>(481,196)</b> |                  | (307,115) |         |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                      |      |                  | <b>1,044,905</b> |           | 535,339 |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                              |      |                  | <b>1,058,089</b> |           | 537,955 |
| <b>The funds of the charity:</b>               | 11a  |                  |                  |           |         |
| Restricted income funds                        |      | <b>292,746</b>   | <b>292,746</b>   | 47,474    | 47,474  |
| Unrestricted income funds:                     |      |                  |                  |           |         |
| Designated funds (Work in Progress)            |      | <b>483,240</b>   |                  | 235,541   |         |
| Designated- New Premise Fund                   |      | <b>25,000</b>    |                  | 25,000    |         |
| General funds                                  |      | <b>257,103</b>   |                  | 229,940   |         |
| Total unrestricted funds                       |      |                  | <b>765,343</b>   |           | 490,481 |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>                     |      |                  | <b>1,058,089</b> |           | 537,955 |

Approved by the trustees on 11 July 2024 and signed on their behalf by

**John Scampion**

Treasurer

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2023

|                                                                                                     | 2023            | 2022     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| £                                                                                                   | £               | £        |
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>                                                         |                 |          |
| Net income for the year and net movement in funds<br>(as per the statement of financial activities) | 520,134         | 242,873  |
| Depreciation charges                                                                                | 2,554           | 628      |
| (Increase) / decrease in debtors                                                                    | (284,713)       | (37,710) |
| (Decrease) / increase in creditors                                                                  | 174,081         | 107,107  |
| <b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>                                                    | <b>412,056</b>  | 312,898  |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>                                                        |                 |          |
| Purchase of fixed assets                                                                            | (13,122)        | (2,312)  |
| <b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>                                        | <b>(13,122)</b> | (2,312)  |
| <b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>                                              | <b>398,934</b>  | 310,587  |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year                                              | 567,084         | 256,497  |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>                                             | <b>966,018</b>  | 567,084  |

### Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt

|                                        | At 1 January 2023<br>£ | Cash flows<br>£ | Other non-cash<br>changes<br>£ | At 31 December 2023<br>£ |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cash at bank and in hand               | 567,084                | 398,934         | -                              | 966,018                  |
| <b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b> | 567,084                | 398,934         | -                              | 966,018                  |

# Notes to the financial statements

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For the year ended 31 December 2023

## 1 Accounting policies

### a) Statutory information

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office address and principal place of business is Bruges Place, 15-20 Baynes Street, London, NW1 0TF.

### b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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) (effective 1 January 2019)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include the estimation of the value of the work in progress.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

As of July 2023, the activities of the Migrant Law Project (MLP) were transferred to Asylum Aid from Islington Law Centre. The transfer included staff working on the project, £200,000 in unrestricted funds to fund the next two years of the project, unspent restricted project funding allocated to the project, and work in progress on project files totalling approximately a further £200,000.

### c) Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company.

### d) Income

Income is recognised when:

- 1) The charity has entitlement to the funds
- 2) Any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- 3) It is probable that the income will be received
- 4) The amount can be measured reliably.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

We recognise work done under the legal aid contract where the criteria for entitlement to payment under the legal aid regulations are met.

### **e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

### **f) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

### **g) Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

### **h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

### **i) Allocation of support costs**

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

### **j) Tangible fixed assets**

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £250. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Office equipment      25% straight line basis

### **k) Work in progress**

Work in progress is valued at the average hourly rate paid by the Legal Aid Agency less any necessary provisions.

### **l) Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### **m) Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

### **n) Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

### **o) Pensions**

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Pensions Trust Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

## 2 Income from donations and grants

|                                                 | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2023<br>Total<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£ |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Donations</b>                                |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Individual donations                            | 100,547           | -               | <b>100,547</b>     | 54,804             |
| Corporate donations                             | 52,150            | 107,000         | <b>159,150</b>     | 99,000             |
| Helen Bamber Foundation                         | -                 | -               | -                  | 75,786             |
| Legacies                                        | -                 | -               | -                  | 47,266             |
| <b>Grants</b>                                   |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Access to Justice Foundation Funder Plus Scheme | -                 | -               | -                  | 12,196             |
| ILPA                                            | -                 | 30,000          | <b>30,000</b>      | 19,005             |
| The Legal Education Foundation                  | -                 | 46,000          | <b>46,000</b>      | -                  |
| Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust                | -                 | 10,000          | <b>10,000</b>      | -                  |
| London Legal Support Trust                      | -                 | -               | -                  | 11,228             |
| Trust for London (Statelessness)                | -                 | 17,920          | <b>17,920</b>      | 22,730             |
| National Lottery Community Fund                 | -                 | 9,653           | <b>9,653</b>       | -                  |
| BNP Paribas                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | 20,000             |
| Disrupt Foundation                              | 50,000            | -               | <b>50,000</b>      | 50,000             |
| Unbound Philanthropy                            | 25,000            | -               | <b>25,000</b>      | 30,000             |
| Open Society Foundation                         | 40,000            | 40,000          | <b>80,000</b>      | 36,154             |
| Good Law Ltd                                    | -                 | 29,040          | <b>29,040</b>      | 17,649             |
| Samworth Foundation                             | -                 | -               | -                  | 65,000             |
| Choose Love                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | 8,000              |
| Justice Platform                                | -                 | 88,860          | <b>88,860</b>      | 20,454             |
| Anonymous                                       | 36,500            | 25,000          | <b>61,500</b>      | 35,000             |
| Other                                           | 1,104             | -               | <b>1,104</b>       | 16,317             |
|                                                 | <b>305,301</b>    | <b>403,473</b>  | <b>708,774</b>     | <b>640,590</b>     |

2022 Unrestricted £363,247. Restricted £277,343)

### 3 Income from charitable activities

|                                                | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2023<br>Total<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Legal Aid Claims                               | 155,115           | -               | 155,115            | 129,157            |
|                                                | 155,115           | -               | 155,115            | 129,157            |
| Other Legal Aid Claims Work in Progress        | 247,699           | -               | 247,699            | 25,692             |
|                                                | <b>247,699</b>    | <b>-</b>        | <b>247,699</b>     | <b>25,692</b>      |
| Ramfel                                         | 57,318            | -               | 57,318             | 26,627             |
|                                                | 57,318            | -               | 57,318             | 26,627             |
| Westminster CAB Project                        | 117,191           | -               | 117,191            | 61,306             |
|                                                | 117,191           | -               | 117,191            | 61,306             |
| MLP Income                                     | -                 | 398,461         | 398,461            | -                  |
|                                                | -                 | 398,461         | 398,461            | -                  |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>577,323</b>    | <b>398,461</b>  | <b>975,784</b>     | <b>242,782</b>     |

(2022 Unrestricted £242,782)

#### 4a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

|                                   | Basis of allocation | Charitable activities |                         |                       |                    | 2023 Total<br>£  | 2022 Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                                   |                     | Raising funds<br>£    | Legal Aid Services<br>£ | Governance costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ |                  |                 |
| Staff costs (Note 6)              | Staff time          | 34,984                | 693,005                 | 19,250                | 31,212             | <b>778,451</b>   | 465,276         |
| Direct costs                      | Direct              | 2,354                 | 288,877                 | -                     | -                  | <b>291,231</b>   | 101,352         |
| Premises costs                    | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 39,325             | <b>39,325</b>    | 18,227          |
| Staff recruitment/<br>training    | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 15,414             | <b>15,414</b>    | 10,752          |
| Office costs/comms                | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | 808                   | 64,778             | <b>65,586</b>    | 40,663          |
| Depreciation                      | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 2,554              | <b>2,554</b>     | 628             |
| Audit & Accountancy<br>fees       | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | 10,800                | -                  | <b>10,800</b>    | 3,600           |
|                                   |                     | 37,338                | 981,882                 | 30,858                | 153,283            | <b>1,203,361</b> | 640,499         |
|                                   |                     | -                     | -                       | -                     | -                  | -                | -               |
| Support costs                     |                     | 7,664                 | 145,619                 | -                     | (153,283)          | -                | -               |
|                                   |                     | -                     | -                       | -                     | -                  | -                | -               |
| Governance costs                  |                     | 1,543                 | 29,315                  | (30,858)              | -                  | -                | -               |
|                                   |                     | -                     | -                       | -                     | -                  | -                | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure<br/>2023</b> |                     | <b>46,545</b>         | <b>1,156,816</b>        | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>           | <b>1,203,361</b> |                 |
| Total expenditure<br>2022         |                     | <b>25,768</b>         | <b>614,731</b>          | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>           |                  | 640,499         |

#### 4b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

|                                   | Basis of allocation | Charitable activities |                         |                       |                    | 2022 Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                                   |                     | Raising funds<br>£    | Legal Aid Services<br>£ | Governance costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ |                 |
| Staff costs (Note 6)              | Staff time          | 19,542                | 395,086                 | 17,865                | 32,783             | <b>465,276</b>  |
| Direct costs                      | Direct              | -                     | 101,352                 | -                     | -                  | <b>101,352</b>  |
| Premises costs                    | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 18,227             | <b>18,227</b>   |
| Staff recruitment/<br>training    | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 10,752             | <b>10,752</b>   |
| Office costs/comms                | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 40,663.03          | <b>40,663</b>   |
| Depreciation                      | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | -                     | 628                | <b>628</b>      |
| Audit & Accountancy<br>fees       | Staff time          | -                     | -                       | 3,600                 | -                  | <b>3,600</b>    |
|                                   |                     | 19,542                | 496,439                 | 21,465                | 103,053            | <b>640,499</b>  |
| Support costs                     |                     | 5,153                 | 97,901                  | -                     | (103,053)          | -               |
| Governance costs                  |                     | 1,073                 | 20,391                  | (21,465)              | -                  | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure<br/>2022</b> |                     | <b>25,768</b>         | <b>614,731</b>          | <b>-</b>              | <b>-</b>           | <b>640,499</b>  |

## 5 Net income for the year

This is stated after charging:

|                         | 2023<br>£ | 2022<br>£ |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Depreciation            | 2,554     | 628       |
| Auditor's remuneration: |           |           |
| Audit fees              | 9,000     | -         |
| Independent examination | -         | 3,600     |

## 6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

|                                                                 | 2023<br>£      | 2022<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Salaries and wages                                              | 686,357        | 408,389        |
| Social security costs                                           | 64,707         | 40,260         |
| Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes | 27,387         | 16,626         |
|                                                                 | <b>778,451</b> | <b>465,276</b> |

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension and employer's national insurance (of between £60,000 and £70,000). (2022: one)

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £111,961 (2022: £113,179).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2022: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2022: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: £nil).

### Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

|                     | 2023<br>No. | 2022<br>No. |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Raising funds       | 2           | 4           |
| Charitable activity | 20          | 20          |
| Governance          | 2           | 4           |
|                     | <b>24</b>   | <b>28</b>   |

## 7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

## 8 Tangible fixed assets

| <b>Cost</b>                   | Office equipment<br>£ | <b>Total<br/>£</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| At the start of the year      | 3,669                 | <b>3,669</b>       |
| Additions in year             | 13,122                | <b>13,122</b>      |
| At the end of the year        | 16,791                | <b>16,791</b>      |
| <b>Depreciation</b>           |                       |                    |
| At the start of the year      | 1,052                 | <b>1,052</b>       |
| Charge for the year           | 2,554                 | <b>2,554</b>       |
| At the end of the year        | 3,606                 | <b>3,606</b>       |
| <b>Net book value</b>         |                       |                    |
| <b>At the end of the year</b> | 13,184                | <b>13,184</b>      |
| At the start of the year      | 2,616                 | <b>2,616</b>       |

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

## 9 Debtors

|                | 2023<br>£     | 2022<br>£     |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Trade debtors  | 56,795        | 30,653        |
| Other debtors  | 385           | 3,995         |
| Prepayments    | 9,663         | 5,180         |
| Accrued income | 10,000        | -             |
|                | <b>76,843</b> | <b>39,829</b> |

## 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                                         | 2023<br>£      | 2022<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Trade creditors                         | 12,034         | 22,906         |
| Taxation and social security            | 19,289         | 10,290         |
| Other creditors                         | 25,948         | 67,364         |
| Amounts owed to Helen Bamber Foundation | 65,095         | 72,416         |
| Accruals                                | 40,219         | 65,078         |
| Deferred income                         | 318,611        | 69,061         |
|                                         | <b>481,196</b> | <b>307,115</b> |

### Deferred income

|                                       | 2023<br>£      | 2022<br>£     |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Balance at the beginning of the year  | 69,061         | -             |
| Amount released to income in the year | (69,061)       | -             |
| Amount deferred in the year           | 318,611        | 69,061        |
| Balance at the end of the year        | <b>318,611</b> | <b>69,061</b> |

Deferred income comprises grants received from Corporates and Trusts and foundations in the current year which relate to a future period. It also contains the Migrant Law Project grant which will fund that project until July 2025.

## 11a Analysis of group net assets between funds (current year)

|                                       | General unrestricted<br>£ | Designated<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 13,184                    | -               | -                     | 13,184           |
| Net current assets                    | 243,919                   | 508,240         | 292,746               | 1,044,905        |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2023</b> | <b>257,103</b>            | <b>508,240</b>  | <b>292,746</b>        | <b>1,058,089</b> |

## 11b Analysis of group net assets between funds (prior year)

|                                       | General unrestricted<br>£ | Designated<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 2,616                     | -               | -                     | 2,616            |
| Net current assets                    | 227,324                   | 260,541         | 47,474                | 535,339          |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2022</b> | <b>229,940</b>            | <b>260,541</b>  | <b>47,474</b>         | <b>537,955</b>   |

## 12a Movements in funds (current year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2023<br>£ | Income & gains<br>£ | Expenditure & losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                        |                     |                           |                |                  |
| Legal Aid Services              | 47,474                 | 404,134             | 372,320                   | -              | 79,288           |
| Migrants' Law Project           | -                      | 397,800             | 184,342                   | -              | 213,458          |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>47,474</b>          | <b>801,934</b>      | <b>556,662</b>            | <b>-</b>       | <b>292,746</b>   |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                        |                     |                           |                |                  |
| General funds                   | 229,940                | 673,862             | 646,699                   | -              | 257,103          |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | 235,541                | 247,699             | -                         | -              | 483,240          |
| Designated- New Premise Fund    | 25,000                 | -                   | -                         | -              | 25,000           |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>490,481</b>         | <b>921,561</b>      | <b>646,699</b>            | <b>-</b>       | <b>765,343</b>   |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>537,955</b>         | <b>1,723,495</b>    | <b>1,203,361</b>          | <b>-</b>       | <b>1,058,089</b> |

## 12b Movements in group (prior year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2022<br>£ | Income & gains<br>£ | Expenditure &<br>losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                        |                     |                              |                |                  |
| Legal Aid Services              | 18,141                 | 277,343             | 248,010                      | -              | <b>47,474</b>    |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>18,141</b>          | <b>277,343</b>      | <b>248,010</b>               | <b>-</b>       | <b>47,474</b>    |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                        |                     |                              |                |                  |
| General funds                   | 67,092                 | 580,337             | 392,489                      | (25,000)       | <b>229,940</b>   |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | 209,849                | 25,692              | -                            | -              | <b>235,541</b>   |
| Designated- New Premise Fund    | -                      | -                   | -                            | 25,000         | <b>25,000</b>    |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>276,941</b>         | <b>606,029</b>      | <b>392,489</b>               | <b>-</b>       | <b>490,481</b>   |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>295,082</b>         | <b>883,372</b>      | <b>640,499</b>               | <b>-</b>       | <b>537,955</b>   |

## Legal Aid Services

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects, including the Migrant Law Project. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people against the backdrop of an ever more challenging external environment

## 13 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

## 14 Related party transactions

The total amount of donations received in 2023 from Trustees or parties related to them was £5,000 from one trustee (2022 £nil from none).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

## 15 Ultimate Controlling Party

The company's ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party is Helen Bamber Foundation, a registered charity (charity number 1149652) and company limited by guarantee (company number 08186281). Copies of the financial statements are available from Companies House and the Charity Commission.



Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# Accounts

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CHARITY NUMBER: 328729  
COMPANY NUMBER: 02513874



# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 December 2022





Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

## TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Anne Mottershaw – Chair  
Sir Nicolas Bratza  
Kat Lorenz (appointed November 2022)  
Yehia Nasir (appointed December 2022)  
Constantine Partasides  
Peter Reid (resigned October 2022)  
John Scampion – Treasurer  
Ruth Tanner (appointed December 2022)  
Ian Watt (resigned February 2022)

## MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES

Alison Pickup – Director of Asylum Aid  
Gareth Holmes – Group Executive Director of Fundraising and Communications  
Anne Muthee – Group Director of Finance and Operations  
Kerry Smith – Group Chief Executive Officer

**CHARITY NUMBER** 328729  
(registered in England and Wales)

**COMPANY NUMBER** 02513874  
(incorporated in the United Kingdom)

## REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

Bruges Place, 15-20 Baynes Street  
London  
NW1 0TF

Derry House  
20 Penfold Street  
London  
NW8 8HJ

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Sayer Vincent LLP  
Joanna Pittman FCA  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0TL

## BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

# INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM AID

Asylum Aid is a committed, professional and collaborative organisation dedicated to protecting people from persecution by providing legal representation and access to justice for refugees and those seeking asylum. It combines this with the role of providing welfare advice to refugees, migrants and other members of the community whose first language is not English.

**Our vision is that all those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it, and are treated fairly and with dignity.**

At Asylum Aid, we know that good quality legal representation is life-saving for the people we help, and that by working together, we can help more people. We represent vulnerable people, particularly children, survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, and stateless people. We believe everyone deserves access to protection – and we take on the complex cases that others do not. The organisation also works with others to change policy and practice, to ensure the safety and recovery of people who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity. We share best practice and seek to build capacity through training, second-tier support and the publication of resources.

## OUR VALUES ARE A REFLECTION OF HOW WE WORK:

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**Pursuing Excellence:** We strive to be the best we can be in our work. We share what we have learned with others and seek to continuously learn from our clients and others about how we can do better. Where we advocate for changes, we do so on the basis of evidence and experience of what works best.

**Courageous:** We advocate bravely for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, survivors of trafficking and stateless people, and we are not afraid to speak out against injustice. We are courageous in the advice we give and we persevere in seeking lasting solutions, undaunted by the barriers we encounter and inspired by the bravery of our clients.

**Collaborative:** We know that we can achieve more if we collaborate with others. We seek out opportunities for partnerships, for sharing knowledge, and for joint work. We work together as a team and we are open to each other. We listen to our clients and we offer them advice that enables them to get the best outcomes.

**Acting with Integrity:** We are honest, open, respectful and professional in all our dealings with our clients, with our partners, with the Home Office and other government departments, with the courts and with each other. We fight fearlessly for the best interests of every client without compromising our ethical duties. We are accountable to these values and we bring our whole selves to our work.

**Promoting Equality:** We believe that all those seeking protection should be afforded equal access to a fair system for deciding their claims and should be treated equally according to their needs. We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our organization and in our dealings with our clients, volunteers and partners.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTOR

2022 was an exciting year of growth and development for Asylum Aid, against the backdrop of an ever more challenging external environment. We adopted an ambitious strategy for 2022-2024, setting objectives that seek both to consolidate our focus on delivering expert advice and representation in some of the most complex cases, and to leverage our position and experience to achieve wider systems change. You can read more about our strategic objectives, and the work we have started to do to achieve these, below.

