



Executive summary



Barbara Roche, Chair of Praxis

I am proud of how Praxis stepped up in 2020, adapting at pace to deliver vital services throughout the pandemic. Staff, volunteers and service users made Herculean efforts and by working together Praxis has maintained community and fostered solidarity, despite the challenges to human connection. We worked to ensure those at the sharp end were not forgotten. We made over 1000 phone calls to people identified as at risk, to ensure they had support. Our advice team helped 2,442 people and we doubled our group sessions – working online to keep everyone safe. All this required creativity, flexibility and rapid digital transformation. We are very grateful for the generous support of our funders who funded technology and data to combat digital exclusion.

Responding to the demands of the pandemic has not blown us off-course, though we know its impact will reverberate over time. During the year trustees undertook a strategic review and have developed a new plan to guide us for the next 5 years. We will use our expertise, energy and passion to have national impact. We will expand our training and influencing work and we will campaign for change. People with lived experience of the immigration system will be the driving force and at the heart of this work; we know that policy change is the only long-term solution. We will continue to deliver expert legal advice and welfare support and we will collaborate with law firms, universities and allies in the sector to maximise capacity and impact. Despite our successes we know there is much more to be done to challenge an unjust system and we will face those challenges together.



Sally Daghlian OBE,
Praxis Chief Executive Officer

In January 2020 Covid-19 was not on Praxis' risk register. As the world was turned upside down, some felt the pain more than most, and continue to do so. The impact has been disproportionate with black communities experiencing some of the worst effects, both in health terms and economic hardship. People with insecure immigration status and those excluded from the welfare safety net were at risk of being left behind. Covid-19 made stark the injustices created by an immigration system that leaves thousands of people struggling to find a route to safety.

Many people became more isolated as community networks and services disappeared. We provided welfare and support packages, ensured people had access to accurate information and healthcare. Praxis and partner agencies lobbied to ensure that the 'Everybody In' initiative opening hotels to people experiencing homelessness really did include everybody, regardless of immigration status. We were then able to provide critical immigration advice and interventions to provide lasting routes out of destitution.

The injustice of the iniquitous No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition has been widely exposed. During the year, Praxis began a new campaign in partnership with experts by experience against the widespread use of this condition. This year has shown the power of community support and solidarity and how the public can come together to create change. However dark the world seems, we can make a difference by coming together and I would like to thank all our partners, funders and supporters for making our work possible. Together we can do more!

Aminat, Service User Representative

In 2020 everything became harder. Migrants are already in a precarious position, and lockdown made it worst – and there is no escape. The needs are stronger than before, for example for people who need to renew their leave to remain it has become even harder to come up with thousands of pounds to pay the Home Office fees when they lost their job. To get support – including for mental health – has become extra hard if not impossible.

Praxis has been incredible. They made sure that the connection is still there – for example, for groupwork they've doubled the number of sessions, it's something to look forward to every week for people who have become even more restless. And for people who received advice, they were able to keep in touch with their caseworker via email, phone or text. Praxis has gone the extra mile to make people feel comfortable and connected.

We have all gone through lockdown. Now everyone knows what it feels not to be free – lockdown

might feel like prison, and this is what a lot of migrants have gone through, even before the pandemic. With Covid-19, people are constantly worried about catching the virus. For migrants, it's constantly being worried about police, destitution, homelessness, visa.

Now that all people have been through similar situations, we hope that they will show more empathy towards migrants, because now they know what it means not to be free.

We want to change the system that keeps us trapped. Empathy leads to change, so if we want to change the law we need to create more empathy, so that then people on the street will support our campaigning calls and put pressure to change the laws.

“Praxis has gone the extra mile to make people feel comfortable and connected.”

Aminat



Together, we supported Chaneti to access safety, and rebuild her life

Born in Jamaica, Chaneti was left with a guardian in the UK when she was three years old and grew up with England as her home. At nineteen, after attending school in the UK her whole life, Chaneti was very excited to apply for university. But when she applied, she found out she did not have valid leave to remain in the UK. This meant that she could not access higher education. It also meant that when she left school she would be locked out of all normal support – including job seekers' support, healthcare and housing.

Luckily, Chaneti found Praxis. Neither Chaneti nor her guardian could afford to pay the £2,052 for the Home Office visa application fee. Praxis assisted her to apply for a Home Office fee waiver, which was wrongly refused by the Home Office. We worked with a law firm and successfully challenged this decision through a Judicial Review, enabling us and Chaneti to submit an application for her leave to remain.

