



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

		Period start date			Period end date		
From	Day	Month	Year	To	Day	Month	Year
	08	11	2019		07	11	2020

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

Charity's principal address

Postcode

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Araba Taylor			
2	Jayne Macpherson			
3	Katie Welbourn		15/01/2020	Existing trustees
4	Kate Breed		03/07/2020	Existing trustees
5	Sarah Chatwin		03/07/2020	Existing trustees
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Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document <small>(eg. trust deed, constitution)</small>	Constitution
How the charity is constituted <small>(eg. trust, association, company)</small>	Foundation
Trustee selection methods <small>(eg. appointed by, elected by)</small>	Appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You may choose to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

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Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

To promote the relief of need for the homeless or vulnerably housed by providing advice, advocacy and support.

Vulnerably housed is taken to include those who struggle to afford their accommodation and so are at risk of falling into rent arrears, those who struggle to manage their tenancy without support, those who live in properties where the physical condition significantly effects the wellbeing of the occupants, those who experience, or are at risk of experiencing abuse or harassment in their home and those where the landlord has not followed due procedures whilst renting out the property. These factors in

turn place the occupants at risk of homelessness or living in unacceptable conditions.

JustUs provides support and advocacy to the adult population of Bedford Borough who are socially excluded. This includes adults with dependent children who will indirectly benefit.

We include within our understanding of socially excluded those people who are living with mental health issues, people with substance misuse problems, people who are homeless or face the threat of homelessness, people who do not enjoy a basic standard of housing, people with learning difficulties, people fleeing violence (domestic or otherwise) and people facing prejudice and discrimination.

Support and advocacy includes anything that helps socially excluded people receive fair and ethical treatment from those that are duty-bound to provide it.

Because of the nature and enormity of social exclusion, we have initially focussed our efforts on homeless people, or those facing the threat of homelessness, and our priorities lie with securing accommodation and getting the wrap-around support that should go with that accommodation for such people. We recognise that homeless people are one of the most marginalised people groups in society and also recognise that the issues that go alongside homelessness often include the other issues mentioned in our objects. Many homeless people are failing to get the legal duty of assistance that is owed to them from Local Authority and other housing providers and are being overlooked when it comes to housing them in independent living accommodation. These individuals are poorly represented and may lack the knowledge around housing law to effectively argue their own case. JustUs challenges the Local Authority and other housing providers to ensure that these individuals are treated according to the law.

The trustees are aware of, and have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You may choose to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

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Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Casework:

In our last financial year JustUs supported 148 individuals from 82 households. These households comprised of 96 adults and 52 children.

From these 82 households:

- 34 have moved into new homes, with 4 of these (bar 1) managing to secure their own accommodation with the support of JustUs.
- 16 remain in temporary accommodation with the guarantee of a new home.
- 6 moved into supported accommodation as a personal preference
- 5 decided to remain in the housing that they were already living in
- 3 moved back in with their families
- 1 was a victim of cuckooing so was supported to move out of area
- 1 was a victim of domestic abuse so was supported to move out of area
- 2 were supported to have their eviction prevented
- 1 was supported to have their homelessness prevented so remained in supported accommodation
- 1 had no local connection but was supported into emergency accommodation
- 7 chose not to continue to pursue the homeless application that they were being supported with
- 1 was supported into temporary accommodation but returned to prison
- 1 was referred to JustUs too late in the homeless application decision making process so remains housed with the referrer in emergency accommodation, and
- 3 were supported but were found not to be homeless.

Casework Items of note:

Although the breakdown above only appears to show 1 household as being supported following domestic abuse, there were a further 13 households, within the 31 reported (housed) households, that were also fleeing domestic abuse.

1 lone child (a 17-year-old) was referred to us after 2 other homeless organisations failed to recognise clear child safeguarding issues.

JustUs picked up 7 referrals from other organisations that had struggled to support their clients through the homeless and/or housing register application process and gave up once they encountered any difficulties.

11 households were gatekept from applying as homeless on their first (lone) approach to the Local Authority, and 1 within this number was gatekept twice, once on a lone approach and once again even though they had support. 6 households also had their Housing Register applications gatekept.

8 households were denied the temporary accommodation that was owed to them by the Local Authority. JustUs got 6 of these decisions overturned whilst 2 households chose to remain in their current accommodation. JustUs also managed to get 4 issues surrounding the suitability of temporary accommodation resolved, 4 issues of the suitability or affordability of permanent accommodation resolved, and 1

issue of the suitability of temporary accommodation unresolved as the household disengaged with support.

JustUs got 2 Local Authority 'minded to' decisions overturned, and 10 varying 'final' decisions overturned on review, got 6 complaints fully upheld (with 1 not upheld) and 3 complaints partially upheld. JustUs also secured financial compensation for 4 households because of these complaints.