In 2022, we saw the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering the largest refugee flow in Europe since the Second World War; the announcement by the UK Government of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda; the adoption of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022; and a continuing increase in the number of people crossing the channel in small boats, with tragic loss of life. We continued to feel the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on our staff and clients, and we saw the impact of the cost of living crisis, which has left many of our clients destitute. On top of all of this, the Government's hostile rhetoric towards refugees and survivors of trafficking, and its increasing hostility towards their legal representatives, made what was an already difficult environment even harder to navigate.

Yet despite all of this, we are extremely proud of all that we have achieved in 2022. We are privileged to lead an extremely committed and talented team, whose enthusiasm and courage in representing some of the most vulnerable people seeking protection in the UK is infectious. We have established new partnerships to advise those unable to return to Ukraine and to help tackle rough sleeping through the provision of specialist advice. We have taken legal action to secure fair processes and fair outcomes for refugees faced with being sent to Rwanda under the Government's inhumane policy, and to tackle the delays that leave our clients in uncertain limbo for months or years. And we have continued to provide high quality representation in complex cases.

In some of the hardest moments, we have been buoyed by the support we have received from our supporters: members of the public, including those who contributed to our Crowdfunder campaign to fund our litigation on the Rwanda policy; funders who saw the value of our work, including our corporate partners who contributed their time and energy as well as funding; and colleagues in the sector who continue to share their experiences and ideas, and inspire us in our work. These are challenging times but we know that we are working as part of a collective endeavour to achieve a more positive outlook for the refugees whom we are privileged to work alongside and represent.

**Kerry Smith, CEO of Asylum Aid & Alison Pickup, Director of Asylum Aid**

# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## ASYLUM AID'S STAFF & VOLUNTEERS: A COMMUNITY EFFORT

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Asylum Aid grew during 2022. We started with the full-time equivalent of 8.4 members of staff and ended the year with 11.5, as part of our strategy to sustainably increase impact. We recruited nine volunteers to support our welfare advice service, providing interpreting services, language support and gateway assessments and supporting drop-ins at our offices in Westminster and a local library. We also recruited volunteers to help with administration for the legal service, and a volunteer coordinator for our new Ukraine pro bono project.

## MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

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Asylum Aid is a charity in its own right and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Helen Bamber Foundation – the Helen Bamber Foundation is the sole member of Asylum Aid. The day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to a Management Group consisting of the Group Chief Executive, Director of Asylum Aid, Executive Director of HBF Group Fundraising and Communications, and Director of HBF Group Finance and Operations. The Helen Bamber Foundation Group Finance and Fundraising Committee is composed of Trustees of both Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation and includes the Director of Asylum Aid. Management Team members of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation meet at least monthly to provide financial and fundraising, safeguarding and executive oversight.

Our Chair, Elizabeth Mottershaw, was appointed in January 2022. Following further recruitment during the year, there are now seven Trustees of Asylum Aid, three of whom – including the Chair and Treasurer – also serve on the Helen Bamber Foundation Board, to ensure strong governance and joint strategic alignment while ensuring independent decision-making. During the year, Ian Watt and Peter Reid stepped down as Trustees. We are grateful to both of them for the time and support that they gave to Asylum Aid during its transition from our previous home at Consonant and into the Helen Bamber Foundation Group.

New Trustees are recruited externally, and their appointment is approved by Asylum Aid's Board of Trustees and by the Helen Bamber Foundation Group Board. A tailored induction follows, ensuring that each new Trustee has been briefed on Asylum Aid's governance structure and decision-making processes, on their obligations under charity law, and on the activities of Asylum Aid and its financial performance. New Trustees are offered training on their duties as Trustees if required. Trustee meetings are held every quarter.

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th June 1990 and registered as a charity on 24th July 1990.

The company was established under a memorandum of association that established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

During 2022, we completed significant work on our governance and structure to update our objects and to formalise the relationship between Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation. The Helen Bamber Foundation is now the sole member of Asylum Aid and, following consultation, consent was obtained from the Charity Commission in August 2022 to adopt new Articles of Association, which were duly adopted on 22 September 2022. These include revised objects and have otherwise been updated and revised in line with charity law and the objects of the Group. The revised objects are as follows:

**2.1** The Charity is established for the following purposes for the benefit of the Beneficiaries:

- 2.1.1** to relieve their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including by providing them with legal advice and representation);
- 2.1.2** to preserve and protect their physical and mental health;
- 2.1.3** to advance their education and training so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community;
- 2.1.4** to advance public education about the position of, and issues relating to, the Beneficiaries, including the situations that give rise to refugee movements; and
- 2.1.5** assisting them in such other exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time.

**2.2** In this Article 2, “Beneficiaries” means individuals who:

- 2.2.1** are seeking asylum or other forms of protection in the UK;
- 2.2.2** have already been granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or other forms of protection status by UK immigration authorities;
- 2.2.3** have insecure immigration status or are stateless;
- 2.2.4** are vulnerable to destitution, exploitation, abuse, trafficking or other forms of human cruelty including, but not limited to, those outside their country of origin; and
- 2.2.5** the dependants of those mentioned in Articles 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 above.

We are grateful to our lawyers at Bates, Wells and Braithwaite for their advice and assistance with this process.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. No expenses were reclaimed from the charity during the year.

This report is for the twelve-month period from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

When a person arrives in the UK having fled persecution or cruelty, or when they have been trafficked here and manage to escape their traffickers, they are faced with a frightening, confusing process: interviews with officials followed by complex decision letters written in English; then, if they are not granted protection, they may be able to appeal to a tribunal – they will usually have to give oral evidence and be cross-examined; sometimes tribunal judges get it wrong, and there may be further appeals to more senior tribunals and courts. This is the context for Asylum Aid's vital work of providing legal representation, which helps support individuals navigating this complex process.

I joined Asylum Aid as Chair of Trustees in January 2022 and would like to pay tribute to the impressive and exciting work carried out by the team this year. In 2022, the team provided legal representation to more than 130 individuals, all complex cases and highly vulnerable people. Asylum Aid also seeks to influence the process itself and in 2022 this work included its legal challenge to the proposal to remove asylum seekers to Rwanda – something likely to have an impact on thousands – as well as work on the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and seeking to improve access to legal advice. Also in 2022, the organisation established new ways of sharing its expertise with other professionals, in order to maximise its impact.

In 2022, 74,751 people applied for asylum in the UK; 5,242 of them were unaccompanied children. By spring 2023, the backlog of unresolved cases stretched to more than 160,000. Many asylum seekers spend years in limbo, waiting for a decision from the Home Office, or for their appeal to the Tribunal to be heard. During this time, they are usually unable to work and cannot move on with their lives; nor can they be joined by – or travel to see – family they have left behind. In this context, I truly believe that Asylum Aid offers a unique and far-reaching approach – and that, now more than ever, it is essential.

Under the leadership of Alison Pickup and Kerry Smith, the organisation's strategic plan for 2022-2024 provides a framework for sustainable growth and extended impact. I am confident that the organisation will continue to provide essential legal representation in the most complex of cases whilst finding innovative ways to share its expertise and to challenge government policy.

**Elizabeth Anne Mottershaw, Chair, Asylum Aid**

# ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

## ASYLUM AID STRATEGY 2022 – 2024

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Following a period of consolidation after Asylum Aid moved from its previous home at Consonant in August 2020, in 2022 we set out our strategy for our work from 2022-2024. Following consultation with staff, Trustees and colleagues in the sector we adopted a new statement of our vision, mission and values, and identified five strategic objectives for the next stage of our organisation's life, to the end of 2024.

**Our vision is that all those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it, and are treated fairly and with dignity.**

## OUR MISSION – WHAT WE DO



## OBJECTIVES FOR 2022-2024

1. Strengthen and grow our capacity to deliver expert advice, direct legal representation and casework in the most complex cases, enabling more survivors of human cruelty to secure legal status and meaningful protection
2. Working in partnership with others, build capacity across the immigration advice sector to deliver expert advice and representation in complex cases
3. Increase our capacity to engage in policy advocacy and strategic legal work to make the asylum system fair and dignified, and to improve access to effective and quality advice for those seeking protection
4. Achieve financial sustainability with reserves of between 3 to 6 months by 2024
5. Ensure that Asylum Aid is a friendly, inclusive and supportive place to work where each member of the team feels valued and able to develop to their full potential

## I. INCREASING ACCESS TO PROTECTION: OUR CASEWORK

This year has seen some modest growth in our casework team and its capacity: we have increased our team by 1 full time caseworker and 1 full time supervisor. During the year we also hosted two trainees on secondment from the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. The trainees spent four months on secondment at Asylum Aid, gaining exposure to our approach to casework. This contributed to both increasing our capacity and sharing best practice with our partners in the sector.

We have continued to focus on the most vulnerable: children, survivors of torture, trafficking and gender-based violence, and homeless people. In the period between 1st January 2022 and 31st December 2022 the team provided legal representation to over 130 refugees and people seeking asylum, many of whom were survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, and 23 stateless persons. As a result of growth in the team, we were able to take on 81 new clients during the year and we also facilitated access to advice for 28 clients through our Ukraine project. Thanks to the hard work of our expert team of caseworkers, 53 of our clients were granted protection during the year, and 15 clients were recognised as victims of trafficking. 79% of initial decisions we received from the Home Office were grants of status (slightly above the national success rate of 76%), and an additional 20 clients were granted protection following an appeal or judicial review proceedings. The team also provided welfare advice to more than 870 individuals through the Westminster Advice Services Partnership.

### CHILDREN

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During 2022, around a fifth of Asylum Aid's clients were children, many of whom were also survivors of trafficking. Unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation because their cases are often complex, as many involve histories of trafficking or other trauma, and in all cases they are coping with the strain of family separation. This inevitably requires extra work and time for which payment is not usually received until the closure of their case.

Working with children has been particularly challenging over the last few years, due to increasing delays in Home Office decision-making, despite the priority supposed to be given to children's cases. Our approach is to take the necessary time that each child requires to tell their story; to work collaboratively with their support networks; and to challenge delays and poor quality decision-making by the Home Office.

## BENJAMIN

When he was only 15, Benjamin and his mum were targeted by the authorities in his home country after attending a political demonstration. His mum went into hiding and arrangements were made for Benjamin to leave the country; Benjamin has had no further contact with his family since then, and no knowledge of what happened to his mum. He was then trafficked to the UK where, upon arrival, he was taken directly to a house where he was forced to cultivate cannabis plants. Benjamin was kept in the house for more than a year; the windows of the house were boarded up so there was no natural light, he was not permitted to leave at any point, and he had only limited contact with others. Eventually, Benjamin was able to escape the house where he was being held and he boarded a train to London. He later claimed asylum and was referred into the National Referral Mechanism on account of his experiences of trafficking and modern slavery.

We started working with Benjamin on his case, taking a detailed witness statement from him and obtaining expert reports to support his asylum and trafficking claims. Despite Benjamin's vulnerabilities and his diagnosed mental health conditions, which stemmed from his experiences as a child, it took the Home Office two years to accept his trafficking claim, and recognise that he was a victim of trafficking and modern slavery. It then took a further four months for the Home Office to make a decision on his asylum claim.

Despite the Home Office accepting that Benjamin was trafficked to the UK as a child and forced to work in a cannabis factory, his asylum claim was refused as it was stated that he could safely return to his country of origin. We worked with Benjamin to appeal this refusal and a judge at the First-tier Tribunal allowed his appeal on all grounds.

Benjamin was eventually granted asylum and accepted as a child victim of trafficking.

We have seen increasing numbers of children being age-disputed, often following a cursory assessment by immigration officers. This results in children being wrongly treated as adults, placed in adult accommodation and without the additional support and care that they so desperately need. We have expanded our legal service this year to include directly challenging these age assessments, supporting children to request assessments by specialist social workers and bringing judicial review proceedings where needed. We have also been working collaboratively with a group of other charities and lawyers to develop legal strategies for challenging the Home Office's approach to assessing age.

## SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING AND TORTURE

During 2022, around a quarter of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of torture and/or trafficking, who often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the frequent complexity of their cases. At Asylum Aid, we understand that the experience of torture and/or trafficking can impact survivors' ability to give a coherent and chronological account of the experiences that led them to seek asylum because of the impact of trauma on memory. Through our link with the Helen Bamber Foundation, which developed the Trauma Informed Code of Conduct, our entire legal team is trained in working in a trauma-informed way with survivors of torture and trafficking, to ensure they can give the best account of their claims. We obtain medical evidence to document the torture and other abuses our clients have experienced and we support them to access therapy and other support to manage the consequences of their trauma during the asylum process.

## MAY

May is an asylum seeker whose nationality is disputed. She was born in Eritrea and believes herself to be Eritrean, but the Home Office considers her to be Ethiopian. She came to the UK in 2011 and claimed asylum. Her initial application was refused, her appeal dismissed, and her subsequent four further submissions rejected without a right of appeal. The Home Office did not accept that her life would be in danger in Eritrea, and did not consider her to be at risk if removed to Ethiopia. She struggled to find legal representation to make a judicial review application, which was her only legal remedy. We assisted her with making an application for judicial review, challenging the Home Office's refusal of her fresh application for asylum on the basis of the department's failures and flaws in the decision-making process. The judicial review application was successful: the Tribunal granted permission on all grounds and the Home Office agreed to reconsider its decision to refuse May's asylum and to make a new decision.

We also assisted May in her modern slavery claim. Despite disclosing clear indicators that she had been subjected to labour exploitation as a child in her Home Office interview in 2011, May had not been identified as a victim before she was referred to Asylum Aid. We ensured that she is referred into the National Referral Mechanism, and she subsequently received a positive initial decision on her trafficking claim. She is receiving necessary support as a potential victim of human trafficking.

## STATELESS

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In 2022, about a fifth of Asylum Aid's clients were stateless persons. Having no recognised citizenship of any country, and no proof of identity, stateless persons are frequently destitute and very vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Asylum Aid is one of the few organisations that dedicate caseworker time to supporting individuals to make statelessness applications under Part 14 of the Immigration Rules – the statelessness procedure that Asylum Aid successfully petitioned the Home Office to put in place. It often takes one to two years to gather the evidence necessary to make the representations and we are seeing increasing delays in receiving a decision after we submit all necessary evidence. In 2022 one of our first clients to have been granted stateless leave had his leave extended for another five years, and another client, Tegist (whose case is described below), was granted stateless leave after many years of living in limbo in the UK.

Our stateless project works in partnership with 11 corporate law firms, whose lawyers provide their time for free to work with our caseworkers in building the case for each of our clients. This requires detailed investigation, as the Home Office will only recognise a person as stateless and grant them leave if it accepts that they have taken all reasonable steps to obtain recognition as a national of, and/or admission to, countries with which they have a connection. We are very grateful to the firms for their continuing support – both financial and practical – for this vital work. The firms that worked with us in 2022 are: Akin Gump, Ashurst, Cooley, Dentons, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Latham & Watkins, Morrison & Foerster, O'Melveny, Orrick, Reed Smith, Skadden, and White & Case.

## TEGIST

Tegist was born in Eritrea, but at a very young age was taken to Ethiopia by a couple who were not her parents but acted as her foster family. Tegist has no knowledge of what happened to her parents or their whereabouts. She lived in Ethiopia with her foster family until around 2000 when, following a campaign of mass expulsion of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean descent, she was detained pending deportation to Eritrea. She managed to escape and travelled through several countries before reaching the UK on 16 October 2012.

Tegist claimed asylum on 17 October 2012. Over the next six years, her claim was refused, reconsidered, refused again, and then her appeal was also unsuccessful. She became appeals rights exhausted in 2018. Asylum Aid took on her case in late 2021, working with lawyers from Freshfields. An application for statelessness leave was submitted in May 2022. In October 2022, 10 years after her arrival, Tegist was granted statelessness leave in the UK and was able to start her life again.

## II. BUILDING CAPACITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION IN COMPLEX CASES: OUR PARTNERSHIPS

This year, we developed three new partnerships and began delivering through two of them.

### UKRAINE: A LIFELINE FOR PEOPLE STRANDED IN THE UK

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 triggered one of the largest flows of refugees since the Second World War. While the majority of Ukrainian refugees were hosted in neighbouring countries such as Poland, we recognised an immediate need to respond to the crisis here in the UK. Through two new partnerships, we rapidly increased our capacity to respond to this emerging need and ensure that Ukrainians in the UK could access expert advice.

Pro bono lawyers from each of our five corporate partners – DLA Piper, Eversheds, Orrick, White & Case and Reeves & Miller – are providing expert advice to Ukrainians and their family members in the UK, as well as former long-term Ukraine residents unable to return to the country as a result of the conflict. Under supervision of an immigration expert, Stephane Gentili of Gentili Stark Solicitors, the lawyers give detailed pro bono advice on the three schemes established by the Home Office for Ukrainians to regularise their status, and on the benefits or disadvantages of these schemes as against applying for asylum. They will also help to submit an application under one of the schemes, for which no legal aid is available, where the client chooses this route. Since its inception, in 2022 this project provided advice to 27 cases, including at least 49 individuals. Detailed advice letters covered a wide range of topics including asylum claims, different routes to regularising status of both adults and children, and procedure and processing times. At least five clients have been granted status under one of the Ukraine schemes following our involvement. Following its success, the project has been extended for another 12 months.

We were also lucky enough to partner with the Good Law Project to establish a new asylum and protection caseworker post to increase our capacity to provide specialist advice on protection claims in response to the increased need for advice as a result of the conflict. Since September 2022 we have been able to provide expert representation to six Ukrainian clients (four of whom were referred from the collaborative pro bono project), as well as a dual Ukrainian/Russian national and two Russian clients. One of the Russian clients and his family were granted asylum and one of the Ukrainian clients has been granted humanitarian protection.

We have used this focus on Ukrainian cases to inform policy work around the protection and support needs of those stranded in the UK as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. We are pressing for Ukrainians to be granted humanitarian protection status without interview where it is clear that they would be at real risk of indiscriminate violence if returned to Ukraine. This will often be a better option for Ukrainian clients than obtaining status under one of the bespoke schemes because of the possibilities it offers for family reunion and a route to settlement.

## **TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING**

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In October 2022 we began work under a new partnership with the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL), as part of their work to provide immigration advice to rough sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping. The provision of immigration advice to regularise their immigration status can provide a route out of homelessness for rough sleepers by enabling them to get access to accommodation and financial support while applications are pending, and eventually by regularising their stay to access housing, benefits and look for work. Rough sleepers and those at risk are often very vulnerable (50% of those referred to us have significant mental and/or physical health issues, and the group includes clients with a history of trafficking or exploitation and abuse in the UK), plus their cases are often particularly complex and intractable with long histories of rejection by the immigration system. All of this contributes to a spiral of vulnerability. Under the partnership, Asylum Aid will take up to 30 referrals a year to investigate eligibility for legal aid in asylum, humanitarian protection, trafficking, statelessness and complex human rights cases.

## **INCREASING CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND REMOTE SUPERVISION**

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During 2022, we focussed on exploring ways for Asylum Aid to support capacity-building across the immigration advice sector. We worked with Refugee Action and the Justice Together Initiative to develop a proposal for a model of remote supervision, training and peer support to increase capacity to deliver expert advice in a sustainable way. At the end of 2022, we secured a grant from the Justice Together Initiative for a three-year pilot project, starting in 2023, to pilot and test this model.

## **WELFARE ADVICE SERVICES PARTNERSHIP**

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The team provided welfare advice to more than 870 individuals through the Westminster Advice Services Partnership. Asylum Aid's welfare advice team specialises in providing advice to migrant communities in Westminster, many of whom do not have English as a first language. Our advisers and volunteers are multilingual and we work with volunteer community interpreters. In 2022, at least 80% of those receiving welfare support from Asylum Aid were either migrants and/or people of colour and 45% had a disability or long-term ill health. In more than 70% of cases, advice was given in a community language, the predominant one being Arabic. During 2022, Asylum Aid has secured more than £962,000 in additional support for its clients.

