

Impact Report

2022/2023

Snapshot of Your Support

Assisted over 500 people

167
prisoners
of conscience

334 family members and dependants

Made 175 individual grants

Additional block grants to trusted referral agencies

Financial support raised
£170,891

increase on 2021/22, thanks to the generosity of our supporters

Reunited

refugees in exile helped to requalify in the legal, engineering, architecture, construction, healthcare, biomedical science, statistics, business management and human rights sectors.

Supported prisoners of conscience from countries

families including

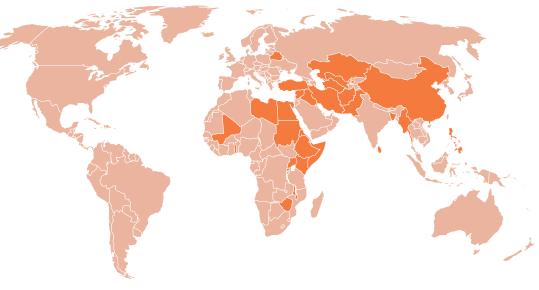
dependants

Collaborated with 29 referral agencies and other NGOs to reach those whom we supported

"In times such as these, when human rights everywhere are under ceaseless threat and refugees are struggling to make safe and tolerable lives, PoC stands out as a beacon of light. The practical support it provides to those persecuted for their acts of bravery and conscience has never been more necessary."

Caroline Moorehead OBE, PoC patron and supporter

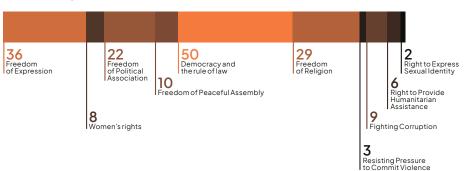
Impact Around The World

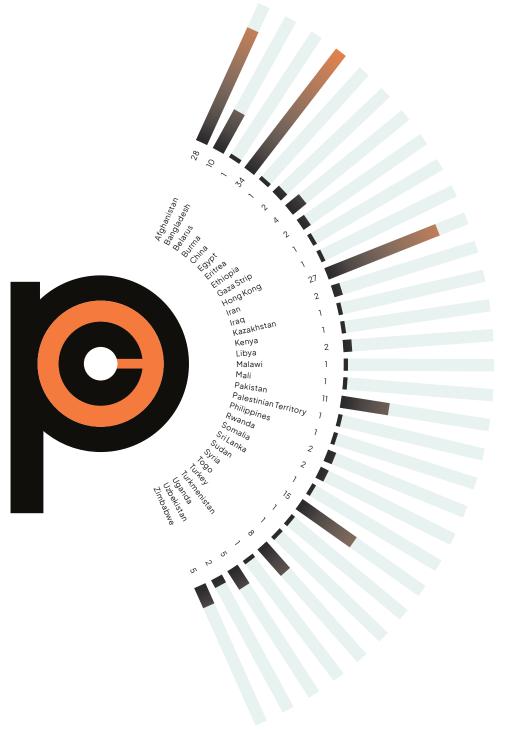


Grant support by category



Support by human right infringed





Director's message

Welcome to our impact report for 2022/23 and thank you to our supporters, volunteers, staff and referral agencies who have once again helped to make the world a better place for many prisoners of conscience and their families.

Courageous people continue to stand up for their and, in turn, our human rights around the world. Unsurprisingly, PoC has seen a huge increase in requests for support from Afghanistan (up 71%) and Iran (up 27%). Many of these prisoners of conscience have had no choice but to seek refuge in countries like the United Kingdom, and the Illegal Immigration Act, roundly criticised by the United Nations and human rights defenders, is likely to prove yet another obstacle to reaching countries of safety.

Our supporters have enabled PoC in the last year to:

- Assist 167 prisoners of conscience and over 334 family members and dependants
- Increase financial grants by 38%
- Increase charitable activities by 19%, from £251,591 to £299,409
- Reduce the costs of raising funds from 19% to 14%
- Increase the breadth of practical support for security, employability, IT needs and reaching countries of safety

This assistance for prisoners of conscience has been made possible through increased donations and legacies over the last year and we remain grateful to our supporters for their support. The need to help those who uphold human rights has never been more urgent, but there is a vast disparity between the extent of human rights abuses in each country and PoC's financial resources to meet this need.

We hope that you will find this report informative and, as always, please do get in touch if you would like to provide feedback, volunteer or provide ideas on how we might reach and support yet more prisoners of conscience in the years to come.

