



Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	Day 08	Month 11	Year 2020		Day 07	Month 11	Year 2021

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name JustUs

Other names charity is known by None

Registered charity number (if any) 1166198

Charity's principal address 29 Bevery Close
 Oakley
 Bedford
Postcode MK43 7SH

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	Kate Breed			
2	Araba Taylor			
3	Serena Varatharajah		23/02/2021	Existing trustees
4	Samantha Price		09/06/2021	Existing trustees
5	Luke Larner		12/07/2021	Existing trustees
6	Mark Stedman		07/10/2021	Existing trustees
7	Robert Muncaster		15/10/2021	Existing trustees
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

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)

--

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document <i>(eg. trust deed, constitution)</i>	Constitution
How the charity is constituted <i>(eg. trust, association, company)</i>	Foundation
Trustee selection methods <i>(eg. appointed by, elected by)</i>	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.

--

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.

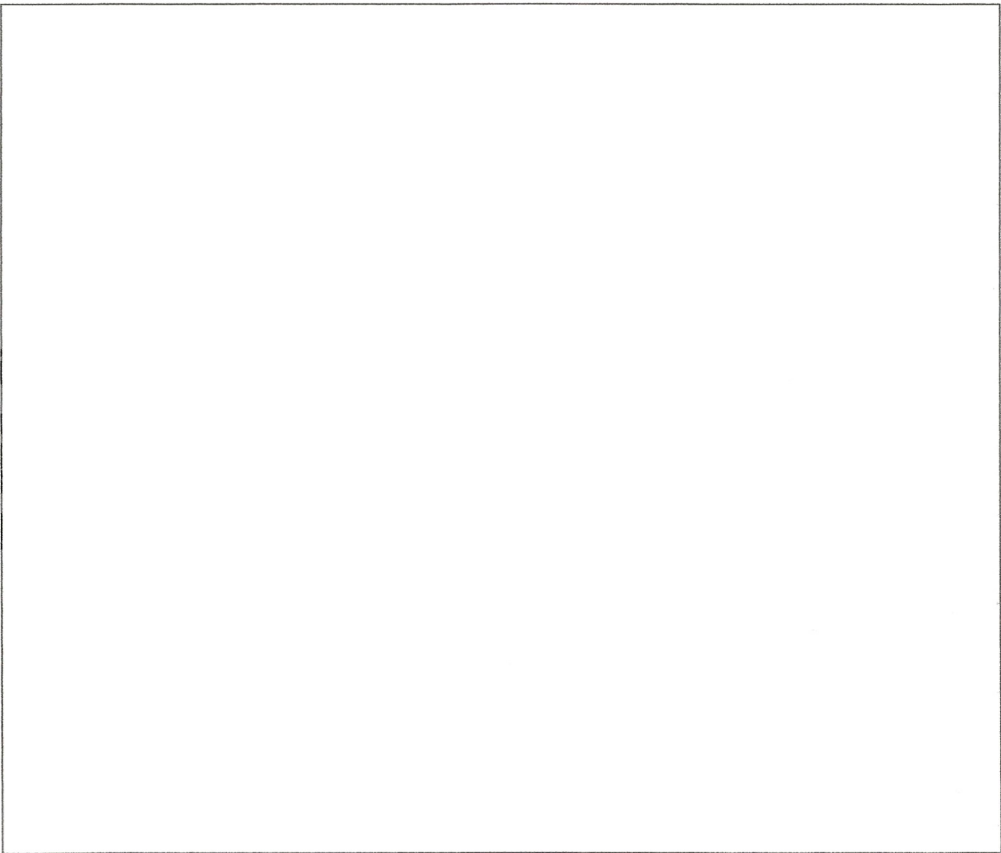
The trustees are aware of, and have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

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.



Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

In our last financial year JustUs had a total income of £93,241.33 and a total expenditure of £64,198.65

Our total casework costs were £29,528.33. This includes caseworkers' holiday pay and caseworkers' professional supervisions.

During this year JustUs supported 99 individuals from 52 households. These households comprised of 69 adults and 30 children.