### III. ADDRESSING INJUSTICE IN THE SYSTEM: STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK AND POLICY ADVOCACY

At Asylum Aid, we know that our work can achieve greater impact if shared beyond those whom we directly help. Asylum Aid has a long history of successful policy change work based on the evidence and testimony of our clients. It continues to be Asylum Aid's responsibility and mission to use the expertise we've gained through working with clients to encourage others to take on complex cases and to deliver a humane and effective system both for individuals seeking refuge and for survivors of trafficking. Our relationship with the Helen Bamber Foundation further amplifies our voice and enables us to draw on the Foundation's expertise in working with survivors of trafficking, torture and other severe human rights violations.

Throughout 2022, we continued to participate in policy influencing forums, despite having no dedicated capacity for doing so. We have contributed to the work of the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, the Immigration Law Practitioners Association, and the European Network on Statelessness (including contributing to a submission to the Universal Periodic Review); and we have attended stakeholder meetings with the Home Office on statelessness, decision-making, access to legal advice, equalities and children. We have used our experience to support our colleagues at the Helen Bamber Foundation in developing policy positions on issues such as access to legal advice in 'quasi-detention' settings. Going forward, we will develop our systems for monitoring trends in our casework so that we can identify emerging issues and provide robust evidence to support our policy influencing and campaigns.

We also know that we have a lot to share with fellow practitioners in the refugee law field from our experience working on complex cases and with survivors. We continue to host the Refugee Legal Group, a Google group with more than 1500 members that is a vital forum for sharing information and support on legal, policy and practical developments in the field. In 2022, we contributed to updating the Best Practice Guide on Asylum and Human Rights Appeals (published at [www.ein.org.uk](http://www.ein.org.uk)) and in 2023, we will work in partnership with EIN and Doughty Street Chambers to produce a more comprehensive update, reflecting legal changes in 2022 and including new chapters on remote hearings and costs applications. We will develop our resources, training materials and capacity to provide second-tier advice and support to other practitioners.

#### STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK

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We know that sometimes it is necessary to bring litigation to achieve real change for our clients and we want to grow our capacity to do so in a way that makes the best use of our resources to drive system change for the benefit of all those in need of protection in the UK. We also believe in the importance of working collaboratively, sharing information and knowledge with others in the sector to ensure effective deployment of resources.

During 2022, we made significant progress in this area:

##### **Nationality and Borders Act 2022:**

With the benefit of a grant from the Strategic Legal Fund, we obtained detailed advice from counsel about the opportunities for strategic legal work to mitigate the worst effects of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. This work led to our litigation challenging the Rwanda policy (see below) and helped us to identify other areas of priority from within the many changes brought about by the Act. We convened a roundtable of other lawyers at which we shared a summary of this advice and discussed potential strategies. We also discussed and shared strategy at the Strategic Litigation Advice Committee convened by ILPA. We continue to reflect on the outcomes of this work and it will inform our focus and legal strategy in 2023.

## **Rwanda:**

In April 2022, the Home Office announced a policy of relocating ‘inadmissible’ asylum seekers to Rwanda for their asylum claims to be processed there. Rather than the expected policy of “offshoring”, this policy effectively shifts responsibility for considering asylum claims, and providing protection to those who need it, to the Rwandan authorities. We had grave concerns about this policy from the outset, which we believe is inhumane, unjustified and ineffective.

As the policy began to be implemented through April and May 2022, we became increasingly concerned about the way in which the Home Office was rushing people through the system towards being sent to Rwanda. Newly-arrived asylum seekers, often in detention, were given as little as seven or 14 days to respond to a ‘Notice of Intent’ to send them to Rwanda. This impossibly short period was manifestly inadequate for asylum seekers to understand what was being proposed, get effective access to legal advice, and make representations on all the myriad issues raised by the Notice. Once the seven-day period had expired, the Home Office could go ahead and make a series of decisions leading to removal, giving only five working days for asylum seekers to get access to court to challenge their removal.

In June 2022, we commenced judicial review proceedings, arguing that this process is inherently unfair and incompatible with the right to access to justice. We worked collaboratively with other NGOs and lawyers representing individuals threatened with removal, sharing our legal arguments and collating evidence of the unfair outcomes that resulted from this rushed procedure. Our judicial review proceedings were linked with a series of other challenges to the Rwanda policy and heard by the High Court over September-October 2022. Our claim was unfortunately dismissed in December 2022 but were granted permission to appeal, and the appeal was heard between 24th and 27th April 2023.

## **Delays in the asylum system:**

The growing backlog in asylum decision-making that we have witnessed over the last few years has become acute. According to the Home Office’s published asylum statistics, the backlog of asylum seekers waiting more than six months for an initial Home Office decision to be made on their asylum claim has trebled since 2019. At the end of December 2022 (the latest data available published by the Office of National Statistics) 136,522 asylum claims made since 1 April 2006 were awaiting a decision – and of these, 90,970 (67%) had been waiting for an initial decision for more than six months.

Delay is one of the biggest problems encountered by our clients, who face many years in limbo with the uncertainty over their future hanging over them. By December 2022, 31 of our clients had been waiting for an initial decision on their asylum claim for more than six months – and nearly half of those had been waiting more than a year, some as long as three or four years. As well as the serious effects on our clients’ wellbeing and their ability to secure protection and rebuild their lives in dignity, the long delays and uncertainty over when decisions would be taken impacted on our capacity to take on more clients. It is also undoubtedly contributing to the challenges of securing safe and decent accommodation for those waiting for asylum decisions. We therefore identified challenging delays as a priority for our public law work in 2022.

Working together with counsel and our clients, we developed a legal case challenging the Home Office’s systemic failure to comply with the requirement in the Immigration Rules to provide an explanation for a delay of more than six months, and give a realistic timescale for a decision on request. We provided evidence about 22 of our clients to demonstrate the systemic nature of the issue. This claim was issued on behalf of one of our clients in December 2022.

## IV. ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are on track to achieve our objective of three months minimum reserves by 2024 following several measures taken to focus on this area. In January 2022, we appointed a part-time billing coordinator who focused on clearing a backlog of legal aid billing and developed efficient systems for billing our legal aid work. We seek to maximise the income from our legal aid work while recognising that without substantial increases in the rates paid by the Legal Aid Agency, it will never be enough to meet the costs of delivering our service. With that in mind, we also worked with the fundraising team at Helen Bamber Foundation to raise funds for our service, and recruited a dedicated Asylum Aid fundraiser, who started in January 2023.

More information about our financial position is provided in the Financial Review below.

## V. A FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK CULTURE

We know that the work that our team do with some of the most vulnerable people in the UK asylum system can be extremely challenging and emotionally draining. We aim to provide a friendly, inclusive and supportive environment for our team, where each person who works at or volunteers for Asylum Aid can thrive. We prioritise learning and personal development opportunities for our team, aiming to support sustainable careers.

All frontline staff are provided with monthly group clinical supervision with an external psychologist, to support them in processing the difficult aspects of the work. We have regular face-to-face team meetings and 1:1 supervision sessions, as well as making use of technology to facilitate hybrid working. During 2022, we participated in team building and social events with our colleagues at Helen Bamber Foundation, as well as organising an office spring clean to improve our working environment, participating in the London Legal Walk in June, and hosting a successful Great Legal Quiz in December 2022 to raise money and build our community.

We have invested in developing our team. We supported our billing coordinator to train in casework and pass her casework assistant accreditation exams. We also secured funding to host a Justice First Fellow trainee solicitor starting in April 2023. Our supervisors received management training and we have a programme of internal training which in 2022 included training on the Trauma Informed Code of Conduct, the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, judicial review procedure, and a legal aid refresher.

## OUR FUTURE

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The adoption of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, and the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda, created significant challenges for refugee protection in the UK in 2022. They were announced in a context of significant delays with a growing backlog of undecided asylum claims, as well as growing concern about the number of people arriving in small boats across the Channel and serious issues with the availability and standard of Home Office accommodation for asylum seekers.

This is the backdrop against which, at the time of writing, the Government has just published the so-called Illegal Migration Bill. For the first time in 25 years since the passing of the Human Rights Act 1998, we are faced with a Bill which the Home Secretary is unable to confirm is compatible with our human rights. UNHCR has condemned the proposals as incompatible with the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention. It seeks to severely restrict the availability and effectiveness of judicial review as a remedy for our clients and proposes the mass detention of asylum seekers including, for the first time since 2010, the detention of families with children.

Against this extremely challenging policy context, we must maintain a clear-eyed focus on our vision that those in need of protection from persecution and other serious human cruelty in the UK can obtain it, and be treated fairly and with dignity.

Therefore in 2023, Asylum Aid will:

- Increase the number of people we can help directly, especially survivors of trafficking and torture, children and stateless people.
- Ensure that good quality legal advice is provided to those in need of protection, including by building partnerships and sharing best practice with others.
- Develop partnerships to ensure that children and survivors of trafficking and torture who are seeking asylum across the UK, including those held in accommodation centres and detention, have access to high quality legal representation, both remotely and face-to-face.
- Leverage our evidence and experience to challenge regressive policies that seek to undermine human rights and access to justice, and to improve the asylum system and national referral mechanism alongside the Helen Bamber Foundation.

We would like to share one further client story with you:

## JOURY

Joury is a highly vulnerable teenager from Kuwait. She suffers from complex physical and mental health conditions, and requires regular blood transfusions due to a severe blood disorder. She came to the UK in July 2021 as an unaccompanied asylum-seeker when she was 16 turning 17 on her claimed age. Shortly after arrival to the UK, her age was assessed by social workers employed by the Home Office, who did not accept she was a child. Following the age assessment, the Home Office treated her as an adult and accommodated her at a hotel for adult asylum seekers in London but did not provide her with any financial support for nine months, until June 2022, despite knowing that Joury had no source of income. She received treatment at a hospital in London very close to her accommodation. She attended the hospital frequently for various medical appointments and blood transfusions, and also started to attend a local college. Despite being aware of her significant vulnerabilities, medical conditions, and treatment received at a local hospital, in April 2022 the Home Office relocated Joury to another hotel in a remote part of London, away from the hospital where she received treatment. Joury had no money and no transportation to attend her medical appointments. Her treatment was disrupted and her condition deteriorated. We worked hard to ensure Joury is relocated back closer to the hospital. Urgent representations were made to the Home Office asking for relocation to suitable accommodation closer to the hospital. When no action was taken by the Home Office, we initiated urgent judicial review proceedings to safeguard Joury and protect her human rights. Our application to the Court was successful and as a result of our legal action, Joury was provided with suitable accommodation within walking distance of the hospital and she was able to continue treatment. She was also provided with back-payments of financial support for a period of nine months. We also assisted Joury in challenging the age assessment.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

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Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Asylum Aid has had another successful year in 2022, which ended in a surplus. This is as a result of our increasing income from the Legal Aid Agency for work undertaken, our ability to respond to urgent situations and take forward new projects and collaborations, and our fundraising activities. As we go forward, we will need to grow the income generated for Asylum Aid in order to ensure and strengthen our financial stability and fundamentally to support the ambitious strategy to increase the impact of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group as a whole.

## DESIGNATED CASEWORK IN PROGRESS FUND

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Our casework work in progress (WIP) designated fund (£235,541) reflects income that is recognised in our accounts, but which is an illiquid asset that cannot be relied upon as part of our reserves policy. In the majority of cases, we cannot bill for legal aid work until the case is completed (and even where stage billing is possible, we can only recover fixed fees). This means that delays in Home Office decision-making and in hearing appeals, which have increased during, and beyond, the pandemic, have a direct impact on our ability to convert our WIP into cash. As casework is a major source of unrestricted income, we show our WIP as a designated fund in order to avoid misleading funders that these funds are available to invest in our charitable activities. For instance, in 2023, we are currently budgeting to bring in £150,000 cash from Legal Aid work, which represents 64% of our total WIP. However, we recognise that the value of this WIP is a helpful indicator of future legal aid income and helps ensure that the organisation remains a going concern.

## RESERVES POLICY

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Forming part of reserves, the unrestricted general fund is the working fund of the charity. Unlike the other funds, it is not restricted or designated for a defined purpose. The unrestricted general fund provides for activities not funded by earned income or restricted funding and for the general administration of the charity. It also provides working capital for operations and helps to provide resources to ensure that the charity is able to continue with its obligations.

Currently our group policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Given the importance of being confident that Asylum Aid can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aim to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund in order to ensure that the minimum level of reserves is met throughout the year by 2024.

In December 2022, Asylum Aid ended the year positively with £229,940 (2021: £67,092) unrestricted free reserves, which represents three months of unrestricted expenditure.

## RISKS

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The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are considered to be:

- The challenge of ensuring that funds are raised to fill the gap left by the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding, primarily due to delays in closure of cases, and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that can arise from the significant level of demand for the services of the organisation, while at the same time as cases are not being closed, and there is little capacity for new clients.
- The impact of the Nationality and Borders Act, the Rwanda policy and subsequent legislation making a system that is already failing, hard to implement fairly and which will result in increased delays for our clients and increased number of clients with complex needs.
- The cost of living crisis and this Government's plans to recover from the financial impact of the pandemic mean there is unlikely to be any extra central Government funding for legal advice or to invest in the wider asylum system. These economic impacts will make an already hostile influencing environment more challenging for our clients and therefore for our work more generally.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring and application of the reserves policy.

## SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN

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The Trustees have put in place measures to mitigate the risks to Asylum Aid from the ongoing delays in the closure of cases due to external factors, resulting in delayed receipt of payment from the Legal Aid Agency for work done, by continuing to focus on fundraised income during this period. We have also invested in capacity to ensure prompt and timely billing where possible. Brexit has not had a negative impact on Asylum Aid's income and is not expected to in future. The introduction of new legislation denying people seeking asylum the ability to make claims in the UK is of concern. However, given the numbers of individuals with claims outstanding, the ongoing right to have human rights aspects of protection needs considered and the Government's inability to execute mass detention and removals leaves us confident that the services of Asylum Aid will still be required. Having regard to these steps and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the accounts.

## REMUNERATION POLICY

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The objectives of HBF Group's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high-calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level, taking account of external market rates – the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures, including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

## FUNDRAISING

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Asylum Aid is supported by the same fundraising team as the Helen Bamber Foundation as part of the group structure. An annual income generation strategy is produced, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and Trustees. In 2022, Asylum Aid secured fundraised income of £640,590 part of which was due to the synergy between Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation as a group.

Asylum Aid's/Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on the HBF's website [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org). The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2022, it only used external professional fundraisers for the purposes of supporting efforts to create a Capital Appeal Fund to support a move to new premises. Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation produces or markets merchandise for fundraising purposes.

HBF Group is registered with the Fundraising Standards Board. Registration with the Board represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, HBF Group commits to the Board's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on five key pledges that reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF Group's strong commitment to recognize sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation has received any complaints with regard to its fundraising activities in 2022.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

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In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to its stated aims and objectives. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee or other forms of protective status, those who have insecure immigration status or are stateless, and those who are vulnerable to destitution, exploitation, abuse, trafficking or other forms of human cruelty, including but not limited to those outside their country of origin and their dependents, are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including providing them with legal advice and representation);
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community;
- the advancement of public knowledge of the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and the conditions that give rise to refugee movements, as well as all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the impact on people who experience such suffering;
- assisting them in other such exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time

## STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

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The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid 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 that 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;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the finance statements;
- Prepare the finance statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 December 2022 was seven. The Trustees are members of the charity, entitling them to voting rights, but they have no beneficial interest in the charity.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The Trustees' annual report has been approved by the Trustees on 29th June 2023 and signed on their behalf by Elizabeth Mottershaw Chair of the Board of Trustees.

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ASYLUM AID

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Asylum Aid for the year ended 31 December 2022.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

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As the charity trustees of the Company 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 the Company'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 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 the Institute of Chartered Accounts in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 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.

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:

**Name:** Joanna Pittman FCA DChA

**Address:** Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL

**Date:** 1 September 2023

## Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 December 2022

|                                                              | Note | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£ | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Income from:</b>                                          |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Donations and legacies                                       | 2    | 363,247           | 277,343         | <b>640,590</b>     | 267,401           | 123,000         | 390,401            |
| Charitable activities                                        |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services                                           | 3    | 129,157           | -               | <b>129,157</b>     | 45,950            | -               | 45,950             |
| Other Legal Aid Services<br>(Work in progress)               | 3    | 25,692            | -               | <b>25,692</b>      | 209,849           | -               | 209,849            |
| Ramfel                                                       | 3    | 26,627            | -               | <b>26,627</b>      | -                 | -               | -                  |
| Westminster CAB                                              | 3    | 61,306            | -               | <b>61,306</b>      | 61,306            | -               | 61,306             |
| <b>Total income</b>                                          |      | <b>606,029</b>    | <b>277,343</b>  | <b>883,372</b>     | <b>584,506</b>    | <b>123,000</b>  | <b>707,506</b>     |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                       |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Raising funds                                                | 4a   | 25,856            | -               | <b>25,856</b>      | 21,859            | -               | 21,859             |
| Charitable activities                                        |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services/<br>Westminster CAB                       |      | 366,633           | 248,010         | <b>614,643</b>     | 353,613           | 104,859         | 458,472            |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                     |      | <b>392,489</b>    | <b>248,010</b>  | <b>640,499</b>     | <b>375,472</b>    | <b>104,859</b>  | <b>480,331</b>     |
| <b>Net income for the year and<br/>net movement in funds</b> | 5    | <b>213,540</b>    | <b>29,333</b>   | <b>242,873</b>     | <b>209,034</b>    | <b>18,141</b>   | <b>227,175</b>     |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>                              |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Total funds brought forward                                  |      | 276,941           | 18,141          | <b>295,082</b>     | 67,907            | -               | 67,907             |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                           |      | <b>490,481</b>    | <b>47,474</b>   | <b>537,955</b>     | <b>276,941</b>    | <b>18,141</b>   | <b>295,082</b>     |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 12a to the financial statements.