Gary Allison
DIRECTOR

Chair's message

People who stand up for human rights around the world make the world a better place for us all – we are indebted to every one of them. They assert the importance of governments and public bodies being accountable to the people they serve; a key part of that accountability is respecting the differences between people, respecting diverse political, societal and religious views. When established systems of authority are challenged by those who want to hold coercive forces to account for the exercise of state power, some governments attack and persecute those who are upholding human rights. Individuals pay a heavy price for raising issues that governments would prefer to remain hidden. Our charity plays a small part in supporting those who have paid that price – often being forced to relocate to another country and begin a wholly different life – all as a result of asserting human rights. But human rights are only real if people have the courage to assert them.

But we could do nothing without the generous and loyal support of our donors. Many thanks to every donor. Sadly, the demand for support from our charity continues and we promise to continue to do our best to use your donations to support prisoners of conscience in the best way we can in the coming year. Special thanks must go to the Trustees of The Lombard Charitable Trust who very generously donated a property to our charity in Seaford, which is presently occupied by a former beneficiary.

Whilst keeping our main focus on making grants to individuals who have been persecuted as a result of asserting human rights, we are tentatively exploring ways to support the community of human rights defenders more effectively as well as trying to improve conditions in the UK for those who flee here from persecution abroad. We hope this will increase the positive benefits the charity can deliver for those upholding human rights.

David Lock KC
CHAIR OF THE
TRUSTEE BOARD

Lives Transformed



Rania Obead Freedom of expression and democracy

and lecturer. During her university for its opposition to Omer Albashire's Arabia. dictatorship. The party organised many peaceful demonstrations However, the Sudanese government against the regime, which greatly would not let them escape peacefully. angered government forces. During a major protest, a close friend of 'The Sudanese national security herself:

'National Security Service members threw gas tears pumps and hit us... I was arrested and tortured for a day then at night'

This appalling treatment would not stop Rania's commitment to upholding human rights. When working to defend women's rights in Sudan years later, she was once again attacked and arrested for her activism. Although Rania's youngest daughter was only 7 months old at the time, security forces refused to release her:

'When I beg them to allow me to leave for her, they threatened me and said we will arrest all your daughters with you.'

Rania's husband was also an activist. He has been arrested eight times, Rania was a Sudanese activist tortured, and beaten, all for standing up for what's right. Fearing for their studies, Rania joined a political party and their family's lives, Rania and her called Democratic Front, well known husband decided to flee for Saudia

Rania was murdered. In the days continues threatening us. We that followed, other members of the receive many calls from the Sudan party were targeted, including Rania embassy telling us they will catch us and send us back to Sudan'

continuing, despite this move to human rights whilst re-qualifying. Saudia Arabia. Rania and her family young daughters.

in 2017, Rania was determined to from her home country: continue her activism, and give back to UK society. She decided 'No one would like to leave his to re-qualify, pursuing a PhD in country, leave his life and his environmental sustainability after memories, and most importantly his having worked as a lecturer in the family and friends. All refugees were field for 15 years, with the hopes of forced to leave their homes, where lecturing again in the UK. As Rania they had a life they knew and were needed financial support with used to. Where they have their links, achieving this goal, she reached out families, and friends who are always to PoC:

get any funds for my Ph.D. and as I live in Scotland am not eligible for your life in a totally different place, the PhD loan. PoC are paying my tuition fees each year since I started, a place for ourselves. without this grant I wouldn't be able to continue my studies. Now I am in the second year of my studies.'

Rania is now also a member of the Sudanese women union in the UK. and the Sudanese uprising support belonging. And more importantly, group in Edinburgh. She is passionate let us know that they are willing to about helping Sudanese people, and help us and what we go through and other refugees, to have their voices how much we are struggling to find heard. Without the PoC bursary our place in this country' grant, Rania would not have been

With threats from the government able to continue her work defending

had no choice but to come to the UK In a message to the supporters looking for a safe life for their three of PoC. Rania told us about her experience as a refugee, and how PoC has aided the difficult process When they finally settled in the UK of moving thousands of miles away

willing to help them when they need it. Many like me find it too difficult to 'Unfortunately, I didn't manage to adapt to the new place, culture, and system. It is too stressful to start but we are working too hard to find

> What PoC are doing is not just giving us financial support. They give us hope for a better future for us and for our families. This support is a bridge that helps us to integrate and feel