From these 52 households:

- 15 have moved into new homes
- 6 remain in local authority temporary accommodation (TA) with the guarantee of a new home
- 11 remain in their current accommodation with the guarantee of a new home
- 4 moved into supported accommodation as a personal preference
- 1 chose to remain in supported accommodation despite the offer of TA
- 3 were supported to have their eviction prevented
- 1 went to prison once TA had been secured and a full housing duty was likely
- 1 went to prison immediately following the referral so no support was actually given
- 2 chose to remain with friends
- 1 decided to remain in their own home despite offers of suitable accommodation in Bedford and out of area
- 1 decided to not approach Bedford Borough Council and remain out of area despite being legally homeless
- 2 disengaged as there was no legal duty owed to them, so they were housed in the Covid-19 emergency accommodation
- 2 simply disengaged
- 1 moved away from Bedford despite securing a full housing duty, and
- 1 had already secured a full housing duty but was supported with child protection issues

This means that for reporting purposes we were able to support each individual to a positive conclusion (89 people) for an average cost of £332 per person.

JustUs also spent £660.73 advising other professionals so that they too could support people with their housing issues. Advice was given to:

- The Kings Arms Project

- Bedford Women's Centre
- Bedford Borough Children's Services
- Bedford Borough Adult Social Care
- Path 2 Recovery
- Bedford Probation
- The Bedford Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service
- The Bedford Homeless Partnership
- SMART
- Powher Advocacy
- One Housing One Support
- A local Councillor
- Bedfordshire Police
- YMCA Bedfordshire
- Emmaus Village Carlton
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Direction for Bedfordshire
- Bedfordshire & Luton Perinatal Mental Health Team
- Women's Aid
- Oxford Council
- Bexley Council
- Barnardo's
- Age UK
- RISE Domestic Abuse Service
- Change Grow Live
- NOAH Enterprise, and
- Signposts (Luton)

JustUs has supported another 35 individuals from a further 23 households (28 adults and 7 children) whose future housing has yet to be determined. Most are currently residing in TA.

In total JustUs supported 134 individuals (97 adults and 37 children) from 75 households. This is slightly down from last year's figure of 148 individuals from 82 households.

From those 75 households:

- 10 individuals and/or families were fleeing domestic abuse and 1

family had previously been housed too close to the perpetrator of their domestic abuse

- 3 individuals were suffering from other forms of abuse
- 7 individuals were suffering from anti-social behaviour, and
- 1 individual was a victim of cuckooing

To secure housing for some individuals and/or families, and as a natural part of our work JustUs have inevitably had to challenge the Local Authority at various stages in the process. This has resulted in:

- The overturn of 3 non-priority decisions following review with 1 being unsuccessful
- 3 changes in banding priority on the housing register through complaint
- The overturn of a not-homeless decision following review with 1 being unsuccessful
- The overturn of a not-homeless decision through informal complaint
- The overturn of a not-homeless gatekeeping incident through complaint, and
- The overturn of a gatekept housing register application through complaint

JustUs is also currently challenging Bedford Borough Council on its data sharing practices and access criteria to the Covid-19 emergency accommodation and have also successfully challenged 2 other councils' gatekeeping incidents through informal complaint.

For those that have been newly housed JustUs has spent £4,329.30 on furniture and household goods by using our own funds or from funds kindly donated by:

- The Arnold Clark Community Fund
- St Paul's Church, and
- Members of the public

We have also been able to secure free furniture many times throughout the year due to the kindness of Emmaus Village Carlton and their Solidarity Packs.

This year JustUs has increased its push to improve practice within the homeless sector costing a further £3,501.52. Items of note include:

- An increase in the membership of our Facebook Better Homelessness Practice group to 545 members nationwide
- Inputting into the review and consultation of Bedford Borough Council's Housing Allocation Scheme with 15 out of 16

recommendations that we put forward being implemented into the Scheme. Also inputting into Bedford Borough Council's draft Domestic Abuse Strategy following a Facebook discussion of our own and inputting into a pre-cursor for the impending review of Bedford Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy by attending 2 events hosted by the Bedford Homeless Partnership