## Balance sheet

Company no. 02513874

As at 31 December 2022

|                                                | Note | £                     | 2022<br>£             | £              | 2021<br>£             |
|------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Fixed assets:</b>                           |      |                       |                       |                |                       |
| Tangible assets                                | 8    |                       | <u>2,616</u>          |                | <u>933</u>            |
|                                                |      |                       | <b>2,616</b>          |                | <b>933</b>            |
| <b>Current assets:</b>                         |      |                       |                       |                |                       |
| Work in progress                               |      | <b>235,541</b>        |                       | 209,849        |                       |
| Debtors                                        | 9    | <b>39,829</b>         |                       | 27,811         |                       |
| Cash at bank and in hand                       |      | <u><b>567,084</b></u> |                       | <u>256,497</u> |                       |
|                                                |      | <b>842,454</b>        |                       | <b>494,157</b> |                       |
| <b>Liabilities:</b>                            |      |                       |                       |                |                       |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 10   | <b>(307,115)</b>      |                       | (200,008)      |                       |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                      |      |                       | <u><b>535,339</b></u> |                | <u>294,149</u>        |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                        |      |                       | <u><b>537,955</b></u> |                | <u><b>295,082</b></u> |
| <b>The funds of the charity:</b>               | 11a  |                       |                       |                |                       |
| Restricted income funds                        |      | <b>47,474</b>         | <b>47,474</b>         |                | <b>18,141</b>         |
| Unrestricted income funds:                     |      |                       |                       |                |                       |
| Designated funds (Work in Progress)            |      | <b>235,541</b>        |                       | 209,849        |                       |
| Designated- New Premise Fund                   |      | <b>25,000</b>         |                       | -              |                       |
| General funds                                  |      | <u><b>229,940</b></u> |                       | <u>67,092</u>  |                       |
| Total unrestricted funds                       |      |                       | <u><b>490,481</b></u> |                | <u>276,941</u>        |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>                     |      |                       | <u><b>537,955</b></u> |                | <u><b>295,082</b></u> |

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 and members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 31 December 2022 and of its net outgoing resources for the period in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees on 29 June 2023 and signed on their behalf by

**John Scampion**  
Treasurer

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2022

|                                                                                                     | 2022           | 2021      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| £                                                                                                   | £              | £         |
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>                                                         |                |           |
| Net income for the year and net movement in funds<br>(as per the statement of financial activities) | 242,873        | 227,175   |
| Depreciation charges                                                                                | 628            | 339       |
| (Increase) / decrease in debtors                                                                    | (37,710)       | (222,334) |
| (Decrease) / increase in creditors                                                                  | 107,107        | 61,368    |
| <b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>                                                    | <b>312,898</b> | 66,548    |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>                                                        |                |           |
| Purchase of fixed assets                                                                            | (2,312)        | -         |
| <b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>                                        | <b>(2,312)</b> | -         |
| <b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>                                              | <b>310,587</b> | 66,548    |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year                                              | 256,497        | 189,949   |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>                                             | <b>567,084</b> | 256,497   |

### Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt

|                                        | At 1 January 2022<br>£ | Cash flows<br>£ | Other non-cash<br>changes<br>£ | At 31 December 2022<br>£ |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cash at bank and in hand               | 256,497                | 310,587         | -                              | 567,084                  |
| <b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b> | <b>256,497</b>         | <b>310,587</b>  | <b>-</b>                       | <b>567,084</b>           |

# Notes to the financial statements

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For the year ended 31 December 2022

## **1 Accounting policies**

### **a) Statutory information**

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office address and principal place of business is Bruges Place, 15-20 Baynes Street, London, NW1 0TF.

### **b) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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) (effective 1 January 2019)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include the estimation of the value of the work in progress.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

### **c) Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company.

### **d) Income**

Income is recognised when:

- 1) The charity has entitlement to the funds
- 2) Any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- 3) It is probable that the income will be received
- 4) The amount can be measured reliably.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

We recognise work done under the legal aid contract where the criteria for entitlement to payment under the legal aid regulations are met.

### **e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

### **f) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

### **g) Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

### **h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

## **1 Accounting policies (continued)**

### **i) Allocation of support costs**

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

### **j) Tangible fixed assets**

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £250. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Office equipment                      25% straight line basis

### **k) Work in progress**

Work in progress is valued at the average hourly rate paid by the Legal Aid Agency less any necessary provisions.

### **l) Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### **m) Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

### **n) Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

### **o) Pensions**

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Royal London Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

## 2 Income from donations and grants

|                                                     | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Donations</b>                                    |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Individual donations                                | 54,804            | -               | <b>54,804</b>      | 39,244             |
| Corporate donations                                 | 5,000             | 94,000          | <b>99,000</b>      | 72,000             |
| Helen Bamber Foundation                             | 75,786            | -               | <b>75,786</b>      | 136,155            |
| Legacies                                            | 47,266            | -               | <b>47,266</b>      | 15,102             |
| <b>Grants</b>                                       |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund | -                 | -               | -                  | 31,000             |
| Access to Justice Foundation Funder Plus Scheme     | 12,196            | -               | <b>12,196</b>      | -                  |
| The Barrow Cadbury Trust Covid 19 Support Fund      | -                 | -               | -                  | 150                |
| ILPA                                                | -                 | 19,005          | <b>19,005</b>      | -                  |
| Trust for London                                    | -                 | -               | -                  | 50,000             |
| London Legal Support Trust                          | 11,228            | -               | <b>11,228</b>      | 21,764             |
| Trust for London (Statelessness)                    | -                 | 22,730          | <b>22,730</b>      | 20,000             |
| BNP Paribas                                         | 20,000            | -               | <b>20,000</b>      | -                  |
| Disrupt Foundation                                  | 50,000            | -               | <b>50,000</b>      | -                  |
| Unbound Philanthropy                                | 30,000            | -               | <b>30,000</b>      | -                  |
| Open Society Foundation                             | -                 | 36,154          | <b>36,154</b>      | -                  |
| Good Law Ltd                                        | -                 | 17,649          | <b>17,649</b>      | -                  |
| Samworth Foundation                                 | -                 | 65,000          | <b>65,000</b>      | -                  |
| Choose Love                                         | 6,650             | 1,350           | <b>8,000</b>       | -                  |
| Justice Platform                                    | -                 | 20,454          | <b>20,454</b>      | -                  |
| Anonymous                                           | 35,000            | -               | <b>35,000</b>      | -                  |
| Other                                               | 15,317            | 1,000           | <b>16,317</b>      | 4,986              |
|                                                     | <b>363,247</b>    | <b>277,343</b>  | <b>640,590</b>     | <b>390,401</b>     |

£78,756 represents a portion of the income raised from Trusts and Foundations that was received by the Helen Bamber Foundation on behalf of HBF Group, and which has been allocated to Asylum Aid. This amount is based on the proportion of increased expenditure attributable to Asylum Aid.

### 3 Income from charitable activities

|                                                | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2022<br>Total<br>£              | 2021<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Legal Aid Claims                               | 129,157           | -               | 129,157                         | 45,950             |
|                                                | 129,157           | -               | 129,157                         | 45,950             |
|                                                |                   |                 | (2021 £45,950 All Unrestricted) |                    |
| Other Legal Aid Claims Work in Progress        | 25,692            | -               | 25,692                          | 209,849            |
|                                                | 25,692            | -               | 25,692                          | 209,849            |
| Ramfael                                        | 26,627            | -               | 26,627                          | -                  |
|                                                | 26,627            | -               | 26,627                          | -                  |
| Westminster CAB Project                        | 61,306            | -               | 61,306                          | 61,306             |
|                                                | 61,306            | -               | 61,306                          | 61,306             |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>242,782</b>    | <b>-</b>        | <b>242,782</b>                  | <b>317,105</b>     |

#### 4a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

|                                   | Basis of allocation | Raising funds<br>£ | Charitable activities   |  | Governance costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ | 2022 Total<br>£ | 2021 Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                   |                     |                    | Legal Aid Services<br>£ |  |                       |                    |                 |                 |
| Staff costs (Note 6)              | Staff time          | 19,542             | 395,086                 |  | 17,865                | 32,783             | <b>465,276</b>  | 421,801         |
| Direct costs                      | Direct              | -                  | 101,352                 |  | -                     | -                  | <b>101,352</b>  | 14,469          |
| Premises costs                    | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 18,227             | <b>18,227</b>   | 16,446          |
| Staff recruitment/<br>training    | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 10,752             | <b>10,752</b>   | 2,965           |
| Office costs/comms                | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 40,663.03          | <b>40,663</b>   | 20,521          |
| Depreciation                      | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 628                | <b>628</b>      | 339             |
| Audit & Accountancy<br>fees       | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | 3,600                 | -                  | <b>3,600</b>    | 3,790           |
|                                   |                     | 19,542             | 496,439                 |  | 21,465                | 103,053            | <b>640,499</b>  | 480,331         |
| Support costs                     |                     | 5,153              | 97,901                  |  | -                     | (103,053)          | -               | -               |
| Governance costs                  |                     | 1,073              | 20,391                  |  | (21,465)              | -                  | -               | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure<br/>2022</b> |                     | <b>25,768</b>      | <b>614,731</b>          |  | -                     | -                  | <b>640,499</b>  |                 |
| Total expenditure<br>2021         |                     | <b>21,859</b>      | <b>458,472</b>          |  | -                     | -                  |                 | 480,331         |

#### 4b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

|                               | Basis of allocation | Raising funds<br>£ | Charitable activities   |  | Governance costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ | 2021 Total<br>£ |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|                               |                     |                    | Legal Aid Services<br>£ |  |                       |                    |                 |
| Staff costs (Note 6)          | Staff time          | 17,910             | 368,986                 |  | 15,910                | 18,995             | <b>421,801</b>  |
| Direct costs                  | Direct              | -                  | 14,469                  |  | -                     | -                  | <b>14,469</b>   |
| Premises costs                | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 16,446             | <b>16,446</b>   |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 2,965              | <b>2,965</b>    |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 20,521             | <b>20,521</b>   |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | -                     | 339                | <b>339</b>      |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time          | -                  | -                       |  | 3,790                 | -                  | <b>3,790</b>    |
|                               |                     | 17,910             | 383,455                 |  | 19,700                | 59,266             | <b>480,331</b>  |
| Support costs                 |                     | 2,963              | 56,303                  |  | -                     | (59,266)           | -               |
| Governance costs              |                     | 986                | 18,714                  |  | (19,700)              | -                  | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure 2021</b> |                     | <b>21,859</b>      | <b>458,472</b>          |  | -                     | -                  | <b>480,331</b>  |

## 5 Net income for the year

This is stated after charging:

|                              | 2022<br>£ | 2021<br>£ |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Depreciation                 | 628       | 339       |
| Auditor's remuneration:      |           |           |
| Independent Examination fees | 3,600     | 3,790     |

## 6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

|                                                                 | 2022<br>£      | 2021<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Salaries and wages                                              | 408,389        | 373,030        |
| Redundancy payments                                             | -              | 5,712          |
| Social security costs                                           | 40,260         | 27,053         |
| Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes | 16,626         | 16,006         |
|                                                                 | <b>465,276</b> | <b>421,801</b> |

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension and employer's national insurance (of between £60,000 and £70,000). (2021: None)

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £113,179 (2021: £72,671).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2021: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2021: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2021: £nil).

### Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

|                     | 2022<br>No. | 2021<br>No. |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Raising funds       | 4           | 2           |
| Charitable activity | 20          | 15          |
| Governance          | 4           | 2           |
|                     | <b>28</b>   | <b>19</b>   |

The average number of employees (based on full time and part-time) during the period was as follows

|                     | 2022<br>No. | 2021<br>No. |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Raising funds       | 3           | 2           |
| Charitable activity | 14          | 12          |
| Governance          | 4           | 2           |
|                     | <b>21</b>   | <b>16</b>   |

## 7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

## 8 Tangible fixed assets

| Cost                          | Office equipment<br>£ | Total<br>£ |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| At the start of the year      | 1,357                 | 1,357      |
| Additions in year             | 2,312                 | 2,312      |
| At the end of the year        | 3,669                 | 3,669      |
| <b>Depreciation</b>           |                       |            |
| At the start of the year      | 424                   | 424        |
| Charge for the year           | 628                   | 628        |
| At the end of the year        | 1,052                 | 1,052      |
| <b>Net book value</b>         |                       |            |
| <b>At the end of the year</b> | 2,616                 | 2,616      |
| At the start of the year      | 933                   | 933        |

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

## 9 Debtors

|               | 2022<br>£     | 2021<br>£     |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Trade debtors | 30,653        | 45            |
| Other debtors | 3,995         | 25,327        |
| Prepayments   | 5,180         | 2,439         |
|               | <b>39,829</b> | <b>27,811</b> |

## 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                                         | 2022<br>£      | 2021<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Trade creditors                         | 22,906         | 9,610          |
| Taxation and social security            | 10,290         | 8,314          |
| Other creditors                         | 67,364         | 55,532         |
| Amounts owed to Helen Bamber Foundation | 72,416         | 116,321        |
| Accruals                                | 65,078         | 10,231         |
| Deferred income                         | 69,061         | -              |
|                                         | <b>307,115</b> | <b>200,008</b> |

### Deferred income

|                                       | 2022<br>£     | 2021<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Balance at the beginning of the year  | -             | 31,000    |
| Amount released to income in the year | -             | (131,000) |
| Amount deferred in the year           | 69,061        | -         |
| Balance at the end of the year        | <b>69,061</b> | <b>-</b>  |

Deferred income comprises of grants received from Corporates and Trusts and foundations in the current year which relates to a future period.

## 11a Analysis of group net assets between funds (current year)

|                                       | General unrestricted<br>£ | Designated<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 2,616                     | -               | -                     | 2,616            |
| Net current assets                    | 227,324                   | 260,541         | 47,474                | 535,339          |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2022</b> | <b>229,940</b>            | <b>260,541</b>  | <b>47,474</b>         | <b>537,955</b>   |

## 11b Analysis of group net assets between funds (prior year)

|                                          | General unrestricted<br>£ | Designated funds<br>£ | Restricted funds<br>£ | 2022<br>£      |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                    | 933                       | -                     | -                     | 933            |
| Net current assets                       | 66,159                    | 209,849               | 18,141                | 294,149        |
| <b>Net assets at the end of the year</b> | <b>67,092</b>             | <b>209,849</b>        | <b>18,141</b>         | <b>295,082</b> |

## 12a Movements in funds (current year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2022<br>£ | Income & gains<br>£ | Expenditure & losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                        |                     |                           |                |                  |
| Legal Aid Services              | 18,141                 | 277,343             | 248,010                   | -              | 47,474           |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>18,141</b>          | <b>277,343</b>      | <b>248,010</b>            | <b>-</b>       | <b>47,474</b>    |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                        |                     |                           |                |                  |
| General funds                   | 67,092                 | 580,337             | 392,489                   | (25,000)       | 229,940          |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | 209,849                | 25,692              | -                         | -              | 235,541          |
| Designated- New Premise Fund    | -                      | -                   | -                         | 25,000         | 25,000           |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>276,941</b>         | <b>606,029</b>      | <b>392,489</b>            | <b>-</b>       | <b>490,481</b>   |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>295,082</b>         | <b>883,372</b>      | <b>640,499</b>            | <b>-</b>       | <b>537,955</b>   |

## 12b Movements in group (prior year)

|                                 | At 1 January 2022<br>£ | Income & gains<br>£ | Expenditure &<br>losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | Total funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                        |                     |                              |                |                  |
| Legal Aid Services              | -                      | 123,000             | 104,859                      | -              | <b>18,141</b>    |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | -                      | 123,000             | 104,859                      | -              | <b>18,141</b>    |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                        |                     |                              |                |                  |
| General funds                   | 67,907                 | 374,657             | 375,472                      | -              | <b>67,092</b>    |
| Designated -work-in-progress    | -                      | 209,849             | -                            | -              | <b>209,849</b>   |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>67,907</b>          | <b>584,506</b>      | <b>375,472</b>               | -              | <b>276,941</b>   |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>67,907</b>          | <b>707,506</b>      | <b>480,331</b>               | -              | <b>295,082</b>   |

### Legal Aid Services

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people against the backdrop of an ever more challenging external environment

## 13 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

## 14 Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions to disclose for 2022 (2021: none).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

## 15 Ultimate Controlling Party

The company's ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party is Helen Bamber Foundation, a registered charity (charity number 1149652) and company limited by guarantee (company number 08186281). Copies of the financial statements are available from Companies House and the Charity Commission.

## 16 Post Balance Sheet Event

In March 2023 Asylum Aid began negotiations with the Islington Law Centre (ILC), to transfer the Migrants' Law Project (MLP), to Asylum Aid. The Board of Trustees of both organisations signed an agreement on 16 June 2023 which provides for the transfer to take place in July 2023, subject to the satisfaction of certain preconditions relating to client, staff and funder consent. Under this agreement Asylum Aid will work with the MLP team to maximise the benefits from our joint work to further the protection and access to justice of people seeking asylum, refugees and others with insecure immigration status in the UK, and their family members or other dependents (whether in the UK or abroad), as well as their fair and dignified treatment. Three solicitors employed to work on the MLP will transfer to Asylum Aid in July 2023. The agreement includes a financial settlement comprising a grant of £200,000, the value of restricted grants paid and not spent, and legal aid income on MLP matters received by ILC after 1 May 2023. The total value of the financial grant, which will be restricted to the MLP's work, is not yet known but is estimated to be sufficient to meet the staff and other running costs of MLP (including a contribution to Asylum Aid's overheads) for at least 18-24 months.



Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

**ASYLUM AID**

England & Wales - Charity number 328729

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# Accounts

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CHARITY NUMBER: 328729  
COMPANY NUMBER: 02513874



# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and  
Financial Statements



Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

## TRUSTEES

Sir Nicolas Bratza – interim Chair to December 2021  
Constantine Partasides  
Elizabeth Anne Mottershaw – Chair (appointed January 2022)  
Peter Reid  
John Scampion – Treasurer  
Professor Ian Watt (resigned January 2022)

## MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES

Kat Hacker – Head of Asylum Aid (until November 2021)  
Alison Pickup – Director of Asylum Aid (from November 2021)  
Gareth Holmes – Fundraising and Communications Director  
Anne Muthee – Finance and Operations Director  
Kerry Smith – Chief Executive Officer

**CHARITY NUMBER** 328729  
(registered in England and Wales)

**COMPANY NUMBER** 02513874  
(incorporated in the United Kingdom)

## REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

Bruges Place, 15-20 Baynes Street  
London  
NW1 0TF

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Sayer Vincent LLP  
Joanna Pittman FCA  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0TL

## BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

# INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM AID

**Asylum Aid is a committed, professional and collaborative organisation dedicated to protecting people from persecution by providing legal representation and access to justice for refugees and those seeking asylum. It combines this with the role of providing welfare advice to refugees, migrants and other vulnerable members of the community.**

At Asylum Aid we know that good quality legal representation is life-saving for the people we help, and that by working together we can help more people. We represent vulnerable people, particularly children, survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, and stateless people. We believe everyone deserves access to protection – and we take on the complex cases that others do not.

We take the time needed to understand the complexity of each person's legal case. This is to ensure that clients are given the professional help they need to obtain protection. We know that, without proper legal representation, people seeking asylum can remain in a state of limbo for years, thereby adding to the pain and trauma already endured.

The organisation also works with others to change policy and practice, to ensure the safety and recovery of those who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity. We share best practice through training, second tier support, and the publication of resources.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTOR

**2021 was a year of consolidation for the Asylum Aid team following its re-establishment as a charity in its own right as part of the Helen Bamber Foundation group in August 2020. The focus of the charity's work remained on providing expert legal representation in the most complex cases going through the asylum and trafficking systems.**

The ongoing public health crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic continued to pose challenges both for the delivery of our services and for our clients, where ongoing delays in decision-making by the Home Office resulted in increased vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and re-trafficking.

At the same time the protection of refugees in the UK is under threat at a level unprecedented in Asylum Aid's 38-year history. The proposals in this Government's Nationality and Borders Act have been widely condemned and, when implemented in full, will do serious damage to refugee rights. The crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan demonstrate the relevance of the commitments that governments made 70 years ago to protect refugees. Yet, in the face of the reality of watching more than five million refugees (at the time of writing) from Ukraine struggle to reach shelter, this Government has driven through punitive legislation that will make it harder for those fleeing war, persecution and trafficking to attain safety. In addition, the Government's broader constitutional change programme threatens access to justice and the effective protection of human rights.

We have the privilege of leading an organisation that is widely respected for its history of securing protection from persecution for those who need it, at a time when the need for our work is escalating. This is an exciting time of growth and development. We do not underestimate the challenges ahead but know that we face the future with determination and the support of an expert and committed team.