Sultan Haidari Journalist in Afghanistan

Sultan is an Afghan journalist living chief of the Taliban group in Kabul. in Kabul. Since 2001, he has worked with a number of media outlets in Afghanistan and is the Deputy Chairman of the Committee to Protect Journalists in the country. Sultan's commitment to defending at least three times that the freedom of expression and press has Taliban's intelligence is seeking the caused him to suffer years of abuse arrest of Hazar journalists, including and intimidation in Afghanistan:

'I have produced many programs my location regularly'. and written countless articles and reports on Afghanistan in which Speaking of his experience in hiding, I mostly criticised the situation Sultan describes how he and his of the country. In my career I was family are 'almost imprisoned' in always threatened and have been hiding. They have faced severe a target from different parties in mental illness while in hiding, Afghanistan because, as you know, with both of Sultan's daughters it is the most dangerous place for attempting suicide, and Sultan being a journalist'.

'I have been repeatedly threatened Having lost his livelihood, Sultan is by armed groups, the corruption in desperate need of assistance for mafia, and the drug mafia in him and his family. In 2022, Sultan

Despite the dangers of being a grant, covering the costs of food, journalist in Afghanistan, Sultan rent, and medical expenses. actively promotes human rights,

developing programs to support the rights of women, children, and religious and ethnic minorities after the Taliban takeover in 2021. Openly defending human rights under the Taliban is often a death sentence for people like Sultan. So, when he became aware of the Taliban searching houses after their takeover in 2021 to identify journalists and imprison them, he decided to move homes and flee with his family.

However, on September 8th, 2021, Sultan was found by the intelligence While reporting on women's rights protests, he was beaten and tortured by members of the regime.

'Since then, I have received reports myself, and that my name is on a list of 15 detainees, so I have to change

experiencing acute agoraphobia.

Afghanistan over the past 15 years.' reached out to PoC for help. We provided Sultan with a hardship relief



Lvdia Bursary

Lydia is currently pursuing her PhD in Law at Oxford University, is a judge of the High Court in Uganda and a Judge at the United Tribunals.

is an important cornerstone for opportunity to make a tangible the effective administration of contribution to the democratization justice in any jurisdiction. But what process of the world through its does this really mean in today's scholarship.' global village? It means judges

must think outside the boxes of their legal training, which may be out of touch with current realities. unlock their potential to learn new approaches and abandon those that are not effective. It is a duty call for judges to critically reflect on the oaths they make at inception and benchmark their actions against these oaths. Judges have to pay forward effective justice that translates into tangible action that the people they serve feel and appreciate. The breadth and depth of the judgements they write are irrelevant if they do not translate into tangible justice.

For judges to effectively execute their roles today, they ought to have bespoke training not only in their areas of expertise; they ought to train in the use of modern technology and artificial intelligence and tread the terrain of comparative jurisprudence to learn from other jurisdictions through continuous education. Through its bursaries. Prisoners of Conscience enhances independence of the judiciary and administration of justice by enabling such training and giving opportunity where it would be impossible. It empowers judges to take justice to the people Nations Residual Mechanism they take the oath to serve and sets for International Criminal the pace for enhanced democratic governance.

'The independence of the judiciary I am grateful to PoC for the



Ahmed M Saleh Freedom of expression and reporting

Ahmed is a Palestinian writer and drained. The next day, the process human rights defender. As freedom of interrogation began. of expression remains heavily upholding human rights.

In 2019. Ahmed was abducted by Hamas, a militant Palestinian Islamist Ahmed belongings.

a whole day until my nerves were Ahmed needed to be punished for

restricted in the West Bank and The officer told me that I was in this the Gaza Strip, Ahmed has been place because of my Facebook forced to pay the price for his work posts...I had denounced the arrest of my friends who were active in the cultural and human rights fields'

had written leaflets group that rules the Gaza strip. He condemning the Hamas' brutal was blindfolded and led to an iron treatment of activists and their caravan in the wilderness, whilst suppression of individual freedoms. Hamas officers confiscated all of his The officer in charge of his interrogation was 'very disturbed' by Ahmed's open support of 'I was placed in an iron caravan for human rights. He decided that

encouraging others to express their support after this arrest. He reached views freely.

'Hedecided to punish me by brutally psychological treatment. Though beating the face...I was bleeding this therapy is helping his mental from my nose and teeth. I don't wellbeing, Ahmed is still unable to know how long he investigated me work in his current condition. Ahmed because it is so painful. I hoped to reached out to PoC in December die...'