Gaining permission to stay in the UK was so important to Chaneti – because it would enable her

to access student finance and higher education. After a few months we were pleased to receive notification that the request had been granted by the Home Office.

Chaneti is now able to build her life – she can stay in the UK – which has always been her home – indefinitely, access the support she needs and to go to university.

“Thanks to Praxis I regained my freedom and a sense of belonging in the UK.”
Chaneti



*Some people's names have been changed to protect their anonymity

On the frontline

In 2020 the Government's response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review acknowledged 'institutional failings at the heart of the Home Office'. On the frontline, Praxis has seen the human impact of these failings every day as hostile environment policies and cuts to frontline services have left people without access to the advice and support they need and forced them into needless poverty and crisis.

Covid-19 has both exposed and exacerbated these issues. Increasingly, people have presented to Praxis facing destitution and homelessness, vulnerability to declining health and severe safeguarding issues, while lockdown has isolated them from the communities and networks that could help them.

Many people had been living in poverty before the pandemic started and yet received no public support because of insecure immigration status or the No Recourse to Public Funds condition on their visa. Lockdowns, loss of work, reduced access to services and the closure of community projects left people hungry and without essentials. People have struggled to meet Home Office requirements in lockdown with reduced access to advice, support, and the documents they need. Delays in decision making by the Home Office has extended periods of destitution. Digital exclusion, isolation and language barriers have intensified these issues, impacting mental health and compounding existing traumas.



Illustration: Javie Huxley

In April 2020 Praxis responded quickly to Covid-19: we redesigned services to ensure we could meet changing needs while maintaining the safety of staff, service users and wider public.

- We quickly **adapted the way we work across services**: we established Covid-secure protocols and undertook a digital transformation to ensure safe, remote work. At the same time, we kept our office running with a skeleton crew to send and receive key documents to the Home Office and respond to emergencies.
- Our **advice services were adapted to be delivered remotely**, providing expert immigration, housing, benefit, healthcare and welfare advice at full capacity over the phone, making arrangements for face-to-face appointments where essential for signing documents.
- Our **wellbeing and resilience groups were moved online**, and we **doubled the number of sessions** provided to meet increased need.
- We **launched our training provision online**, supporting local authorities, homelessness organisations, hospitals, grassroots organisations and schools to better identify and address the needs of at-risk migrants.
- We **implemented new protocols within our housing projects** to ensure they were Covid-19 safe and provided extra support for residents.
- We **delivered vital, modified services and advice to people experiencing homelessness**, supporting access to emergency accommodation, and **providing immigration advice within 'Everybody In' hotels**.
- We **launched a new Covid Inclusion Project**, contacting those most at risk, and conducting triage needs assessments to ensure access to food, healthcare, accommodation, guidance and support.
- We **worked with partners in the sector to highlight the impact of Covid-19** on migrants at risk, and advocate for their needs.

“Everybody at Praxis is so wonderful, whatever they've done for me I'll never forget it in my whole life... even if we couldn't meet, they always tried their best to help all of us.”

Lucy



2,442

PROVIDED ADVICE TO 2,442 PEOPLE

Advice

In April 2020 as the UK went into its first lockdown, Praxis moved our advice services online, operating at full capacity. Expert advisers worked closely with individuals remotely, supporting them to understand their options, delivering casework, advocating on their behalf and ensuring access to the immigration, housing, benefits, healthcare and family advice.

With emergency response funding from The Coronavirus Community Fund and Respond and Adapt, we launched The Covid Inclusion Project making 1,160 welfare calls to those most at risk and conducting triage needs assessments to ensure that they had access to the guidance, support and information they needed to live safely.

In September we launched a new destitution service, providing hardship grants and referrals into complementary services. We dedicated resources to monitoring and evaluating our response, analysing emerging trends and consulting people who have accessed our services to ensure that our work is rooted in their changing needs. Throughout we supported people to understand their rights and entitlements and advocate for themselves.

“My immigration matter was solved within three months... before [I came to] Praxis [there was] Covid and no one, nobody helped me and my children, I was totally helpless.”

Ida



13,976

WE PROVIDED 13,976 NIGHTS OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION TO 58 PEOPLE.