That team has worked extremely hard over the last 20 months to get Asylum Aid to where it now is. We want to pay particular tribute to Ian Kane, who left us in December 2021. As Legal Services Manager, Ian steered the transition from Consonant to Asylum Aid's new home in the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. He has built an extraordinary team with a palpable sense of pride in its achievements to date and that is excited about what the future holds. He has achieved that in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis.

The ongoing encouragement from all of our supporters and partners has also been central to our ability to re-establish Asylum Aid as a small but important part of the work we do to enable survivors to get protection from persecution. Now, it just remains for us to thank you all for the extra mile you have walked to keep this fantastic organisation going and to ensure we continue to deliver life-changing outcomes.

**Kerry Smith, CEO Asylum Aid & Alison Pickup, Director of Asylum Aid**

# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

## ASYLUM AID'S STAFF & VOLUNTEERS: A COMMUNITY EFFORT

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Asylum Aid grew during 2021 starting with the full-time equivalent of 7.6 members of staff and ending the year with 8.4, as part of the strategy to sustainably increase impact. Our advice service continues to work with volunteers who provide interpretation services and help deliver a drop-in at a local community centre. In this period, our welfare advice service took on three new volunteers and we plan to take on more in the future.

## MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

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Asylum Aid is a charity in its own right that is part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. The day-to-day management of the charity is by a Management Group made up of the Chief Executive, Director of Asylum Aid, Director of HBF Group Fundraising and Communications, and Director of HBF Group Finance and Operations. The Helen Bamber Foundation Group Finance and Fundraising Committee is composed of Trustees of both Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation and includes the Director of Asylum Aid. Management Team members of Asylum Aid and Helen Bamber Foundation meet at least monthly to provide financial and fundraising, safeguarding and executive oversight.

The interim chair of Asylum Aid, Sir Nicolas Bratza, oversaw the recruitment of a permanent Chair, Elizabeth Mottershaw, who took up her post in January 2022. Sir Nicolas Bratza continues to be a trustee of Asylum Aid. There are five Trustees of Asylum Aid, two of whom, including the Treasurer, also serve on the Helen Bamber Foundation Board, to ensure strong governance and joint strategic alignment. In 2021, work began on aligning the objects and articles of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation. This work continues in 2022 and will shortly be finalised.

New Trustees are recruited externally, and their appointment is approved by Asylum Aid's Board of Trustees. A tailored induction follows, ensuring that each new Trustee has been briefed on Asylum Aid's governance structure and decision-making processes, on their obligations under charity law, and on the activities of Asylum Aid and its financial performance. Trustee meetings are held every quarter.

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20th June 1990 and registered as a charity on 24th July 1990.

The company was established under a memorandum of association that established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 6 to the accounts.

This report is for the twelve-month period from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

**It has been a privilege to chair the Board of Asylum Aid over the last year as it has consolidated its position following the transition from its previous home at Consonant to re-establishing itself as a charity in its own right. The continuing impact of the coronavirus public health pandemic has provided the backdrop to that process of transition, meaning that the staff have continued to work remotely for most of the year.**

I am delighted to be able to say that Asylum Aid was joined in November 2021 by our new Director, Alison Pickup. Alison came to Asylum Aid after five years as the Legal Director of the Public Law Project and with over 20 years' experience as a refugee and migrant rights lawyer. We are confident that under Alison's leadership, Asylum Aid will grow from strength to strength. In particular in 2022 we will develop and begin to implement a new strategic plan to increase our impact and leverage our expertise both to challenge the anti-refugee agenda of this government, and increase the ability of those seeking protection to access the quality legal representation that we know is so essential.

In particular, I wish to pay tribute to the dedication of the team in continuing to provide legal representation and support in some of the most complex cases, with impressively high rates of success, against that background. We know only too well – as some of the cases described in this report vividly illustrate – the critical difference that expert legal representation can make to survivors' ability to secure protection.

I am delighted that Elizabeth Mottershaw was appointed as the Chair of Asylum Aid from January 2022. She takes over at an exciting time for the organisation as it develops its strategy for sustainable growth, increasing the number of survivors who are able to secure protection from persecution.

**Sir Nicolas Bratza, Interim Chair, Asylum Aid**

# ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

Asylum Aid has continued as a charity in its own right since it became a part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020. We have continued to focus on the most vulnerable: children, survivors of torture, trafficking and gender-based violence, and homeless people. In the period between 1st January 2021 and 31st December 2021 the team provided legal representation to 132 survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, refugees and people seeking asylum, and 23 stateless persons. Thanks to the hard work of our expert team of caseworkers, 45 of our clients were granted protection during the year, and 11 clients were recognised as victims of trafficking. The team also provided welfare advice to more than 670 individuals through the Westminster Advice Services Partnership.

The ongoing public health crisis as a result of the coronavirus pandemic continued to pose challenges, both for the delivery of our services and for our clients. For most of the year, the team continued to work predominantly from home and rose to the challenge of providing remote advice and representation to our clients, as well as support and supervision to each other. For many of our clients, their vulnerability made it necessary to meet them in person and the relationship with HBF enabled us to do this in a safe and supported way. Serious delays in Home Office decision making both on asylum claims and in response to referrals of potential victims of trafficking have left many of our clients, including children, in an uncertain limbo for increasingly long periods.

Unfortunately, 2021 continued very much in the same vein as 2020. The pandemic in particular has contributed to delays in decision-making that have often been worse for children and survivors of trafficking and have left all our clients in limbo with the risk of exploitation and mental health challenges that brings. Significant delays continue to occur in:

- the making of initial decisions,
- the Tribunal hearings of appeals against Home Office decisions,
- the determinations by the National Referral Mechanism of whether the person is a victim of trafficking,
- the making of statelessness grants, and
- the grant to clients of their biometric residence permit once they have been given refugee status.

## OUR CLIENTS – OUR GIFT OF TIME

In 2021, more than 70% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of trafficking or torture and children and just under 20% were stateless. Victims of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence are frequently fearful and confused and, as a result of the trauma suffered, are unable to tell their story in a coherent and consistent way. This oftentimes has the devastating effect of not being believed by the Home Office or the Tribunals. Asylum Aid, therefore, focuses on clients who require extra support. The organisation is committed to ensuring that the necessary time is taken to build the trust of vulnerable clients, to understand and bear witness to their experience and to help them to secure the social support from partners that is critical to enable them to see their legal cases through to the end.

## A FOCUS ON THE VULNERABLE

Recognising that complex cases require time, the Asylum Aid team listens closely to every individual client, taking time to make sure we understand as much as we can of their experiences. This approach means that we have an above average success rate for our clients – giving them the best chance of securing the protection they need. At a time when the majority of decisions have been delayed, 58 international protection cases were resolved, with 45 successfully resulting in protection- an amazing 78% success rate.

## SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING

During 2021, 23% of Asylum Aid's clients were adult survivors of trafficking, who find it particularly difficult to find good quality legal representation. Due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of trafficking, many survivors are not identified as potential victims of trafficking, nor are they advised on the National Referral Mechanism. Many representatives do not have the expertise to support clients through both the asylum system and the National Referral Mechanism simultaneously. Delays in decision making create risks of re-trafficking as survivors are left in an uncertain limbo and in poverty for prolonged periods of time.

At Asylum Aid, we are alert to indicators of trafficking in all our cases. We take the time to work with each survivor to understand their experience of trafficking and gather the evidence needed to ensure they are recognised as such, and provided with protection. We know that obtaining recognition and legal status are vital to reduce risks of re-trafficking, and to enable recovery. We challenge delays and poor decision-making when required and ensure that our clients know how to access support for any other challenges they face day-to-day. We are committed to increasing the numbers of survivors we represent, and to working with our colleagues at the Helen Bamber Foundation, and collaboratively with others in the sector, to increase knowledge and understanding of best practice in representing survivors.

### LEE'S STORY

Lee was a victim of domestic violence who had witnessed drug abuse at home. When he was a young teenager, Lee was forced to work to repay a family debt. He was kept at the work location, not paid and had no days off. He was then trafficked to the UK, and subjected to forced labour in a third country and on arrival. Lee managed to escape in the UK and claimed asylum. When he was referred to Asylum Aid, he was just 16 years old and being looked after by a local authority.



Despite clear indicators of trafficking in his account, Lee had not been identified as a child victim before he was referred to Asylum Aid. We worked hard to persuade the local authority, as a first responder, to refer Lee into the National Referral Mechanism. We made sure that Lee was referred for specialist support and therapy while he was waiting for a decision and we worked closely with his support worker to ensure that he was kept safe. We took a detailed witness statement from the client, setting out details in support of his asylum and trafficking claims, and obtained expert evidence and letters of support from his support worker. The support worker's involvement was crucial as we had to take Lee's witness statement during lockdown and the support worker was able to be present during our remote meetings, and to check in on him afterwards, particularly following distressing disclosures.

Despite Lee's vulnerability, there was a delay of more than two years in obtaining a decision on his asylum claim. Asylum Aid's lawyers had to threaten a legal challenge to the delay before a decision was taken. During this time, we kept in close contact with the client and with his support workers to keep him updated and provide reassurance. Lee was eventually granted asylum and accepted as a child victim of trafficking.

## CHILDREN

During 2021, 23% of Asylum Aid's clients were children (many of whom were also survivors of trafficking). Unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation because their cases are often complex, many involve histories of trafficking or other trauma, and in all cases they are coping with the strain of family separation. This inevitably requires extra work and time for which payment is usually only received at the closure of their case.

Working with children has been particularly challenging over the last two years, due to increasing delays in Home Office decision-making, despite the priority supposed to be given to children's cases. Increasing numbers of children have had their age disputed because of an unlawful Home Office policy, and lockdowns have exposed the particular challenges of providing advice and support to children remotely. Our approach is to take the necessary time that each child requires to tell their story; to work collaboratively with their support networks; and to challenge delays and poor quality decision-making by the Home Office. Our children's solicitors are very experienced in taking a child-centred approach to children's cases, frontloading the evidence to maximise the likelihood of an early positive decision, and ensuring that our children are supported during periods of delay.

We have also been actively involved in the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, using evidence and experience from our legal work with children to support policy work on the treatment of children in the asylum system, and speak out against proposals in the Government's New Plan for Immigration that which will undermine the protection of children.

### TONY'S STORY

Tony fled his country with his family after they were persecuted because of their ethnicity. Tony became separated from his family during a very difficult journey and arrived in the UK, unaccompanied, as a very young teenager. Tony was looked after by the local authority and was obviously very vulnerable.



Despite his age and vulnerability, there was a delay of more than 2.5 years before the Home Office made a decision on Tony's asylum claim. During this period, Tony absconded from care on a number of occasions and was even hospitalised. Our children's solicitor visited Tony in hospital and was able to build a relationship of trust and confidence with him over time. She kept in touch with his support worker and social services, and kept the Home Office updated about Tony's situation. Tony went missing from the hospital on two occasions and we worked with his social worker and the police to try to find him. When the Home Office wanted to interview Tony about his asylum claim, his solicitor persuaded them that he was not well enough to be interviewed. Detailed evidence and representations were submitted to the Home Office with medical evidence, and when no decision was forthcoming after further delay, we sent a letter indicating we would take legal action to challenge the delay. Tony was eventually granted refugee status in the UK while still a child. He was discharged from hospital into accommodation which provides additional care for children and young people with mental health issues and we encouraged him to access support from a specialist refugee support organisation that works with young refugees.

We often work with young people who arrived in the UK as unaccompanied children but are now young adults. Often vital support for these young people is cut off when they reach the age of 18 and the lack of expertise in working with children means that many legal representatives will not advise clients to appeal a refusal of refugee status while they are children. We help these young people to challenge the decisions refusing them protection status.

## DARIO'S STORY



Dario arrived in the UK as a child from Afghanistan. His asylum claim was refused but his representatives failed to advise him of his right of appeal. When he was referred to us, Dario was a young adult with no status. We assisted him to lodge an appeal 3 years late and our representations convinced the Tribunal to allow his appeal to proceed. During the course of the appeal the Home Office withdrew its original decision and granted him refugee status. There was then a delay in issuing him with a status document meaning we had to threaten legal action. Dario has now got his refugee status papers and can begin to rebuild his life.

## SURVIVORS OF TORTURE

During 2021, just over a quarter of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of torture, who often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the frequent complexity of their cases. At Asylum Aid we understand that the experience of torture can impact survivors' ability to give a coherent and chronological account of the experiences that led them to seek asylum because of the impact of trauma on memory. Our link with the Helen Bamber Foundation who developed the Trauma Informed Code of Conduct means all of our legal team are trained in working in a trauma-informed way with survivors of torture so as to ensure that they are enabled to give the best account of their claims. We obtain medical evidence to document the torture our clients have experienced and support them to access therapy and other support to manage the consequences of their trauma during the asylum process.

## AMIR'S STORY



Amir is an Iranian national who first came to the UK in 1998 and claimed asylum based on his fear of the Iranian authorities due to an imputed political opinion. His claim was refused as was his subsequent appeal and further submissions asserting the reasons why it was not safe for him to return. Whilst in the UK, Amir met his current wife Lucy, an Albanian survivor of trafficking. Lucy also had her asylum claim in the UK refused. Together, Amir and Lucy had two children who were born in the UK.

Given the family's struggles in the UK and having received information from Amir's family in Iran, the family decided that they would take the risk of relocating to Iran where they hoped to build a life together. The family lived in Iran without incident until 2012 when Amir was arrested and convicted for selling banned books that were critical of the religious and political establishment within Iran. Amir was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and his wife and children were given no information as to his whereabouts. Whilst in prison, Amir was subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment during interrogation, which included beatings and being placed in stress positions. He describes his time in prison as "hell on earth".

Shortly after Amir's detention, Lucy discovered that she was pregnant with their third child. Fearing that she and her children would themselves be targeted by the Iranian state, Lucy travelled back to the UK where she was later granted refugee status. When Amir was temporary released from prison to visit his sick father, he used the opportunity to again flee the country and travelled to the UK where he was reunited with his wife and children for the first time in 6 years; this was also the first time that he had met his infant son.

Asylum Aid had represented Lucy in her asylum claim and she asked us to help her husband. We helped Amir to make a combined application for asylum and family reunion with his wife and children. We compiled detailed evidence of their relationship and when there was an extensive delay in deciding Amir's case, we sent a pre-action letter to the Home Office asking them to make a decision. In 2022, having waited over 3 years for a decision, Amir was finally granted permission to remain living alongside his wife and children in the UK.

## STATELESS

In 2021, 19% of Asylum Aid's clients were stateless persons. Stateless persons, having no recognised citizenship of any country and no identity, are frequently destitute and very vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Asylum Aid is one of the few organisations that dedicate caseworker time to supporting individuals to make statelessness applications under Part 14 of the Immigration Rules – the statelessness procedure that Asylum Aid successfully petitioned the Home Office to put in place. It often takes one to two years to gather the evidence necessary to make the representations.

Our stateless project works in partnership with 12 corporate law firms, whose lawyers provide their time for free to work with our caseworkers in building the case for each of our clients. This requires detailed investigation, as the Home Office will only recognise a person as stateless and grant them leave if they have taken all reasonable steps to obtain recognition as a national of, and/or admission to, countries with which they have a connection. Recent data disclosed by the Home Office shows that only 7% of statelessness applications are successful – but in 2021, Asylum Aid had a 100% success rate, obtaining leave for five of our clients. For another client, our investigations led to the authorities in his country of birth accepting that he was in fact a citizen of that country and issuing him with new identity documents. After years of battling for recognition, the client was delighted to finally be recognised as a citizen.

The value of this extraordinary collaboration between Asylum Aid and the law firms was given external recognition in 2021: the project won the Law Society Excellence in Pro Bono award in October and was Highly Commended in the Most Effective Partnership category at the LawWorks awards in December. We are very grateful to the firms for their continuing support – both financial and practical for this vital work. The firms that worked with us in 2021 are: Akin Gump, Ashurst, Cooley, Dentons, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Latham & Watkins, Morrison & Foerster, O'Melveny, Orrick, Reed Smith, Skadden and White & Case.

### ERIC'S STORY

Eric was born in Abkhazia when it was part of the USSR. He was conscripted into military service and lived in Georgia, Russia and Kazakhstan throughout his life before coming to the UK. He once owned a Soviet internal passport but this was lost many years ago. After being violently attacked in Russia in the early 2000s, Eric fled to the UK and unsuccessfully claimed asylum and later leave to remain in the UK under Article 8 ECHR. Significant efforts were made with NGOs and the relevant authorities of Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Abkhazia over a three-year period, but none would recognise him, nor issue him any documentation. A statelessness application was subsequently submitted on his behalf by Asylum Aid in June 2020. After decades spent without status or ID, Eric was finally granted leave to remain as a stateless person in the UK in 2021.



### WELFARE ADVICE SERVICES PARTNERSHIP

The team provided welfare advice to more than 670 individuals through the Westminster Advice Services Partnership. Asylum Aid's welfare advice team specialises in providing advice to vulnerable migrant communities in Westminster, many of whom do not have English as a first language. Our advisers and volunteers are multilingual and we work with volunteer community interpreters. In 2021, 80% of those receiving welfare support from Asylum Aid were either migrants and/or people of colour and more than 40% had a disability or long-term ill health. During 2021, Asylum Aid has secured over £360,000 in additional support for its clients.

## AMINA'S STORY



Amina is a single mother, originally from Algeria, who experienced verbal, emotional and financial abuse during her marriage. She speaks very little English. Her ex-husband managed all their benefit claims and money, even if the claims were joint. In June 2021, her relationship broke down and her husband disappeared. Amina found out that her husband had returned to his country, leaving her without any money. He continued to withdraw all the money received into their joint bank account. Amina had to rely on the local foodbank and her eldest daughter, a university student, paid the family's utility bills and other essentials from her student loan. The family were already struggling when Amina received an eviction warning letter from the council due to the rent arrears; Amina learned that her husband had also stopped paying the rent. She contacted the housing office, only to find out that she wasn't even a registered tenant of the flat, which was in her ex's sole name.

Amina told us that she believed she could not get UC because everyone else who tried to help her found her case too complex. With the help of our advisor, who had to file two official complaints to Universal Credit, Amina's single parent claim was accepted, and she was granted three months backdated UC payments, a total of £3300. UC does not usually backdate payments for more than a month, but our advisor helped Amina to build a compelling case, which helped her get the extra payments. UC accepted that she was liable to pay rent on the flat, despite not being a tenant. Our advisor also applied to the Westminster local hardship fund and the family was awarded £320 for food shopping. Amina was able to pay off the rent arrears, and we provided her with housing advice. Amina told us that she cried with joy when she finally received her own money, which she can manage independently.

## A UNIQUE VOICE

At Asylum Aid, we know that our work can achieve greater impact if shared beyond those whom we directly help. Asylum Aid has a long history of successful policy change work based on the evidence and testimony of our clients. It continues to be Asylum Aid's responsibility and mission to use the expertise gained through working with clients to encourage others to take on complex cases and to deliver a humane and effective system for individuals seeking refuge and for survivors of trafficking. Our relationship with the Helen Bamber Foundation further amplifies our voice and enables us to draw on the Foundation's expertise in working with survivors of trafficking, torture and other severe human rights violations.

Throughout 2021, we have continued to participate in policy influencing forums despite having no dedicated capacity for doing so. We have contributed to the work of the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, the Immigration Law Practitioners Association, and the European Network on Statelessness; and we have attended stakeholder meetings with the Home Office on statelessness, decision-making, access to legal advice, equalities and children. We have closely followed the passage of the Nationality and Borders Bill and contributed to sector discussions on its impact and the opportunities for influencing work to mitigate the worst effects. We have used our experience to support our colleagues at the Helen Bamber Foundation in developing policy positions on issues such as remote interviewing and access to legal advice in 'quasi-detention' settings. Going forward, we will develop our systems for monitoring trends in our casework so that we can identify emerging issues and provide robust evidence to support our policy influencing and campaigns.