Ahmed was later moved to a cramped room, where he was unable We provided Ahmed with a hardship to sleep, eat or receive medical grant for basic essentials early in treatment for his injuries. He was 2023, covering the cost of medical only released after making forced care, food, and accommodation until confessions, and promising that he he gets back on his feet. would no longer participate in any human rights protests or produce any work criticising Hamas. Ahmed was considerably shaken after the terrifying ordeal:

'My arrest for the first time directly destroyed my future, depleted my abilities and made me have psychiatric illness, panic disorders, depression and blood pressure'

Despite the threat of further violence. Ahmed did not let the torture he endured silence him or stop his activism. After participating in a demonstration for human rights, Ahmed was arrested for a second time by the Internal Security Service of Hamas along with a group of other activists and jurists.

'We were subjected to the worst physical and psychological torture and left untreated. While after this time I also fell into severe depression'

Ahmed knew he needed to seek

out to a therapy foundation in Germany and began receiving 2022, in desperate need of financial support.



Joydeb Religious persecution

his early teens. Given that 91% of the fearful that this will be his fate. population of Bangladesh is Muslim, religious bigotry.

On 19th May 2019, Joydeb was targeted by a Muslim mob for his Joydeb reached out to PoC in posts:

shock.'

Joydeb's friends tried desperately to call the police. However, instead of protecting Joydeb when they arrived at the scene, the police merely watched the extremist group continue to torture him. To make matters worse. Joydeb was then arrested:

'They put me in jail for eighteen months without a trial. I was also booked under Bangladesh's draconian Digital Security Act 2019 accused of hurting religious sentiment.'

After eighteen months of jail, Joydeb was granted bail. However, with his official trial having now begun, Joydeb could face a prison term of 5-10 years. Simply for expressing Joydeb, a Bangladeshi student his religious beliefs online. Joydeb and blogger, started questioning could spend the next decade behind religious teachings and practice in bars. He has been forced into hiding,

Joydeb knew that his exploration 'I cannot move freely and I'm in of atheism and criticism of religion hiding as the extremists have would be controversial. However, vowed to kill me. In their view I he never would have imagined the have insulted Islam. In reality, in my horrors he would face after writing writings, I have only spoken about blog posts on secularism and social injustices, women's and children's rights, secularism, and religious fundamentalism.'

2022 for assistance. We awarded an emergency hardship grant for 'They attacked my hostel and I was accommodation and shelter while in brutally tortured all night. They use hiding which, along with assistance iron rods, sticks, hockey sticks to from other organizations, will help beat me. They also used electric Joydeb to continue expressing his beliefs without fear.



An update on Lina's story from 2021/22 Afghanistan family reunion

You may remember the story of Lina, 2022, Lina was still alone in hiding, a courageous human rights defender thousands of miles away from her from Afghanistan who was targeted loved ones and struggling to make by the Taliban for her activism. In ends meet by herself: February 2022, Lina sought refuge at what she thought was a safe house 'I am alone, my family and my after the Taliban began to crack down husband are in Kabul, we could violently on peaceful protestors. not support it because it is very However, the Taliban later ambushed expensive here, I can't afford it' the house and detained her. She was only released after making forced News of Lina's situation, and her confessions.

Lina had no choice but to flee supporters. Afghanistan and is now in hiding in a generosity, PoC were was able to neighbouring country.

of you, our supporters, we were able her in exile. to provide Lina with a hardship grant to help pay for her living expenses while in exile. However, at the end of

separation from her family, struck a chord with one of our bighearted Thanks to their send additional grants to Lina. We are delighted to report that these grants Due to the kindness and generosity have enabled Lina's husband to join

Package of Support

signposting for employability, legal to, and worked together with, other and therapy assistance, and the organisations such as Open Briefing provision of IT equipment for UK- who were able to provide physical based beneficiaries, our package protection and mental health support of support has evolved to include to Juliette while she was still in more activities to assist prisoners Uganda. We wrote letters of support of conscience in need. We placed to relevant authorities, NGOs and UN a particular focus on strengthening bodies, and eventually in March 2023 our collaborations with other wereceived the news that Juliette was organisations that share our mission, on her way to Canada. to achieve better and long-lasting results for the prisoners of conscience 'Thank you for the support and effort we support.