Providing safe accommodation

In 2020 our award-winning housing project continued to be a lifeline for women and children at risk. This year 29 adults and 29 children stayed in Praxis accommodation, with access to specialist advice, casework and support to enable them to find sustainable pathways out of destitution. As a result of our intervention, 13 families and three single women were able to leave the project with secure immigration status and access to statutory support.

“When I go in the Praxis house I feel peaceful, one by one everything is solved.”

Rabia



Wellbeing

This year at Praxis we delivered four groups: Brighter Futures, a group for 16 – 24 year olds delivered with Kazzum Arts; WINGS, a group of mothers and their children; GIANTS a space for migrant men who are fighting isolation and poor mental health; and Language of Wellbeing, a group for women to build social connections through yoga practice and English learning, delivered with Globe Foundation.

In response to Covid-19 we moved our group work online, doubling the number of sessions in the first lockdown, to meet increased need. With support from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Children in Need and the Coronavirus Community Fund, we delivered 59 tablets and smartphones to members to reduce digital exclusion, ensuring that families could access the groups online and children could keep up with school work and people who had previously been excluding from accessing technology had support to connect online.

Throughout the pandemic, we provided additional 1:1 calls to members to ensure they had access to the support and advice they needed to live safely. In 2020 we provided 92 care packages including hygiene essentials, wellbeing products for parents and education activities such as books, games, and pens and colouring pencils for children. At Christmas our volunteers delivered 88 boxes of Christmas presents to children eagerly waiting at windows for Santa.

“Praxis has been incredible to make sure that the connection is still there... group work is there for us, and it's something to look forward to... That's such an incredible thing.”

Aminat



97%

97% OF MEMBERS FROM PRAXIS' GROUPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FOR MOTHERS FEEL LESS ISOLATED



200+

WE SUPPORTED OVER 200 PEOPLE THROUGH GROUPS

Expanding our reach

Immigration policies and people's entitlements are complex and frequently changing, while the landscape of services, especially in the context of Covid-19, is hard to navigate, making it difficult for people to secure their rights and access the support they need. In 2020 at Praxis we worked with partners to advocate for better systems and provision during the crisis for people subject to immigration control or with insecure status.



STAR partnership: unlocking safety

In 2020 we expanded our reach by joining the STAR project (**Supporting Tenancies, Accommodation and Reconnections**) – an innovative partnership led by Shelter and in partnership with Thames Reach, Stonewall Housing and St. Mungo's, and funded by London Councils.

Through expert, independent legal advice and casework we made sure that people facing homelessness across London could obtain the vital documents necessary to access safety, as well as employment, housing, healthcare and specialist support. Through this partnership, since September 2020 more than 200 people have received immigration advice.

Working in partnership

In 2020 at Praxis we continued our partnerships with leading homelessness organisations, providing an essential legal lifeline for people experiencing homelessness by providing specialist immigration advice. We delivered innovative projects across London with Crisis, the Connection at St. Martin's, Pathways and St Mungo's and joined a pan-London partnership led by Shelter. We provide expert, specialist immigration advice and support within these projects, while delivering ongoing training to support homelessness organisations to better understand, and holistically address the barriers faced by migrants experiencing homelessness.



400+

WE UPSKILLED MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE WORKING FOR 150+ ORGANISATIONS

Training

Our training work promotes innovative solutions and shares knowledge and good practice, while supporting organisations to understand the complex needs of migrants and the frequently changing landscape of services and entitlements. In 2020 Praxis delivered training to more than 400 people in over 150 organisations to increase knowledge and capacity in identifying and resolving the risks faced by people who have migrated.

“I think the training sort of wakes you up to the horrors of the system, and then when you suddenly see that play out in front of you with a client, that wakes you up even more. What would this person do if they didn't have someone beside them fighting for them, helping them stay calm, deciphering complicated letters if English isn't their first language?”

Lucy, training attendee

“It has changed my life. [Praxis' advisor] did everything for me, he was very supportive. He was a godsend. He has changed my life.”

Ivor



276

WE PROVIDED VITAL ADVICE TO 276 PEOPLE ACCOMMODATED AS PART OF THE EVERYBODY IN SCHEME.