We also know that we have a lot to share with fellow practitioners in the refugee law field from our experience working on complex cases and with survivors. We continue to host the Refugee Legal Group, a Google group with more than 1500 members that is a vital forum for sharing information and support on legal, policy and practical developments in the field. We will develop our resources, training materials and capacity to provide second-tier advice and support to other practitioners.

## OUR FUTURE

Before the pandemic, the number of refugees and those seeking asylum already in the UK was estimated to be 160,000, with more than 30,000 arriving in the country each year. We know that good quality legal representation is absolutely critical to enable survivors to obtain protection and begin to rebuild their lives. We also know that for many survivors, there are real barriers to obtaining quality legal representation.

The Government's New Plan for Immigration, and the Nationality and Borders Act, will make it even harder for survivors to obtain protection. This is at a time when the increasing need is stark before us – to date, more than five million refugees have fled Ukraine, an area already known to have a high risk of trafficking – and yet our Government's response has been one of the most restrictive and bureaucratic in Europe.

Shamefully, all those who are not Ukrainian nationals, but also have the misfortune to have to flee war, persecution and gender-based violence, will face: increased use of remote accommodation centres and “quasi-detention”; the prospect of offshoring; a higher standard of proof; differential treatment of those granted protection depending on their route to safety; and the introduction of new detained fast-track procedures. Furthermore, the new Nationality and Borders Act will not address the real problems in the asylum system: a lack of adequate safe routes to seek asylum; serious delays at the Home Office – which have worsened over the last two years; poor quality initial decision making; and legal aid advice deserts.

The need for good quality legal representation remains acute, and we know that we need to use our position and voice to influence positive change in the asylum and NRM systems; to increase access to quality legal advice; and to work to mitigate the negative impact of the Government's plans.

Therefore in 2022, Asylum Aid will:

- Increase the number of people we can help directly, especially survivors of trafficking and torture, children and stateless people.
- Ensure that good quality legal advice is provided to those in need of protection, including as a result of the Ukrainian crisis, as well as to survivors of trafficking and those at risk of trafficking or other exploitation.
- Develop partnerships to ensure that children and survivors of trafficking and torture who are seeking asylum across the UK, including those held in accommodation centres and detention, have access to high quality legal representation, both remotely and face-to-face.
- Provide training in representing stateless persons, survivors of trafficking and torture, and children, to other legal representatives to increase access to expert legal representation where it is needed.
- Leverage our evidence and experience to improve the asylum system and national referral mechanism alongside the Helen Bamber Foundation.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

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Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation has had a successful year in 2021, which ended in a surplus. This is as a result of our casework in progress (see below) and our fundraising activities. This is aligned to the predictions made in 2020 regarding the time and cash investment necessary to sustainably develop Asylum Aid. As we go forward, we need to grow the income generated for Asylum Aid in order to increase financial stability and to support the ambitious strategy to increase the impact of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group as a whole.

## DESIGNATED CASEWORK IN PROGRESS FUND

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Our casework work in progress (WIP) designated fund (£209,849) reflects income recognised in our accounts, but which is an illiquid asset that cannot be relied upon as part of our reserves policy. In the majority of cases, we cannot bill for legal aid work until the case is completed (and even where stage billing is possible, we can only recover fixed fees). This means that delays in Home Office decision-making and in hearing appeals, which have increased during the pandemic, have a direct impact on our ability to convert our WIP into cash. As casework is a major source of unrestricted income, we show our WIP as a designated fund in order to avoid misleading funders that these funds are available to invest in our charitable activities. For instance, we are currently budgeting to bring in £60,000 cash from Legal Aid work next year, which represents 28% of our total WIP. However, we recognise that the value of this WIP is a helpful indicator of future legal aid income and helps ensure that the organisation remains a going concern.

## RESERVES POLICY

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Forming part of reserves, the unrestricted general fund is the working fund of the charity. Unlike the other funds, it is not restricted or designated for a defined purpose. The unrestricted general fund provides for activities not funded by earned income or restricted funding and for the general administration of the charity. It also provides working capital for operations and helps to provide resources to ensure that the charity is able to continue with its obligations.

Currently our group policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Therefore, the reserves policy for Asylum Aid is two to six months. Given the importance of being confident that Asylum Aid can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aim to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund.

In December 2021 Asylum Aid ended the year positively with two months unrestricted free reserves.

## RISKS

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The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are considered to be:

- The challenge of ensuring that funds are raised to fill the gap left by the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding, primarily due to delays in closure of cases, and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that can arise from the significant level of demand for the services of the organisation, while at the same time as cases are not being closed, and there is little capacity for new clients.
- The impact of the Nationality and Borders Act making a system that is already failing, hard to implement fairly and which will result in increased delays for our clients and increased number of clients with complex needs.
- The anticipated cost of living crisis and this Government's plans to recover from the financial impact of the pandemic mean there is unlikely to be any extra central Government funding for legal advice or to invest in the wider asylum system. These economic impacts will make an already hostile influencing environment more challenging for our clients and therefore for our work more generally.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring and application of the reserves policy.

## SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN

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The global health crisis arising from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) had a profound impact on all aspects of life, including the activities of Asylum Aid. We had to move to remote working but did not see a decrease in referrals. The Trustees have put in place measures to mitigate the risks to Asylum Aid from the ongoing delays in the closure of cases resulting in delayed receipt of payment from the Legal Aid Agency for work done, by focusing on fundraised income during this period. We have also invested in capacity to ensure prompt and timely billing where possible. Brexit has not had a negative impact on Asylum Aid's income and is not expected to in future. Having regard to these steps and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the accounts.

## REMUNERATION POLICY

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The objectives of HBF Group's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high-calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level taking account of external market rates the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

## FUNDRAISING

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Asylum Aid is supported by the same fundraising team as the Helen Bamber Foundation as part of the group structure. An annual income generation strategy is produced, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and Trustees. In 2021, Asylum Aid secured fundraised income of £390,401, part of which was due to the synergy between Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation as a group.

Asylum Aid's/Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on the HBF's website [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org). The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2021 did not involve external professional fundraisers or commercial participants. Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation produces or markets merchandise for fundraising purposes.

HBF Group is registered with the Fundraising Standards Board. Registration with the Board represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, HBF Group commits to the Board's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on six key pledges that reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF Group's strong commitment to recognize sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation has received any complaints with regard to its fundraising activities in 2021.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

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In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to its stated aims and objectives. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee status and their dependents are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including providing them with legal advice and representation);
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community;

- the advancement of public knowledge on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and on the conditions that give rise to refugee movements, as well as on all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the impact on people who experience such suffering.

## STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

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The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid 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 that 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;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the finance statements;
- Prepare the finance statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 December 2021 was six. The Trustees are members of the charity, entitling them to voting rights, but they have no beneficial interest in the charity.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 17th May 2022 and signed on their behalf by Elizabeth Mottershaw Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Elizabeth A Mottershaw

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ASYLUM AID

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Asylum Aid for the year ended 31 December 2021.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

As the charity trustees of the Company you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act') and 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 the Company'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 Charities Act 2011 ('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 the Institute of Chartered Accounts in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 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;

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: 29 June 2022

Name: **Joanna Pittman, FCA DChA**

Address: **Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL**

## Asylum Aid

### Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

#### For the year ended 31 December 2021

|                                                          | Note | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>Income from:</b>                                      |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Donations and legacies                                   | 2    | 267,401           | 123,000         | <b>390,401</b>     | 59,243            | 139,409         | 198,652            |
| Charitable activities                                    |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services                                       | 3    | 45,950            | –               | <b>45,950</b>      | 6,720             | –               | 6,720              |
| Other Legal Aid Services (Work in progress)              | 3    | 209,849           | –               | <b>209,849</b>     | –                 | –               | –                  |
| Westminster CAB                                          | 3    | 61,306            | –               | <b>61,306</b>      | 30,653            | –               | 30,653             |
| <b>Total income</b>                                      |      | <b>584,506</b>    | <b>123,000</b>  | <b>707,506</b>     | <b>96,616</b>     | <b>139,409</b>  | <b>236,025</b>     |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                                   | 4a   |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Raising funds                                            |      | 21,859            | –               | <b>21,859</b>      | 17,783            | –               | 17,783             |
| Charitable activities                                    |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Legal Aid Services/Westminster CAB                       |      | 353,613           | 104,859         | <b>458,472</b>     | 10,926            | 139,409         | 150,335            |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                 |      | <b>375,472</b>    | <b>104,859</b>  | <b>480,331</b>     | <b>28,709</b>     | <b>139,409</b>  | <b>168,118</b>     |
| <b>Net income for the year and net movement in funds</b> | 5    | <b>209,034</b>    | <b>18,141</b>   | <b>227,175</b>     | <b>67,907</b>     | <b>–</b>        | <b>67,907</b>      |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>                          |      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Total funds brought forward                              |      | 67,907            | –               | <b>67,907</b>      | –                 | –               | –                  |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>                       |      | <b>276,941</b>    | <b>18,141</b>   | <b>295,082</b>     | <b>67,907</b>     | <b>–</b>        | <b>67,907</b>      |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 12a to the financial statements.

# Asylum Aid

## Balance sheet

Company no. 02513874

As at 31 December 2021

|                                                | Note | £                | 2021<br>£                    | £                | 2020<br>£                   |
|------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Fixed assets:</b>                           |      |                  |                              |                  |                             |
| Tangible assets                                | 8    |                  | <u>933</u>                   |                  | <u>1,272</u>                |
|                                                |      |                  | <b>933</b>                   |                  | <b>1,272</b>                |
| <b>Current assets:</b>                         |      |                  |                              |                  |                             |
| Work in progress                               |      | 209,849          |                              | –                |                             |
| Debtors                                        | 9    | 27,811           |                              | 15,326           |                             |
| Cash at bank and in hand                       |      | <u>256,497</u>   |                              | <u>189,949</u>   |                             |
|                                                |      | <b>494,157</b>   |                              | <b>205,275</b>   |                             |
| <b>Liabilities:</b>                            |      |                  |                              |                  |                             |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 10   | <u>(200,008)</u> |                              | <u>(138,640)</u> |                             |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                      |      |                  | <u><b>294,149</b></u>        |                  | <u><b>66,635</b></u>        |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                              |      |                  | <u><u><b>295,082</b></u></u> |                  | <u><u><b>67,907</b></u></u> |
| <b>The funds of the charity:</b>               | 11a  |                  |                              |                  |                             |
| Restricted income funds                        |      |                  | <b>18,141</b>                |                  | –                           |
| Unrestricted income funds:                     |      |                  |                              |                  |                             |
| Designated funds                               |      | 209,849          |                              | –                |                             |
| General funds                                  |      | <u>67,092</u>    |                              | <u>67,907</u>    |                             |
| Total unrestricted funds                       |      |                  | <u><b>276,941</b></u>        |                  | <u><b>67,907</b></u>        |
| <b>Total charity funds</b>                     |      |                  | <u><u><b>295,082</b></u></u> |                  | <u><u><b>67,907</b></u></u> |

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 and members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 state of affairs of the company as at 31 December 2020 and of its net outgoing resources for the period in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees on 17th May 2022 and signed on their behalf by

John Scampion  
Treasurer

## Asylum Aid

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2021

|                                                                                                     | £                         | 2021<br>£       | £                                  | 2020<br>£                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>                                                         |                           |                 |                                    |                                |
| Net income for the year and net movement in funds<br>(as per the statement of financial activities) | 227,175                   |                 | 67,907                             |                                |
| Depreciation charges                                                                                | 339                       |                 | 85                                 |                                |
| (Increase)/decrease in debtors                                                                      | (222,334)                 |                 | (15,326)                           |                                |
| Increase/(decrease) in creditors                                                                    | 61,368                    |                 | 138,640                            |                                |
| <b>Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities</b>                                        |                           | <b>66,548</b>   |                                    | <b>191,306</b>                 |
| <b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>                                                        |                           |                 |                                    |                                |
| Purchase of fixed assets                                                                            | –                         |                 | (1,357)                            |                                |
| <b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>                                        |                           | <b>–</b>        |                                    | <b>(1,357)</b>                 |
| <b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>                                              |                           | <b>66,548</b>   |                                    | <b>189,949</b>                 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the                                                   |                           | <b>189,949</b>  |                                    | <b>–</b>                       |
| <b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>                                             |                           | <b>256,497</b>  |                                    | <b>189,949</b>                 |
| <b>Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt</b>                                        |                           |                 |                                    |                                |
|                                                                                                     | At 1 January<br>2021<br>£ | Cash flows<br>£ | Other non-<br>cash<br>changes<br>£ | At 31<br>December<br>2021<br>£ |
| Cash at bank and in hand                                                                            | 189,949                   | 66,548          | –                                  | 256,497                        |
| <b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>                                                              | <b>189,949</b>            | <b>66,548</b>   | <b>–</b>                           | <b>256,497</b>                 |

**1 Accounting policies**

**a) Statutory information**

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office address and principal place of business is Bruges Place, 15–20 Baynes Street, London, NW1 0TF.

**b) Basis of preparation**

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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) (effective 1 January 2019)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include the estimation of the value of the work in progress.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

**c) Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company.

**d) Income**

Income is recognised when:

- 1) The charity has entitlement to the funds
- 2) Any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- 3) It is probable that the income will be received
- 4) The amount can be measured reliably.

Income for prior year was for a 6 month period from 1st July to 31st December 2020 but the charity was dormant from 1st July to 4th August 2020. Comparatives are for a shorter period than 2021 which is a full year.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

We recognise work done under the legal aid contract where the criteria for entitlement to payment under the legal aid regulations are met.

**e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

**f) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

**Support costs** are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £250. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Office equipment 25% straight line basis

Work in progress is valued at the average hourly rate paid by the Legal Aid Agency less any necessary provisions.

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Pensions Trust Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

2 Income from donations and grants

|                                                     | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Donations</b>                                    |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Individual donations                                | 39,244            | –               | <b>39,244</b>      | 34,843             |
| Corporate donations                                 | –                 | 72,000          | <b>72,000</b>      | 24,400             |
| Helen Bamber Foundation                             | 136,155           | –               | <b>136,155</b>     | –                  |
| Legacies                                            | 15,102            | –               | <b>15,102</b>      | –                  |
| <b>Grants</b>                                       |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund | –                 | 31,000          | <b>31,000</b>      | 63,500             |
| Access to Justice Foundation Funder Plus Scheme     | –                 | –               | <b>–</b>           | 10,800             |
| The Barrow Cadbury Trust Covid 19 Support Fund      | 150               | –               | <b>150</b>         | 49,850             |
| ILPA                                                | –                 | –               | <b>–</b>           | 5,259              |
| Trust for London                                    | 50,000            | –               | <b>50,000</b>      | 10,000             |
| London Legal support                                | 21,764            | –               | <b>21,764</b>      | –                  |
| Trust for London (Statelessness)                    | –                 | 20,000          | <b>20,000</b>      | –                  |
| Other                                               | 4,986             | –               | <b>4,986</b>       | –                  |
|                                                     | <b>267,401</b>    | <b>123,000</b>  | <b>390,401</b>     | <b>198,652</b>     |

(2020 Unrestricted £64,502. Restricted £134,150)

£136,155 represents a portion of the income raised from Trusts and Foundations that was received by the Helen Bamber Foundation on behalf of HBF Group, and which has been allocated to Asylum Aid. This amount is based on the proportion of increased expenditure attributable to Asylum Aid.

3 Income from charitable activities

|                                                | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Legal Aid Claims                               | 45,950            | –               | <b>45,950</b>      | 6,720              |
|                                                | <b>45,950</b>     | <b>–</b>        | <b>45,950</b>      | <b>6,720</b>       |
| (2020 £6,720 All Unrestricted)                 |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Other Legal Aid Claims Work in Progress        | 209,849           | –               | <b>209,849</b>     | –                  |
|                                                | <b>209,849</b>    | <b>–</b>        | <b>209,849</b>     | <b>–</b>           |
| Westminster CAB Project                        | 61,306            | –               | <b>61,306</b>      | 30,653             |
|                                                | <b>61,306</b>     | <b>–</b>        | <b>61,306</b>      | <b>30,653</b>      |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>317,105</b>    | <b>–</b>        | <b>317,105</b>     | <b>37,373</b>      |

## Asylum Aid

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

#### 4a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

|                               |                        |                       | Charitable<br>activities   |                          |                       |                    |                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                               | Basis of<br>allocation | Raising<br>funds<br>£ | Legal Aid<br>Services<br>£ | Governance<br>costs<br>£ | Support<br>costs<br>£ | 2021<br>Total<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ |
| Staff costs (Note 6)          | Staff time             | 17,910                | 368,986                    | 15,910                   | 18,995                | <b>421,801</b>     | 124,447            |
| Direct costs                  | Direct                 | –                     | 14,469                     | –                        | –                     | <b>14,469</b>      | 20,546             |
| Premises costs                | Staff time             | –                     | –                          | –                        | 16,446                | <b>16,446</b>      | 2,334              |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time             | –                     | –                          | –                        | 2,965                 | <b>2,965</b>       | 4,500              |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time             | –                     | –                          | –                        | 20,521                | <b>20,521</b>      | 13,606             |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time             | –                     | –                          | –                        | 339                   | <b>339</b>         | 85                 |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time             | –                     | –                          | 3,790                    | –                     | <b>3,790</b>       | 2,600              |
|                               |                        | <b>17,910</b>         | <b>383,455</b>             | <b>19,700</b>            | <b>59,266</b>         | <b>480,331</b>     | <b>168,118</b>     |
| Support costs                 |                        | 2,963                 | 56,303                     | –                        | (59,266)              | –                  | –                  |
| Governance costs              |                        | 986                   | 18,714                     | (19,700)                 | –                     | –                  | –                  |
| <b>Total expenditure 2021</b> |                        | <b>21,859</b>         | <b>458,472</b>             | <b>–</b>                 | <b>–</b>              | <b>480,331</b>     |                    |
| <b>Total expenditure 2020</b> |                        | <b>17,783</b>         | <b>150,335</b>             | <b>–</b>                 | <b>–</b>              |                    | <b>168,118</b>     |

## Asylum Aid

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

#### 4b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

|                               |                     | Charitable activities |                         |                       |                    | 2020<br>Total<br>£ |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                               | Basis of allocation | Raising funds<br>£    | Legal Aid Services<br>£ | Governance costs<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ |                    |
| Staff costs (Note 6)          | Staff time          | 7,022                 | 107,536                 | 6,448                 | 3,441              | 124,447            |
| Direct costs                  | Direct              | 8,780                 | 11,766                  | –                     | –                  | 20,546             |
| Premises costs                | Staff time          | –                     | –                       | –                     | 2,334              | 2,334              |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time          | –                     | –                       | –                     | 4,500              | 4,500              |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time          | –                     | –                       | –                     | 13,606             | 13,606             |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time          | –                     | –                       | –                     | 85                 | 85                 |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time          | –                     | –                       | 2,600                 | –                  | 2,600              |
|                               |                     | 15,802                | 119,302                 | 9,048                 | 23,966             | 168,118            |
| Support costs                 |                     | 1,438                 | 22,528                  | –                     | (23,966)           | –                  |
| Governance costs              |                     | 543                   | 8,505                   | (9,048)               | –                  | –                  |
| <b>Total expenditure 2020</b> |                     | <b>17,783</b>         | <b>150,335</b>          | <b>–</b>              | <b>–</b>           | <b>168,118</b>     |

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

**5 Net income for the year**

|                               |              |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| This is stated after charging | <b>2021</b>  | <b>2020</b>  |
|                               | <b>£</b>     | <b>£</b>     |
| Depreciation                  | <b>339</b>   | <b>85</b>    |
| Auditor's remuneration:       |              |              |
| Independent Examination fees  | <b>3,790</b> | <b>2,600</b> |

**6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel**

|                                                                 |                |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Staff costs were as follows:                                    | <b>2021</b>    | <b>2020</b>    |
|                                                                 | <b>£</b>       | <b>£</b>       |
| Salaries and wages                                              | <b>373,030</b> | <b>109,640</b> |
| Redundancy payments                                             | <b>5,712</b>   | <b>–</b>       |
| Social security costs                                           | <b>27,053</b>  | <b>10,193</b>  |
| Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes | <b>16,006</b>  | <b>4,614</b>   |
|                                                                 | <b>421,801</b> | <b>124,447</b> |

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £72,671 (2020: £20,744).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2020: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2020: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2020: £nil).