JustUs was able to get 2 issues with a housing association resolved as well, one of which has resulted in a policy change for both the Housing Association involved and for the Local Authority.

Training:

This year JustUs has delivered 12 sessions of its own self-developed training (An Introduction to Homelessness Legislation) to 201 delegates. These delegates included staff from:

- Other homeless organisations
- Mental health services (treatment and residential)
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- The MP's Office
- Offender rehabilitation services
- Drug and alcohol treatment services
- Drug and alcohol peer mentoring services
- Housing associations
- Probation
- 5 Local Authorities (front line housing staff and managers)
- Bedfordshire Police
- Women's Services
- The British Red Cross
- Young adults' services
- Domestic Abuse services
- The NHS
- Pre tenancy and floating support services
- Migrants and refugee services
- Families' services
- Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus, and
- Age UK

Other delegates included:

- The elected Mayor
- A local journalist
- Local councillors
- The curate from St Paul's Church
- A GP, and
- Solicitors from a Housing Law firm

JustUs has also piloted its own Data Protection training which remains a work-in-progress, are developing training specific to domestic abuse and homelessness, and aim to develop training around substance use and homelessness within the next year.

Social Media:

JustUs' Better Homelessness Practice Facebook Group now has 350 people participating within it, and acts as an effective way of sharing knowledge to improve everyone's ability to respond to homelessness.

We have added to our homelessness advisory YouTube clips, which delivers conversation pieces to the wider public, and for our Christmas event JustUs will be hosting a virtual seminar, Homelessness: Rights, Wrongs and Remedies. The lead speaker, Jan Luba QC, is one of the very top authorities on homelessness law in the country and will be presenting a very engaging view on homelessness. He will be joined by another 2 barristers, Sarah Steinhardt and our trustee, Araba Taylor, Expert Link's CEO David Ford and JustUs caseworker Shannon Johnstone for a panel discussion.

Campaigning:

Our focus this year has been around the blanket policies that housing associations operate that exclude people from accessing their properties if they have current rent arrears; in all cases but particularly if those rent arrears have been accrued as a result of fleeing domestic abuse. One housing association has agreed to change its policy because of JustUs challenging it and the Local Authority has now amended its Allocations Policy. This campaign remains a work-in-progress as other housing associations still need to follow suit.

We are also exploring ways of responding to Local Authority consultations, having hosted two forums, one to discuss the Housing Strategy and the other to discuss Street Drinking. 2021 will be significant as both the Local Authority's Housing Allocation Policy and Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed.

Funding:

This year JustUs secured funding from:

The Harpur Trust Main Grant (£88,000 over 3 years)
The Harpur Trust Coronavirus Fund (£7,500)
The Rotary Club (£750)
Alpkit (£100)
The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Coronavirus Fund (£3,000)
SoupFest (£1,000)
Tesco Coronavirus Fund (£1,000)
Neighbourly Community Fund (£400)
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
Covid-19 Homeless Response Fund (£10,000)

As a result, JustUs have now been able to recruit a new part-time caseworker and have filled an administration/operations post.

JustUs continues to do a lot of unpaid work, with a recorded 161 hours work done by our volunteer and many more (into the hundreds) unrecorded hours done by our caseworkers.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

At a meeting of the Trustees held on 31st January 2018 Trustees considered what level of funding the charity should hold in reserve. It was agreed that JustUs would hold 1 month's core costs and 6 month's operational costs in reserve up until the review date of January 2019. Based upon current levels of expenditure (1 month's core costs of £120 and 6 month's operational costs of £2,180) £2,300 would be held in reserve.

The Trustees acknowledge the seemingly large difference between core costs and operational costs held in reserve. The reason for this is that JustUs is best able to fulfil its Charitable Objectives by placing an emphasis on its operational costs rather than its core costs i.e. JustUs would still be able to maintain its level of support to its beneficiaries with a limited amount of core cost capital but would struggle to do so with depleted operational capital.

The Trustees consider on a regular basis the levels of funding that it holds in reserve and how this funding will be used to benefit its beneficiaries. Therefore, at a meeting held on 6th November 2019 It was decided that, based on increased levels of expenditure (1 month's core costs of £315 and 6 month's operational costs of £5,985) that subsequently the reserves be increased by £4,000 to £6,300. This policy will be reviewed, and reserve capital adjusted annually

Details of any funds materially in deficit

None

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You may choose to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Section F**Other optional information**

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Section G**Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	ARABA A. W. Taylor	Katie
Full name(s)	ARABA A. W. TAYLOR	KATIE WELBOURN
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)		
Date	18/01/2021	