'Everybody In'

Praxis has worked tirelessly over many years to find solutions for migrants experiencing homelessness. As the UK entered its first lockdown we advocated to ensure migrants were included in the 'Everybody In' initiative and then facilitated a coalition of six frontline organisations, led by Crisis, championing a model which included the provision of immigration advice to support destitute migrants sheltering in hotels. This model was successfully adopted across all 11 hotels funded by the Greater London Authority, where we supported 276 people, offering advice to secure long term routes out of homelessness.

“I wanted to give my personal thanks to you and everyone at Praxis for the amazing work you are doing to support vulnerable migrants in London during the COVID-19 emergency. Without your help, the task of providing the necessary specialist advice and support for migrant rough sleepers at such short notice would not be possible.”

Tom Copley, Deputy London Mayor for Housing and Residential Development

Speaking up



➤ **At Praxis we support people to speak out on the issues that affect them, challenging negative perceptions of migration and influencing those in power to create lasting, systemic change to policy and practice.**

Speaking up in the House of Lords...

Members of Praxis' youth group Brighter Futures were invited to speak at the House of Lords Covid19 Select Committee, to share their views on how to better build back society post Covid-19. They used this platform to advocate for a future where people are not discriminated against on the basis of where they or their parents were born, and where everyone has the chance to achieve their full potential. The group

“ I knew my voice would get heard, regardless of what was going on in my life.”

Maya

subsequently worked together in a series of workshops to create and curate their lockdown art and reflections into a collection entitled: 'A Migrant Covid Journal: A Reflection on Selected Pieces of Covid Art from Young Migrants'.

“ Access to a safety net should not be a privilege but a basic human right.”

WINGS members

...And in the House of Commons

Members of Praxis' groups were invited to speak at two different events hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on No Recourse to Public Funds. Group members spoke about the impact of NRPF on their lives. Members of WINGS, the group of mothers, later turned their contribution into a series of blogs, where they spoke of the intersectionality between hostile environment policies and structural racism.

Our NRPF Campaign: Ensure everyone has access to a safety net

At Praxis we believe that everyone should be able to access support when they are in need, regardless of their immigration status. However, the No Recourse to Public Funds condition prevents many people from accessing state-funded support when they're in crisis.

Evidence shows this policy has devastating consequences: it traps people into a cycle of poverty, leaves children hungry, has a disproportionate impact on women, people of colour and people with disabilities, and it leaves survivors of domestic abuse unprotected. The pandemic has amplified the effects of this policy, hitting those who were already the most vulnerable, hardest.

With support from Trust for London, in 2020 Praxis started work on a campaign co-produced with people with lived experience of the immigration system to challenge the NRPF condition. This campaign aims to a) build a movement for the abolition of NRPF b) create lived experience leaders for change c) improve local authority practice in working with people with NRPF and d) secure commitment to change from decision makers and influencers. We will collaborate with people across and outside the migration sector to synchronise campaigning efforts, gather stories and data to disseminate and align on messaging and priorities.

...In the media

In 2020 a Brighter Futures member was featured in a BBC News article on the barriers faced by those who are young and undocumented, which was engaged with by over 1 million people. A member of Brighter Futures followed this with an interview on Radio 1 Extra podcast hosted by BBC.



Replying to @MayorofLondon



Thank you to the brave young Londoners of @WeBelong19 and @Brighter_Praxis who spoke up about their experiences in this interview, and are advocating for a fairer system for all undocumented young people.

12:15 PM · Jan 28, 2020 · Twitter Web App

“We will continue the fight”

Covid is affecting migrants more than other people – because of No Recourse to Public Funds, migrants can't get help even during the pandemic, we have fewer resources; it's making people homeless; it's giving mental illnesses. And for people seeking asylum, all they can do is sit at home, they don't have internet, they can't work, they can't do anything.

The world should be different, whether you are a migrant or not, the same rules should apply to everyone. Why can't we get support when we need it? Why can't we work if we are able to?

Many people don't know about what we go through, it's not that they hate migrants, it's just that they don't know what's going on, and when you talk to them about our lives they are so surprised – it's so important to educate, and we won't stop doing it.

We will continue the fight – we will campaign to end NRPF, we will write articles, we will educate other people. We need to educate anyone who can help us enable change.”

Member of Praxis' campaign group on NRPF

A Peek into Praxis



Lesly, Campaigns Manager

“As the Campaigns Manager, I am building a campaign against No Recourse to Public Funds together with people with lived experience of the immigration system - I was particularly keen to join Praxis because I wanted to support people to campaign on issues directly affecting them.