**Staff numbers**

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

|                       |             |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                       | <b>2021</b> | <b>2020</b> |
|                       | <b>No.</b>  | <b>No.</b>  |
| Raising funds         | <b>2</b>    | <b>2</b>    |
| Charitable activities | <b>15</b>   | <b>11</b>   |
| Support & Governance  | <b>2</b>    | <b>2</b>    |
|                       | <b>19</b>   | <b>15</b>   |

**7 Taxation**

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

**8 Tangible fixed assets**

|                          | Office<br>equipment<br>£ | Total<br>£ |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>Cost</b>              |                          |            |
| At the start of the year | 1,357                    | 1,357      |
| Additions in year        | –                        | –          |
| At the end of the year   | 1,357                    | 1,357      |
| <b>Depreciation</b>      |                          |            |
| At the start of the year | 85                       | 85         |
| Charge for the year      | 339                      | 339        |
| At the end of the year   | 424                      | 424        |
| <b>Net book value</b>    |                          |            |
| At the end of the year   | 933                      | 933        |
| At the start of the year | 1,272                    | 1,272      |

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

**9 Debtors**

|               | 2021<br>£ | 2020<br>£ |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Trade debtors | 45        | –         |
| Other debtors | 25,327    | 15,326    |
| Prepayments   | 2,439     | –         |
|               | 27,811    | 15,326    |

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                                         | 2021<br>£      | 2020<br>£      |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Trade creditors                         | 9,610          | 11,282         |
| Taxation and social security            | 8,314          | 6,453          |
| Other creditors                         | 55,532         | 56,216         |
| Amounts owed to Helen Bamber Foundation | 116,321        | 30,090         |
| Accruals                                | 10,231         | 3,600          |
| Deferred income                         | –              | 31,000         |
|                                         | <b>200,008</b> | <b>138,640</b> |

Deferred income

|                                       | 2021<br>£ | 2020<br>£     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Balance at the beginning of the year  | 31,000    | –             |
| Amount released to income in the year | (31,000)  | –             |
| Amount deferred in the year           | –         | 31,000        |
| Balance at the end of the year        | <b>–</b>  | <b>31,000</b> |

Deferred income comprises of part of a grant received from Access to Justice in the current year which relates to a future period.

11a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

|                                       | General<br>unrestricted<br>£ | Designated<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | Total<br>funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 933                          | –               | –               | 933                 |
| Net current assets                    | 66,159                       | 209,849         | 18,141          | 294,149             |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2021</b> | <b>67,092</b>                | <b>209,849</b>  | <b>18,141</b>   | <b>295,082</b>      |

11b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

|                                       | General<br>unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | Total<br>funds<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                 | 1,272                        | –               | 1,272               |
| Net current assets                    | 66,635                       | –               | 66,635              |
| <b>Net assets at 31 December 2020</b> | <b>67,907</b>                | <b>–</b>        | <b>67,907</b>       |

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

12a Movements in funds (current year)

|                                 | At 1 January<br>2021<br>£ | Income &<br>gains<br>£ | Expenditure<br>& losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | At 31<br>December<br>2021<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                           |                        |                              |                |                                |
| Legal Aid Services              | –                         | 123,000                | 104,859                      | –              | 18,141                         |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>–</b>                  | <b>123,000</b>         | <b>104,859</b>               | <b>–</b>       | <b>18,141</b>                  |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                           |                        |                              |                |                                |
| General funds                   | 67,907                    | 584,506                | 375,472                      | –              | 276,941                        |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>67,907</b>             | <b>584,506</b>         | <b>375,472</b>               | <b>–</b>       | <b>276,941</b>                 |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>67,907</b>             | <b>707,506</b>         | <b>480,331</b>               | <b>–</b>       | <b>295,082</b>                 |

12b Movements in funds (prior year)

|                                 | At 1 January<br>2020<br>£ | Income &<br>gains<br>£ | Expenditure<br>& losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | At 31<br>December<br>2020<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                           |                        |                              |                |                                |
| Legal Aid Services              | –                         | 139,409                | 139,409                      | –              | –                              |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>–</b>                  | <b>139,409</b>         | <b>139,409</b>               | <b>–</b>       | <b>–</b>                       |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                           |                        |                              |                |                                |
| General funds                   |                           | 96,616                 | 28,709                       | –              | 67,907                         |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>–</b>                  | <b>96,616</b>          | <b>28,709</b>                | <b>–</b>       | <b>67,907</b>                  |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>–</b>                  | <b>236,025</b>         | <b>168,118</b>               | <b>–</b>       | <b>67,907</b>                  |

**Legal Aid Services**

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people in the face of the Covid 19 epidemic.

13 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

**14 Related party transactions**

There are no related party transactions to disclose for 2021 (2020: none).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

**15 Ultimate Controlling Party**

The company's ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party is Helen Bamber Foundation, a registered charity (charity number 1149652) and company limited by guarantee (company number 08186281). Copies of the financial statements are available from Companies House and the Charity Commission.



Charity number: 328729  
Company number: 02513874

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# Accounts

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# ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements  
for the period ended 31 December 2020

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## REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

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### TRUSTEES

Sir Nicolas Bratza – Chair (interim from December 2020)  
Constantine Partasides  
Peter Reid  
Sile Reynolds – Chair (until December 2020)  
John Scampion - Treasurer  
Professor Ian Watt

### MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES

Kat Hacker – Head of Asylum Aid  
Gareth Holmes – Fundraising and Communications Director  
Kerry Smith – Chief Executive Officer

**CHARITY NUMBER** 328729 (registered in England and Wales)

**COMPANY NUMBER** 02513874 (incorporated in the United Kingdom)

### REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

Bruges Place, 15-20 Baynes Street  
London  
NW1 0TF

### INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Sayer Vincent LLP  
Joanna Pittman FCA  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0TL

### BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

## INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM AID

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Asylum Aid is a committed, professional and collaborative organisation dedicated to protecting people from persecution by providing legal representation and access to justice for refugees and those seeking asylum. It combines this with the role of providing welfare advice to migrants and other vulnerable members of the community.

At Asylum Aid we know that good quality legal representation is life-saving for the people we help and that by working together we can help more people. In our work of representing vulnerable people we focus particularly on helping children, survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, and stateless people. We take on the complex cases that others do not to ensure that everyone has access to protection.

We take the time needed to understand the complexity of each person's legal case. This is to ensure that clients are given the professional help they need to obtain protection. We know that, without proper legal representation, people seeking asylum can remain in a state of limbo for years, thereby adding to the pain and trauma already endured.

The organisation also works with others to change policy and practice so as to ensure the safety and recovery of those who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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At the beginning of 2020 Asylum Aid were part of Consonant, a charity for whom the challenges of the coronavirus public health pandemic proved a hurdle too far. But as a charity with a strong reputation for excellent legal representation and policy work, built over 30 years following its creation in 1985, Asylum Aid was an organisation that the sector could not afford to lose.

And neither could survivors of trafficking and torture. The coronavirus public health pandemic has not reduced the need for quality legal representation for survivors of trafficking and torture. Many survivors are still being turned away by law firms, law centres and others who do not have the capacity to take on complex cases and more legal aid practitioners are closing their doors. There is also a clear need for evidence-based and authoritative voices to challenge the increasingly aggressive stance taken by the UK government against people exercising their right to seek refuge – the future no longer looks merely hostile but inhumane and unworkable.

Given the crisis in quality legal representation and the joint focus on vulnerable survivors, it was therefore a natural evolution for the Helen Bamber Foundation to provide a home for Asylum Aid to enable it to carry on its work as a charity in its own right. In August 2020 Asylum Aid re-started operations in its own right with a team of 7 and under the umbrella of the Helen Bamber Foundation. By December 2020 we had a team of 10. The organisation passed its first Lexcel Audit and supported 118 clients through the asylum team and 328 clients through the welfare advice team.

When I first started my own career as a lawyer working with refugees I undertook joint work with Asylum Aid. So it is a great privilege to now be the Chief Executive of an organisation I have long admired and which has transformed the lives of individuals directly and the asylum system as a whole. It is also a great pleasure to work with such a committed expert team of legal representatives. A team who provide a friendly professional service and help survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence, including children, and stateless people to obtain the protection they need.

We have only been able to relaunch Asylum Aid because of the dedication of the staff members who committed their time to ensure that Asylum Aid had a future. I would also like to thank Sile Reynolds who was a Trustee of Asylum Aid for six years, and stepped up to be the Chair of Asylum Aid to enable the transition from Consonant to being a part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group.

The ongoing encouragement from all of our supporters and partners has also been central to the organisation's successful relaunch. I especially look forward to getting to know you more closely in the coming year. Now, I just want to thank you all for the extra mile you have walked to keep this fantastic organisation going and continue to deliver life changing outcomes.

Kerry Smith, CEO Asylum Aid

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

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### Asylum Aid's Staff & Volunteers: A Community Effort

Asylum Aid was relaunched in August 2020 with the full-time equivalent of 5.6 members of staff and ended the year with 7.6. In this period, Asylum Aid did not take on any new volunteers, although it is planned to do so in the future.

### Management and Governance

Asylum Aid is a charity in its own right that is part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. The day-to-day management of the charity is by a Management Group made up of the Chief Executive, Director of Fundraising and Communications, Head of Asylum Aid and the Legal Services Manager. The Helen Bamber Foundation Group Finance and Fundraising Committee is composed of Trustees of both Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation. Management Team members of Asylum Aid and Helen Bamber Foundation meet at least quarterly to provide financial and fundraising governance and oversight.

The chair of Asylum Aid, Sile Reynolds, resigned in December 2020 and was replaced by Sir Nicolas Bratza, as the interim Chair of Asylum Aid. There are five Trustees of Asylum Aid, three of whom, including the Treasurer, also serve on the Helen Bamber Foundation Board to ensure strong joint strategic oversight and governance. New Trustees are recruited externally, their appointment being approved by the Board of Trustees. A tailored induction follows, ensuring that each new Trustee has been briefed on Asylum Aid's governance structure and decision-making processes, on the obligations under charity law, and on the activities of Asylum Aid and its financial performance. Trustee meetings are held every quarter.

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1990 and registered as a charity on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1990.

The company was established under a memorandum of association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 6 to the accounts.

This report is for the six month period from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. The charity was dormant from 1 July to 4 August.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

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2020 was a landmark year in the life of Asylum Aid, as it entered into a formal association with the Helen Bamber Foundation and achieved charitable status in its own right. The transition occurred at an exceptionally difficult time for the organisation, taking place as it did in the midst of one of the gravest public health emergencies in modern times. Despite the serious challenges posed by the pandemic, the Asylum Aid team has continued to provide legal representation and support for those seeking asylum in this country, whether as children, as survivors of torture or trafficking, as victims of gender-based violence or as persons facing the ordeal of being stateless. The individual stories that are graphically described in the Report make clear not only that the need of asylum seekers for skilled legal assistance has never been greater but that Asylum Aid has made a major contribution to meeting that need by ensuring effective legal representation and access to justice.

As someone who has been proud to chair the Board during this transitional period, I am confident that the new partnership between Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation will add strength to both organisations in carrying out their vitally important mission of protecting individual rights and using evidence-based experience to bring about improvements in the asylum system.

Sir Nicolas Bratza, Chair Asylum Aid

## ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

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Asylum Aid has continued as a charity in its own right since it became a part of the Helen Bamber Foundation in August 2020. In the period between 4 August 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 the team provided legal representation to 97 survivors of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence, refugees and people seeking asylum, and 21 stateless persons. The team also provided welfare advice to over 250 individuals through the Welfare Advice Services Partnership.

Our work with our clients continued despite the pandemic but the organisation for the most part converted to working remotely except in those cases where face-to-face appointments were necessary because of the vulnerability of the client. The impact of the pandemic has resulted in challenges for our clients. In particular, the delays in all decision-making have resulted in clients being left in limbo, uncertain as to whether they will get protection and be able to move on with their lives. Significant delays continue to occur in:

- the taking of initial decisions,
- the listing of appeals,
- the determination by the National Referral Mechanism of the question whether the person is a victim of trafficking,
- the making of statelessness grants, and
- the grant to clients of their biometric residence permit once they have been given refugee status.

### Our Clients – Our gift of time

Survivors of trafficking or torture, children and stateless persons make up 58% of Asylum Aid's clients. Victims of trafficking, torture and gender-based violence are frequently fearful and confused and, as a result of the trauma suffered, are unable to tell their story in a coherent and consistent way. Asylum focuses on clients who require extra support. The organisation is committed to ensuring that the necessary time is taken to build the trust of vulnerable clients, to understand and bear witness to their experience and to help them to secure the social support from partners that is critical to enable them to see their legal cases through to the end.

### A focus on the vulnerable

Recognising that complex cases require time, the Asylum Aid team listen closely to every individual client. We take our time with our clients to make sure we understand as much as we can of their experiences. This approach means that we have an above average success rate for our clients. At a time when the majority of decisions have been delayed, only 9 asylum cases were resolved between August and December 2020 – 8 of them successfully resulting in protection.

## Survivors of trafficking

During 2020, 23% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of trafficking (two-thirds of whom were children) who find it difficult to find good quality legal representation. This is because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to support clients through both the asylum system and the National Referral Mechanism simultaneously. In addition, because of delays in decision-making, final payments under the Legal Aid contract are also delayed, thereby creating cash flow concerns for those undertaking complex cases.

### LIEN'S STORY

*“Asylum Aid changed my life, you gave me the chance to tell my story.”*

Lien is a Vietnamese victim of trafficking who was helped by Asylum Aid to make a new asylum claim and to have her case as a victim of trafficking reconsidered. Lien had suffered appalling trafficking, torture and domestic violence in Vietnam. She was sold into prostitution by her ex-partner and at the same time forced to abandon her child. Lien was trafficked throughout a number of countries, and finally brought to the UK. Lien eventually escaped her traffickers, discovered she was pregnant, and gave birth in the UK. Due to poor legal representation, she was not granted asylum or recognised as a survivor of trafficking when she first made her claim. To Lien this felt like additional torture. Asylum Aid took on Lien's case 5 years ago and, after years of complex and dedicated work, she was finally accepted to have been the victim of trafficking and her appeal was not opposed. Lien and her young child were granted refugee status in late 2020. She continues to search for her now grown-up child in Vietnam. Lien stated that Asylum Aid changed her life since we gave her the chance to tell her story.

## Children

During 2020, 22% of Asylum Aid's clients were children. Unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation because their cases are often complex, involving histories of trafficking. This inevitably requires extra work and time for which payment is usually only received at the closure of the case.

### YOHANNES' STORY

Yohannes ran away from his home in North Africa as a child due to severe domestic abuse and became street homeless. While on the street Yohannes was attacked and targeted due to his ethnicity and the police and authorities failed to protect him, targeting him themselves. Yohannes' mental health deteriorated during this time and he also suffered sexual abuse and labour exploitation. Yohannes eventually fled his home country aged 16 and ended up in the UK, having experienced serious traumas and violence on his journey. When Yohannes arrived in the UK aged 17 he claimed asylum, but went on to face severe delays in both his trafficking and asylum claims. Due to his multiple traumas and the delays in his cases, Yohannes' mental health got much worse. Yohannes was referred to Asylum Aid due to our experience of working with vulnerable separated children and young people and our flexibility in offering support. Asylum

Aid's case worker attended Yohannes' welfare interview and also took the time needed to develop trust and understand all of Yohannes' experiences, to prepare a comprehensive witness statement and, during the ongoing delays in his claims, to obtain the necessary evidence and statements in support of his trafficking and asylum claim. At this point Asylum Aid was able to submit that Yohannes was not fit for a substantive interview as well as to find much needed mental health and social support. Due to our work together, Yohannes was accepted as a child victim of trafficking and was granted asylum in the UK, where he continues to receive the support he needs to recover and rebuild his life.

## Survivors of Torture

During 2020, 36% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of torture, who often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the frequent complexity of their cases.

## ARZU'S STORY

Arzu is a young Iranian woman who resisted the authorities' attempts to arrest her sister on fabricated charges. Arzu's sister succeeded in escaping but Arzu was arrested and held in detention, where she was ill-treated and interrogated on several occasions. When Arzu was being transported from prison to attend a court hearing, she was kidnapped on the way. Arzu later found out that the kidnappers had been bribed by her family to facilitate her escape from the authorities and, eventually, from Iran.

Broken and hopeless, Arzu endured a long journey to an unknown 'safe country'. She was put on different lorries before arriving in the UK, where she was discovered by the police and claimed asylum. The Home Office did not believe Arzu and refused her asylum claim. Asylum Aid obtained medico-legal evidence documenting the effect of torture on Arzu to support her appeal to the Tribunal. Nevertheless, her appeal was dismissed. As a result, Arzu was at risk of losing her Asylum Support, without which she would have been destitute and homeless, with a serious negative effect on her ailing mental health. Asylum Aid intervened before her support was stopped, and succeeded in having the appeal decision overturned by the Upper Tribunal. After having been repeatedly told that she was not telling the truth, Arzu was relieved that her account was at last believed. Whilst the distress of her experiences in detention in Iran and during the protracted asylum-determination process in the UK will take time to disappear, Arzu has a renewed hope for a better future.

## Stateless

In 2020, 18% of Asylum Aid's clients were stateless persons. Stateless persons, having no recognised citizenship of any country and no identity, are frequently destitute and very vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Asylum Aid is one of the few organisations that dedicate caseworker time to supporting individuals to make statelessness applications under Part 14 of the Immigration Rules – the statelessness procedure that Asylum Aid successfully petitioned the Home Office to put in place. It often takes one to two years to gather the evidence necessary to make the representations.

## FADI'S STORY

Fadi was born in Libya to a Palestinian father and Libyan mother. His father died when he was a child and he continued to live with his mother in the home in which she had always lived. As Fadi reached his teenage years a senior military official tried to evict them, but his mother refused to leave their home. When his mother died two years later, Fadi returned from work one day to find his home occupied. He was threatened with death if he tried to raise any official complaint. Fadi moved in with his employer, who ran a local garage. After many months of working, Fadi realised that his employer was holding back his wages and using him as free labour. Fadi felt that, as someone of Palestinian descent in Libya, he had nowhere to turn. He had no ID document or passport and was thus effectively a non-citizen in Libya; he also could not go to Palestine, where he had never been and with which country he had no connection. Fadi decided to flee Libya and travelled to UK to claim asylum. His claim was refused and Fadi was given notice of removal. Since no removals to Libya were at that time taking place from the UK, no attempt was made to remove him. For eight years Fadi's situation remained unresolved. He had no right to work or to claim benefits or to study. He was on occasions offered emergency accommodation but this was repeatedly removed, the UK authorities maintaining that he should return to his home country. Fadi eventually met someone with whom he formed a long-lasting relationship but, because of his lack of status in the UK, they could not marry.