- Regularly putting forward questions to the mayor and local councillors sitting on Bedford Borough Council's Housing Committee
- Hosting an online event Rights, Wrongs and Remedies with contributions from notable people with an experienced and legal knowledge of homelessness such as Jan Luba QC, barrister Sarah Steinhardt and Expert Link's CEO David Ford, as well as our own Deputy District Judge and barrister Araba Taylor, and
- Moving towards Community Organising. Community Organising is the work of bringing people together (from all sectors and walks of life across Bedford Borough) to take action around common concerns and overcome social injustice at a political level

JustUs has furthered its push to improve homelessness practice with an increase in our own bespoke training. This year 353 delegates nationwide have attended the delivery of:

- 12 full days of the Introduction to Homelessness Law training
- 4 bespoke versions of the same training specifically tailored to the requests of organisations including Change Grow Live and Crisis
- 4 full days of An Introduction to Domestic Abuse and Homeless Law training
- 3 full days of Challenging Council Homelessness Decisions training
- 1 full day of Understanding Personality Disorders training
- 3 full days of Understanding Drug and Alcohol Use training
- 1 full day of From Complex Trauma to Emotional Recovery training, and
- 1 half day Data Protection Law training

These 353 delegates came from:

- Bedford Borough Council
- One Housing One Support
- Citizen's Advice Bedford
- St Paul's Church
- FACES
- SMART

- Emmaus
- Community Led Initiatives
- Torbay Community Development Trust
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- East Northants Community Service
- Jesus Centres Trust
- RISE Domestic Abuse Service
- YouTurn Futures
- P3 (People, Potential, Possibilities) Charity
- Change Grow Live
- Signposts
- NOAH
- Exist Loudly
- Maundy Relief
- Age UK Torbay
- C2C Social Action
- Rugby Disability Forum
- Coventry City Council
- Emerging Futures
- Riverside – Engage
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- CCP (Caring for Communities and People) Gloucestershire
- Doorway Project
- Project 16:15
- The Benjamin Foundation
- Street Storage
- New Dawn New Day, and
- The British Red Cross

Although the training is a source of income for JustUs it does have its costs (£11,070.83) to implement. These costs are for:

- Administration £1,276.80
- Stationery £30.58
- Development £2,498.90

- Delivery £4,051.30
- External trainers £2,984.50, and
- Work done towards CPD Accreditation £228.75

JustUs credits itself and is not afraid to spend money on the self-development of its employees. This year JustUs has spent a total of £3,493.76 on the mentoring and training of both existing and new caseworkers.

There are of course other costs incurred to enable us to do our work. These are as follows:

- Administration (hours worked) £4,841.71
- Other admin costs (stationery, postage, office equipment etc.) £3,559.91
- The purchase of textbooks £84.61
- Travel £1,278.86
- Parking £120.60
- IT maintenance £1,107.93
- Insurance £458.00
- DBS fees £128.20
- Client ID costs £182.50, and
- Our 'statement' Christmas tree and fundraising quiz expenses £151.84

Finally, this year JustUs has been successful in securing funding from, and would like to thank:

- The Harpur Trust Main Grant second and third tranches of 3-year funding £35,000
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Homeless Link National Lottery Fund £10,000
- The Clothworker's Foundation £1,600
- The Anglian Water Make a Difference Fund £6,240
- The Arnold Clark Community Fund (as previously mentioned) £1,000
- Tesco Bags 4 Life £1,200, and
- The Panacea Trust £14,960 which contributed, alongside the Anglian Water Make a Difference Fund, to us being able to employ another part-time caseworker

And last but in no way least, very generous regular monthly donations from our members of the public core supporters amounting to an amazing £15,238.39. We are eternally grateful to yo

Section E Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

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.

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.

At a meeting held on 9th February 2022, and with further expert advice it was decided that 6 month's reserves were considered too high and that 3 month's reserves would suffice. However, following calculations of current operational costs (a 3-month mean average of £6,462) it was decided that the reserves amount of £6,300 remain the same.

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**

[Empty box for optional information]

Section G **Declaration**

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		Mark, A. Stedman
Full name(s)	LUKE LARNIER	MARK STEDMAN
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE
Date	21/2/2022	