Since joining Praxis I have learned a lot about how the immigration system is set to push people into poverty and criminalise them. I have met people who are incredibly resilient in the face of injustice and learned from them about the changes they want to see.

I hope that our new campaign will empower people with lived experience, raise awareness and mobilise many to take action and create positive change. For when we rebuild back after Covid, I hope for a more caring society, one that is welcoming to all regardless of where we come from.”

Sean, Volunteer

“I found out about Praxis through their housing work, and I was drawn to them because they put the voices of the people they work with at the centre of what they do.

As a volunteer, I did only one day in the office before lockdown was imposed. Since then I have been calling people that Praxis had previously supported to see how they were doing, making sure they knew how to keep safe and offering support when needed. It has been impressive to see how Praxis responded to lockdown. For example, through these calls we found out what unique difficulties people were facing because of lockdown and provided support.

Hearing about the extreme difficulties many people have been facing has been particularly challenging. It was great to be able to offer some help and have a positive impact, even just by having a conversation and say that we are not alone, while looking for more adequate solutions.”



Connie, Trustee

“Before I joined the board, I had known Praxis as an excellent service provider for a long time and I supported its mission and values wholeheartedly. I wanted to join Praxis' board to use my personal energies and skills to combat the many forces negatively and unjustly affecting migrants in Britain today.

As a trustee, I'm the housing and homelessness champion: I work closely with the Head of Services on some of Praxis' projects with a housing focus. In the coming year we are going to use the learnings from our award-winning housing project to develop a new welfare programme and ensure that people can access the support they need, including housing.

Praxis is an expert in migrants' rights and I really like how we use that expertise twice over: in practice, to support people facing destitution or homelessness; and in campaigning, to end the injustice of our current immigration system.”



Jagruiti, Service User Representative

“I first came to Praxis when my social worker brought me to the Praxis house, before I didn't know about them, and now I love everything about Praxis - there is nothing I don't like. After I moved into the Praxis house I started going to WINGS group and got help with my immigration issues. That was in 2017. Now I still go to WINGS because there are very beautiful mums there, I volunteer with other groupwork activities, and I am part of the campaigning group to abolish No Recourse to Public Funds - I will speak about the things we want to see change.

I have also been elected to be a Service User Representative. As a rep, I am going to join the board meetings to speak about what Praxis needs to do to and what they can learn from other organisations to support even more migrants.”





Financial Year 2019-20

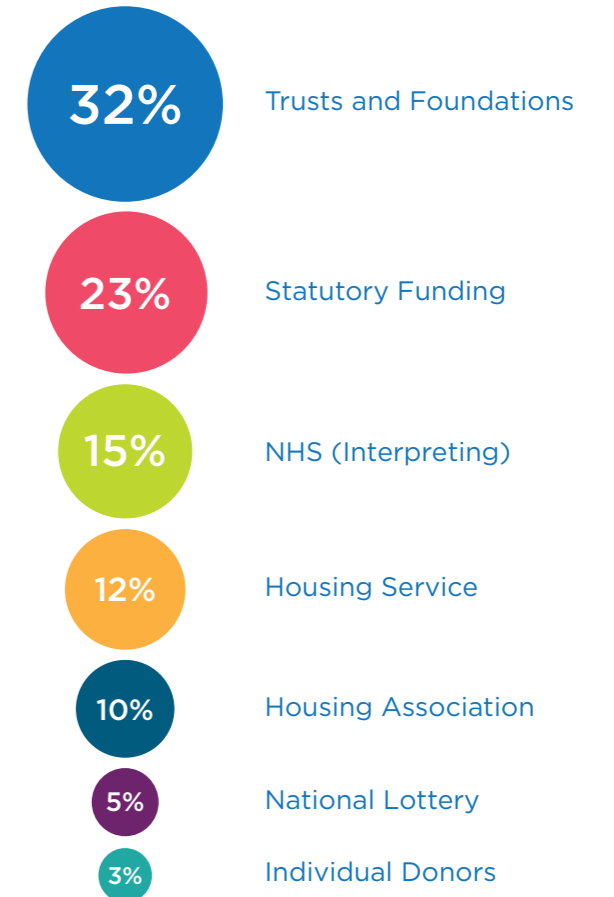
Total income of the Charity for the year was £2,007,735 (2018-19: £1,902,163) and total expenditure amounted to £1,834,495 (2018-19: £1,596,799).