Fadi was referred to Asylum Aid's statelessness project and expert evidence was obtained to show that someone of his father's Palestinian background would not have been recognised as a citizen in Libya, nor would his children. Fadi's experience was consistent with that of many stateless Palestinians living illegally in Libya. Asylum Aid also established that Libyan nationality law did not allow a woman alone to pass on her nationality to her child. Fadi was therefore recognised as stateless and given five years leave to remain as a stateless person, with the option to apply for indefinite leave to remain at the end of those five years. Fadi was able to marry and now lives with his wife and works in Wales.

## Welfare Advice Services Partnership

The team provided welfare advice to over 300 individuals through the Welfare Advice Services Partnership. The focus of Asylum Aid's welfare advice team is on migrant and vulnerable communities. Between August 2020 and December 2020, over 80% of those receiving welfare support from Asylum Aid were either migrants and/or people of colour and one third had a disability or long-term ill health. Since August 2020, Asylum Aid has secured over £360,000 in additional support for its clients.

## SAID'S STORY

*"I cannot thank the service enough, I never knew it existed. I now have hope and belief that things can get back to normal and we can enjoy our time with the baby."*

Said is a 42-year-old British citizen who arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker, with a wife and four children, including a newborn. Said started using a local food bank following the loss of his job in March 2020 and was referred to Asylum Aid's welfare advice service. Up until then Said had always worked and was

not reliant on benefits but he applied for Universal Credit. However, when he was awarded Universal Credit in April 2020, the award did not match his entitlement and Said was still unable to manage. Said was desperate, as he had no savings left and... had to pay back loans (for furniture and for his children's tablets, bought for home schooling), he could not afford to buy food, and he was falling behind with his utility bills. When Said first consulted Asylum Aid, he said that he felt completely devastated and that he could not cope any more. As a result of Asylum Aid's help, Said's family is in a much better position. He was supported to obtain the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant and to receive his full entitlement from Universal Credit, taking into account the grant from SEISS. Said's family also received a Westminster City Council hardship fund award for food, which arrived a few days before Christmas and immediately allowed them to shop for food rather than rely on parcels. With Said's agreement, his case was reported to Asylum Aid's partners for use in their policy change work, as an example of a family which had slipped through the safety net and found themselves in serious poverty,

## A Unique Voice

At Asylum Aid we know that our work can achieve greater impact if shared beyond those whom we directly help. Asylum Aid has a long history of successful policy change work based on the evidence and testimony of our clients. It continues to be Asylum Aid's responsibility and mission to use the expertise gained through working with clients to encourage others to take on complex cases and to deliver a humane and effective system for individuals seeking refuge and for survivors of trafficking.

## Our Future

Before the pandemic the numbers of refugees and those seeking asylum already in the UK were estimated to be 160,000, with over 30,000 arriving in the country each year. While all those seeking asylum should have access to good legal representation, this is regrettably not the case, especially for children, survivors of trafficking and stateless people. Therefore in 2021 Asylum Aid will:

- Increase the number of cases it can take on directly, especially on behalf of survivors of trafficking, children and stateless people.
- Develop partnerships to ensure that children and survivors of trafficking who are seeking asylum across the UK have access to high quality legal representation both remotely and face-to-face.
- Work with existing partners to expand social support services for our clients.
- Provide training in representing stateless persons, survivors of trafficking and children to other legal representatives to increase access to legal representation where it is needed.
- Leverage its evidence and experience to improve the asylum system and national referral mechanism alongside the Helen Bamber Foundation.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

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### Financial Framework

Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

### Reserves Policy

Forming part of reserves, the unrestricted general fund is the working fund of the charity. Unlike the other funds, it is not restricted or designated for a defined purpose. The unrestricted general fund provides for activities not funded by earned income or restricted funding and for the general administration of the charity. It also provides working capital for operations and helps to provide resources to ensure that the charity is able to continue with its obligations.

Currently our group policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. Given the importance of being confident that the group can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aim to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund. The Group Trustees have therefore approved a three-year plan to hold an unrestricted general fund of up to nine months of gross expenditure by December 2023.

Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Since, however, the organisations serve a common charitable purpose, the Helen Bamber Foundation agreed to make good the shortfalls where needed and to support Asylum Aid to meet the group reserves policy over time. In December 2020 Asylum Aid ended the year positively with 2.4 months reserves.

### Summary of Results

As a result of successful fundraising activities, Asylum Aid ended 2020 in a satisfactory financial position, with an unrestricted general fund of £67,907. A budget showing a small surplus has been set for 2021.

### Risks

The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are considered to be:

- The challenge of ensuring that funds are raised to fill the gap left by the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding due to delays in closure of cases and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that can arise from the level of demand for the services of the organisation, while at the same time cases are not being closed.

- The increasingly inhumane environment facing most of our client group and corresponding ineffectiveness of the asylum system, and the resulting likelihood of an increase in the number of clients with complex needs.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring and application of the reserves policy.

## Subsequent Events and Going Concern

The global health crisis arising from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has had a profound impact on all aspects of life, including the activities of Asylum Aid. We have had to move to remote working but have not seen a decrease in referrals. The Trustees have put in place measures to mitigate the risks to Asylum Aid from the ongoing delays in closure of cases resulting in delayed receipt of payment from the Legal Aid Authority for work done, by focusing on fundraised income during this period. It is not considered that Brexit will have a negative impact on Asylum Aid's income. Having regard to these steps and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

## Remuneration Policy

The objectives of HBF's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level taking account of external market rates - the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

## Fundraising

Asylum Aid is supported by the Helen Bamber Foundation Group's fundraising team. The team produces an annual income generation strategy, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and Trustees. In 2020, Asylum Aid exceeded the objectives of its strategy, with fundraised income of £170,000. The success in fundraising has compensated for the delays in receiving Legal Aid Authority payments for work done by Asylum Aid on cases which have not yet been resolved.

Asylum Aid s/Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on the HBF's website [www.helenbamber.org](http://www.helenbamber.org). The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2020 did not involve external professional fundraisers or commercial participators. Neither Asylum Aid nor Helen Bamber Foundation produces or markets merchandise for fundraising purposes.

HBF is registered with the Fundraising Standards Board. Registration with the Board represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, HBF commits to the Board's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on 6 key pledges which reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF's strong commitment to recognize sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation has received any complaints with regard to its fundraising activities in 2020.

## Public Benefit

In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee status and their dependents are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including by providing them with legal advice and representation)
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community
- the advancement of public knowledge on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and on the conditions which give rise to refugee movements, as well as on all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the effect on people who experience such suffering.

## Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid 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, which 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
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice 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 charity 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

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 December 2020 was 6. The Trustees are members of the charity, entitling them to voting rights, but they have no beneficial interest in the charity.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 10 June 2021

and signed on their behalf by Sir Nicolas Bratza Chair of the Board of Trustees.

## Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Asylum Aid

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Asylum Aid for the period ended 31 December 2020.

This report is made solely to the trustees as a body, in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

## Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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:

Name: Joanna Pittman

FCA DChA

Address: Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0TL

Date: 11 June 2021

# Asylum Aid

## Statement of financial activities

(incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the six month period ended 31 December 2020

|                                              |      | Unrestricted  | Restricted     | 2020           | 2019     |
|----------------------------------------------|------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
|                                              | Note | £             | £              | Total          | Total    |
|                                              |      |               |                | £              | £        |
| <b>Income from:</b>                          |      |               |                |                |          |
| Donations and legacies                       | 2    | 59,243        | 139,409        | 198,652        | -        |
| Charitable activities:                       | 3    |               |                |                |          |
| Legal Aid Services                           |      | 6,720         | -              | 6,720          | -        |
| Westminster CAB                              |      | 30,653        | -              | 30,653         | -        |
| <b>Total income</b>                          |      | <b>96,616</b> | <b>139,409</b> | <b>236,025</b> | <b>-</b> |
| <b>Expenditure on:</b>                       |      |               |                |                |          |
| Raising funds                                | 4    | 17,783        | -              | 17,783         | -        |
| Charitable activities:                       | 4    |               |                |                |          |
| Legal Aid Services/Westminster CAB           |      | 10,926        | 139,409        | 150,335        | -        |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                     |      | <b>28,709</b> | <b>139,409</b> | <b>168,118</b> | <b>-</b> |
| <b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b> | 5    | <b>67,907</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>67,907</b>  | <b>-</b> |
| <b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>              |      |               |                |                |          |
| Total funds brought forward                  |      | -             | -              | -              | -        |
| <b>Total funds carried forward</b>           |      | <b>67,907</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>67,907</b>  | <b>-</b> |

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities.

There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above.

The attached notes form part of these financial statements.

**Asylum Aid**  
**Balance sheet**  
**As at 31 December 2020**

|                                                | Note | 2020<br>£        | 2020<br>£     | 2019<br>£ | 2019<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Fixed assets:</b>                           |      |                  |               |           |           |
| Tangible assets                                | 8    |                  | 1,272         |           | -         |
| <b>Current assets:</b>                         |      |                  |               |           |           |
| Debtors                                        | 9    | 15,326           |               | -         |           |
| Cash at bank and in hand                       |      | <u>189,949</u>   |               | <u>-</u>  |           |
|                                                |      | 205,275          |               | -         |           |
| <b>Liabilities:</b>                            |      |                  |               |           |           |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | 10   | <u>(138,640)</u> |               | <u>-</u>  |           |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                      |      |                  | <u>66,635</u> |           | <u>-</u>  |
| <b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>   |      |                  | <u>67,907</u> |           | <u>-</u>  |
| <b>Funds</b>                                   | 12   |                  |               |           |           |
| Restricted funds                               |      |                  | -             |           | -         |
| Unrestricted funds:                            |      |                  |               |           |           |
| General funds                                  |      | <u>67,907</u>    |               | <u>-</u>  |           |
| Total unrestricted funds                       |      |                  | <u>67,907</u> |           | <u>-</u>  |
| <b>Total funds</b>                             |      |                  | <u>67,907</u> |           | <u>-</u>  |

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 and members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 31 December 2020 and of its net outgoing resources for the period in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the trustees on 10 June 2021  
and signed on their behalf by:

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**John Scampion**  
**Treasurer**

**Company registration no. 02513874**

The attached notes form part of the financial statements.

**1 Accounting policies**

**Basis of preparation**

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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) (effective 1 January 2015)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

The charitable company is exempted from preparing a cash flow statement due to the adoption of the exemption available to the charities with income less than £500,000.

**Going concern**

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company. Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include estimating the liability from multi-year grant commitments. The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

**Income**

Income is recognised when:

- (1) the charity has entitlement to the funds
- (2) any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- (3) it is probable that the income will be received
- (4) the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

**Donations of gifts, services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

**Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

**1 Accounting policies (continued)**

**Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of trading costs and the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

**Allocation of support costs**

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 5.

**Tangible fixed assets**

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £1,000. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ~ Office equipment | 33% straight line basis |
|--------------------|-------------------------|

**Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**Creditors and provisions**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

**Pensions**

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Pensions Trust Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

**Asylum Aid**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the period ended 31 December 2020**

**2 Income from donations and grants - current year**

|                                                     | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ | 2019<br>Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Donations</b>                                    |                   |                 |                    |                    |
| Individual donations                                | 34,843            | -               | <b>34,843</b>      | -                  |
| Corporate donations                                 | 24,400            | -               | <b>24,400</b>      | -                  |
| <b>Grants</b>                                       |                   |                 |                    |                    |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
| Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund | -                 | 63,500          | <b>63,500</b>      | -                  |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
| Access to Justice Foundation Funder Plus Scheme     | -                 | 10,800          | <b>10,800</b>      | -                  |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
| The Barrow Cadbury Trust Covid 19 Support Fund      | -                 | 49,850          | <b>49,850</b>      | -                  |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
| ILPA                                                | -                 | 5,259           | <b>5,259</b>       | -                  |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
| Trust for London                                    | -                 | 10,000          | <b>10,000</b>      | -                  |
|                                                     | -                 | -               | -                  | -                  |
|                                                     | <b>59,243</b>     | <b>139,409</b>  | <b>198,652</b>     | <b>-</b>           |

**3 Income from charitable activities**

|                                                | Unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | 2020<br>Total<br>£ | 2019<br>Total<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Legal Aid Claims                               | 6,720             | -               | <b>6,720</b>       | -                  |
|                                                | <b>6,720</b>      | <b>-</b>        | <b>6,720</b>       | <b>-</b>           |
| Westminster CAB Project                        | 30,653            | -               | <b>30,653</b>      | -                  |
|                                                | <b>30,653</b>     | <b>-</b>        | <b>30,653</b>      | <b>-</b>           |
| <b>Total income from charitable activities</b> | <b>37,373</b>     | <b>-</b>        | <b>37,373</b>      | <b>-</b>           |

**Asylum Aid**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the period ended 31 December 2020**

**4 Analysis of expenditure - current period**

|                               |                     | Charitable Activities      |                         |                    |                       | 2020 Total<br>£ | 2019 Total<br>£ |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                               | Basis of allocation | Cost of raising funds<br>£ | Legal Aid Services<br>£ | Support costs<br>£ | Governance costs<br>£ |                 |                 |
| Staff costs                   | Staff time          | 7,022                      | 107,536                 | 3,441              | 6,448                 | 124,447         | -               |
| Direct costs                  | Direct              | 8,780                      | 11,766                  | -                  | -                     | 20,546          | -               |
| Premises costs                | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | 2,334              | -                     | 2,334           | -               |
| Staff recruitment/training    | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | 4,500              | -                     | 4,500           | -               |
| Office costs/comms            | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | 13,606             | -                     | 13,606          | -               |
| Depreciation                  | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | 85                 | -                     | 85              | -               |
| Audit & Accountancy fees      | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | -                  | 2,600                 | 2,600           | -               |
| Other Governance costs        | Staff time          | -                          | -                       | -                  | -                     | -               | -               |
|                               |                     | 15,802                     | 119,302                 | 23,966             | 9,048                 | 168,118         | -               |
| Support costs                 |                     | 1,438                      | 22,528                  | (23,966)           |                       | -               | -               |
| Governance costs              |                     | 543                        | 8,505                   | -                  | (9,048)               | -               | -               |
| <b>Total expenditure 2020</b> |                     | <b>17,783</b>              | <b>150,335</b>          | <b>-</b>           | <b>-</b>              | <b>168,118</b>  | <b>-</b>        |
| Total expenditure 2019        |                     | -                          | -                       | -                  | -                     | -               |                 |

## Asylum Aid

### Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2020

#### 5 Net expenditure for the year

|                               |              |      |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|
| This is stated after charging | <b>2020</b>  | 2019 |
|                               | £            | £    |
| Depreciation                  | <b>85</b>    | -    |
| Auditor's remuneration:       |              |      |
| Independent Examination fees  | <b>2,600</b> | -    |

#### 6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

|                                                                 |                |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| Staff costs were as follows:                                    | <b>2020</b>    | 2019 |
|                                                                 | £              | £    |
| Salaries and wages                                              | <b>109,640</b> | -    |
| Social security costs                                           | <b>10,193</b>  | -    |
| Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes | <b>4,614</b>   | -    |
|                                                                 | <b>124,447</b> | -    |

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £20,744 (2019: £nil).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2019: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2019: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2019: £nil).

#### Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

|                       |             |      |
|-----------------------|-------------|------|
|                       | <b>2020</b> | 2019 |
|                       | No.         | No.  |
| Raising funds         | <b>2</b>    | -    |
| Charitable activities | <b>11</b>   | -    |
| Support & Governance  | <b>2</b>    | -    |
|                       | <b>15</b>   | -    |

#### 7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

# Asylum Aid

## Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2020

### 8 Tangible fixed assets

|                          | Office<br>equipment<br>£ | Total<br>£          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Cost</b>              |                          |                     |
| At the start of the year | -                        | -                   |
| Additions in year        | 1,357                    | <b>1,357</b>        |
| At the end of the year   | <u>1,357</u>             | <u><b>1,357</b></u> |
| <b>Depreciation</b>      |                          |                     |
| At the start of the year | -                        | -                   |
| Charge for the year      | 85                       | <b>85</b>           |
| At the end of the year   | <u>85</u>                | <u><b>85</b></u>    |
| <b>Net book value</b>    |                          |                     |
| At the end of the year   | <u>1,272</u>             | <u>1,272</u>        |
| At the start of the year | <u>-</u>                 | <u>-</u>            |

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

### 9 Debtors

|               | 2020<br>£            | 2019<br>£ |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Trade debtors | -                    | -         |
| Other debtors | <b>15,326</b>        | -         |
| Prepayments   | -                    | -         |
|               | <u><b>15,326</b></u> | <u>-</u>  |

### 10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

|                              | 2020<br>£             | 2019<br>£ |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Trade creditors              | <b>67,497</b>         | -         |
| Taxation and social security | <b>6,453</b>          | -         |
| Other creditors              | <b>30,090</b>         | -         |
| Accruals                     | <b>3,600</b>          | -         |
| Deferred income              | <b>31,000</b>         | -         |
|                              | <u><b>138,640</b></u> | <u>-</u>  |

#### Deferred income

|                                       | 2020<br>£            | 2019<br>£ |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Balance at the beginning of the year  | -                    | -         |
| Amount released to income in the year | -                    | -         |
| Amount deferred in the year           | <b>31,000</b>        | -         |
| Balance at the end of the year        | <u><b>31,000</b></u> | <u>-</u>  |

Deferred income comprises of part of a grant received from Access to Justice in the current year which relates to a future period.

# Asylum Aid

## Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2020

### 11 Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

|                                          | General<br>unrestricted<br>£ | Restricted<br>£ | Total<br>funds<br>£ |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Tangible fixed assets                    | 1,272                        | -               | 1,272               |
| Net current assets                       | 66,635                       | -               | 66,635              |
| <b>Net assets at the end of the year</b> | <b>67,907</b>                | <b>-</b>        | <b>67,907</b>       |

### 12 Movements in funds - current period

|                                 | At the start<br>of the period<br>£ | Incoming<br>resources &<br>gains<br>£ | Outgoing<br>resources &<br>losses<br>£ | Transfers<br>£ | At the end<br>of the<br>period<br>£ |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Restricted funds:</b>        |                                    |                                       |                                        |                |                                     |
| Legal Aid Services              | -                                  | 139,409                               | 139,409                                | -              | -                                   |
| <b>Total restricted funds</b>   | <b>-</b>                           | <b>139,409</b>                        | <b>139,409</b>                         | <b>-</b>       | <b>-</b>                            |
| <b>Unrestricted funds:</b>      |                                    |                                       |                                        |                |                                     |
| General funds                   | -                                  | 96,616                                | 28,709                                 | -              | 67,907                              |
| <b>Total unrestricted funds</b> | <b>-</b>                           | <b>96,616</b>                         | <b>28,709</b>                          | <b>-</b>       | <b>67,907</b>                       |
| <b>Total funds</b>              | <b>-</b>                           | <b>236,025</b>                        | <b>168,118</b>                         | <b>-</b>       | <b>67,907</b>                       |

#### Purposes of restricted funds

##### Legal Aid Services

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people in the face of the Covid 19 epidemic.

### 13 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

### 14 Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions to disclose for 2020 (2019: none).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.