and human rights defenders to reach this past year. A notable example is that of Juliette, a Rwandan journalist Juliette is now re-establishing her life Rwandan military officer. Fearing meether immediate needs. for her safety and that of her family, Juliette decided to flee to Uganda In addition to targeted support for

Over the last year, in addition to relocate to Canada. We referred her

for my advocacy. I am now starting my journey to Canada and am now Supporting prisoners of conscience setting off to Entebbe Airport. Help me to thank all the team for sure if countries of safety and begin to it wasn't Prisoners of Conscience, re-establish their lives has been a I won't be rescued thank for setting central theme among our activities mefree, thank you for saving my life.'

who was repeatedly harassed for in exile in Ottawa - enrolled in English writing a critical investigative piece and French classes and for a Masters on the assassination of a former degree in journalism, while working to

where she lived precariously and individuals, we organised events continued to face both persecution to explore ways in which human and poverty, as Rwandan security rights defenders could be assisted: agents followed her there. With the - webinar with UNHCR and other help of PoC, Juliette was able to NGOs to explore how PoC could



"Thank you for providing a laptop. I use it for all my research and writing of my PhD thesis. My work is very much more convenient now. I am so grateful to PoC."

Lydia, Judge from Uganda and bursary recipient

assist human rights defenders reach countries of safety, particularly the UK - event at the Houses of Parliament co-hosted with the APPG for human rights focusing on women human rights defenders in theocratic autocracies and leading to further work aimed at creating a refugee scheme in the UK for human rights defenders, similar to the scheme created in Canada in 2021.

Our broader work to help prisoners of conscience to re-establish their lives in safety included:

- closer working with Together With Refugees, including social media activity on the Illegal Immigration
- assisting beneficiaries to expedite family reunion visas, including correspondence to the Home Secretary, Home Office and MPs
- increasing respite holidays in Jersey for human rights defenders and their families.
- working with lawvers who have had to flee to the UK on CVs. interview skills and opportunities to secure training contracts.

Package of support in 2022/23

- prisoners of conscience accessed our Package of support this year, bringing the total to 88. Of these:
- laptops provided
- referrals for legal/advisory, mental health therapy, English classes
- letters of support provided
- referred to the employability panel
- signed up for the online forum to share experiences to improve integration
- prisoners of conscience and their families provided with respite holidays in Jersey

Referral agencies in 2022/2023

Afghan and Central Asian Association Rights Hub Sheffield Hallam

Article 19 Eastern Africa Human Rights Focus Pakistan

Ateizm Dernegi (Association of Human Rights Watch - East Asia

Atheism, Turkey) Humanists International 2020

Breaking Barriers NIACRO

British Red Cross PAFRAS - Positive Action For

Canadian Journalists for Free Refugees And Asylum Seekers

Expression PEN - America

English Centre of International Pen RefuAid

Free from Fear/Azadi Charity Scottish Refugee Council

Freedom From Torture Rory Peck Trust

Freedom Now Traumatic Stress Clinic

Haringey Adult Learning Service, Waging Peace

Economic Regeneration, London Women's Academy for Leadership

Borough of Haringey and Politics

Helen Bamber Foundation Youth for Positive Change

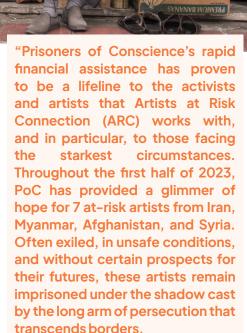
Helena Kennedy Centre Zimbabwe Peace Project

"The funding that Prisoners of Conscience allocated to the Rory Peck Trust has been crucial to supporting many freelance journalists who have suffered persecution and imprisonment because of their work. Freelance journalists have no institutional support or employment rights protections and rarely benefit from the training made available to staff iournalists. This makes them as vulnerable as activists or human rights defenders. The grants from PoC have helped to cover the costs of subsistence (rent and food). legal fees, and relocation.

The cooperation between our two organisations has gone beyond providing grants to journalists and includes non-financial support, such as providing recommendation letters to support applications for asylum or fellowships.

We are keen to maintain our partnership and coordination with PoC because we believe that together we reach out to and support more journalists, especially those who report from conflict zones or fragile states – environments that are increasingly hostile to their work."

Amel
The Rory Peck Trust



PoC's collaboration with ARC has provided the means for persecuted artists to endure dire situations, in their journeys towards safety and free expression."