Overall there was a surplus for the charity of £173,240. This was a successful year for the charity, building on the strong performance in 2019 and further increasing reserves to support the organisation's future growth and sustainability. At 31 March 2020, the charity held £715,096 in unrestricted reserves, of which £190,131 was designated for specific purposes including a transition from our long term current premises. The remaining £524,965 of unrestricted reserves are for general purposes, and given the level of uncertainty caused by Covid-19 in March 2020 were at a level that the trustees deemed reasonable to ensure financial security for the Charity through a period of extreme uncertainty. The reserve levels are reviewed annually by Trustees.

CHARITY BALANCE SHEET 31 MARCH 2020

Fixed assets	£
Tangible fixed assets	33,280
Current assets	
Debtors	278,841
Cash in bank and in hand	730,880
Creditors	
Amounts falling due within one year	(166,790)
Net current assets	842,931
Total assets less current liabilities	876,211
Creditors	
Amounts falling due after one year	(40,594)
Net assets	835,617
Charity funds	
Restricted income funds	121,061
Unrestricted income funds	
General reserves	524,965
Designated	190,131
Total charity funds	836,157

£2,007,735 Total income 2019-20



£1,834,495 Total expenditure 2019-20



We could have not done it without you.

Nobody expected 2020. It has been a difficult year for everyone and the impact on people at-risk navigating the challenges of the immigration system has been enormous.

Yet, with the support of partners, funders, supporters and volunteers we have been able to respond, together. Thank you for the difference your support and partnership has powered.

Our main funders 2019-20

AB Charitable Trust
Act for Change
ARHAG (DCLG)
Aurum Charitable Trust
BBC-Children in Need
Ben & Jerry's Foundation
East End CAB (LBTH-MSG)
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
French Huguenot Church of London Charitable Trust
Greater London Authority
Henry Smith Foundation
Homeless Link
ISD Innovation Fund
John Daghlian
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Newham
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
London Catalyst (Samaritans Fund)
London Churches Refugee Fund
London Legal Support Trust (LLST)
Migration Foundation
Milton Damerel Charitable Trust
Oak Foundation
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Pilgrim Trust
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
The Allen & Overy Foundation
The National Lottery Community Fund
The Dischma Charitable Trust
The Souter Charitable Trust
Tudor Trust
Wendy Quill

Thanks to each of the organisations, local authorities, charities and companies who have collaborated with us.

Allen & Overy
Amiens Choir
Anchor House
Asylum Aid
Babel's Blessing
Bindmans LLP
British Red Cross
Browne Jacobson LLP
Commonweal Housing Crisis
Croydon Quaker Meeting House
Culture Seeds
Depaul
Deighton Pierce Glynn
Doctors of the World
East End CAB
FEANTSA
Free Movement
Garden Court Chambers
Glass Door Homeless Charity
Growth
Hackney Migrants' Centre
Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre
Homeless Link
Hosts with Refugees at Home and Room for Refugees
Housing Justice
iMix
Irene Taylor Trust
JCWI
Just Fair
Kazzum
London Catholic Workers
Look Ahead
Members of Praxis groups
Missionaries of Charity
NACCOM
On Road Media
Ourmala
No Second Night Out
Pathways
Pan Intercultural Arts
PICUM
Praxis Service User Forum and Service User Representatives
Project 17
Public Interest Law Centre
Ramfel
Refugee Action
Refugees at Home
Shelter
Signature Law LLP
Single Homeless Project
Southwark Law Centre
St Martin-in-the-fields Charity
St Mungo's
Thames Reach
The Connection at St Martin's
The Magpie Project
The Relief Group: Mobile Creche
The Unity Project
Timebank UK
Together with Migrant Children
Tower Hamlets Law Centre
TH Community Advice Network
United Reformed Church
Women's Environmental Network



Trustees of the charity during 2020

- Barbara Roche, Chair
- Pasha Coupet Michaelsen, Vice Chair
- Raphael Perret, Treasurer
- Tom Brand
- Martin Cosarinsky Campos
- Connie Cullen
- Ruby Giblin
- Dylan Matthews
- Kemi Ogunlana (appointed November 2020)
- Jumana Rahman
- Elijah Sambo (left November 2020)

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