Andrea Villa Franco
Protection Programs Assistant
at PEN America's ARC

Trustees and Patrons

We are fortunate to be supported by committed and experienced directors of our corporate trustee:

David Lock KC (Chair)

Diba Alikhani

Jonathan Taylor

Keith Davis

Mandira Sharma

Dr Roger Harrison

Dorothy Connell (resigned 18th November 2022)

Michael Morrison (appointed 26th January 2023)

Nora Mbagathi (appointed 28th June 2023)

As part of our governance rules, the directors of the corporate trustee are obliged to resign after 9 years of service.

In addition, we continue to benefit from the support of many distinguished patrons:

Lady Brooke Caroline Moorehead OBE

Lynn Carter Rabbi Julia Neuberger DBE

Lucy Chandler OBE Sir Geoffrey Nice QC

Dame Judi Dench DBE The Hon Jonathon Porritt

Lady Antonia Fraser DBE Lord Puttnam CBE

Rosamund Horwood-Smart QC Rev Dr Nicholas Sagovsky

Kurt & Caroline Jackson Sir Tom Stoppard OM

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC Zoë Wanamaker CBE

Neil Latchman

Our Funders

Everything we have achieved in the past year has only been made possible thanks to the ongoing support and generosity of our funders and donors. We offer our sincere thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support during these uncertain times.

In addition to the generosity of many private individual donors, we benefitted from the support of the following charitable trusts and foundations:

Allen Charitable Trust Oakdale Trust

Berni Charitable Trust Pat Newman Memorial Trust

CB & HH Taylor 1984 Trust Roger & Ingrid Pilkington Charitable Trust

DG Charitable Settlement Souter Charitable Trust

Eva Reckitt Trust Fund Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust Topinambour Trust

Jomati Foundation Treeside Trust

Lindsay Foundation WGFJM Charitable Trust

National Lottery Community Fund

With special thanks to The Joffe Charitable Trust for the last 3 years' of support to help strengthen our fundraising ability.

Our people

We are a small team of one-full time and 2 part-time staff members, a freelance accountant and several dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers.

Staff Gary Allison, Director

Joanna Pitta, Grants and Support Manager

 $Kirsty\,Bennett,\,Grants\,and\,Support\,Manager\,\hbox{\tiny (resigned\,in\,January\,2023)}$

Emily Cray, Communications Officer Kathleen Moss, External Accountant

 $Kevin\,Taylor-McKnight,\,Philanthropy\,Manager\,\hbox{\tiny (resigned\,in\,October\,2022)}$

Volunteers Daniele Chiarantini

Samuel Hutman Amy Mitchell Jack Woollands Rajeshwari Machender Leonie Williams

Rowen O'Neill

Consolidated accounts

Statement of Financial Activities for the period ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
INCOME:	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies	322,510	17,200	225,000	564,710	340,544
Income from investments	433	-	-	433	11
TOTALINCOME	322,943	17,200	225,000	565,143	340,555
EXPENDITURE ON:	£	£	£	£	£
Raising funds	51,338	26,062	-	77,400	52,787
Charitable activities	271,487	27,922	-	299,409	264,639
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	322,825	53,984	-	376,809	317,426
NETINCOME/ (EXPENDITURE)	118	(36,784)	225,000	188,334	23,129
Transfer between funds	60,418	(418)	(60,000)	-	-
Net movement in funds	60,536	(37,202)	165,000	188,334	23,129
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS	23,702	45,262	60,000	128,964	105,835
Total funds brought forward					
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	£84,238	£8,060	£225,000	£317,298	£128,964

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
FIXED ASSETS	£	£
Tangible assets	225,000	-
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	53,864	47,620
Cash at bank and in hand	92,057	128,572
	145,921	176,192
CREDITORS: Amounts failing due within one year	(53,623)	(47,228)
NETASSETS	317,298	128,964
FUNDS		
Restricted income funds	8,060	45,262
Designated income funds	225,000	60,000
Unrestricted income funds General reserve	84,238	23,702
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS	317,298	128,964

The summary financial statements are extracted from the independently examined financial statements. The opinion on the full financial statements was not qualified and they were approved by the trustees on 28TH June 2023 and submitted to the Charity Commission. Copies of the full financial statements, including the independent examiner's report, can be obtained by written request from the charity's registered office: PO Box 61044, London SE11UP

David Lock KC

CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEE BOARD

P Morrello ACA
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER



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