

# Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date: Day 08, Month 11, Year 2021  
 Period end date: Day 07, Month 11, Year 2022  
**From**      **To**

## 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	Mark Stedman			
2	Araba Taylor			
3	Robert Muncaster			
4	Samantha Price			
5	Luke Larner			
6	Kate Breed			
7	Serena Varatharajah			
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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	Constitution
How the charity is constituted	Foundation
Trustee selection methods	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.

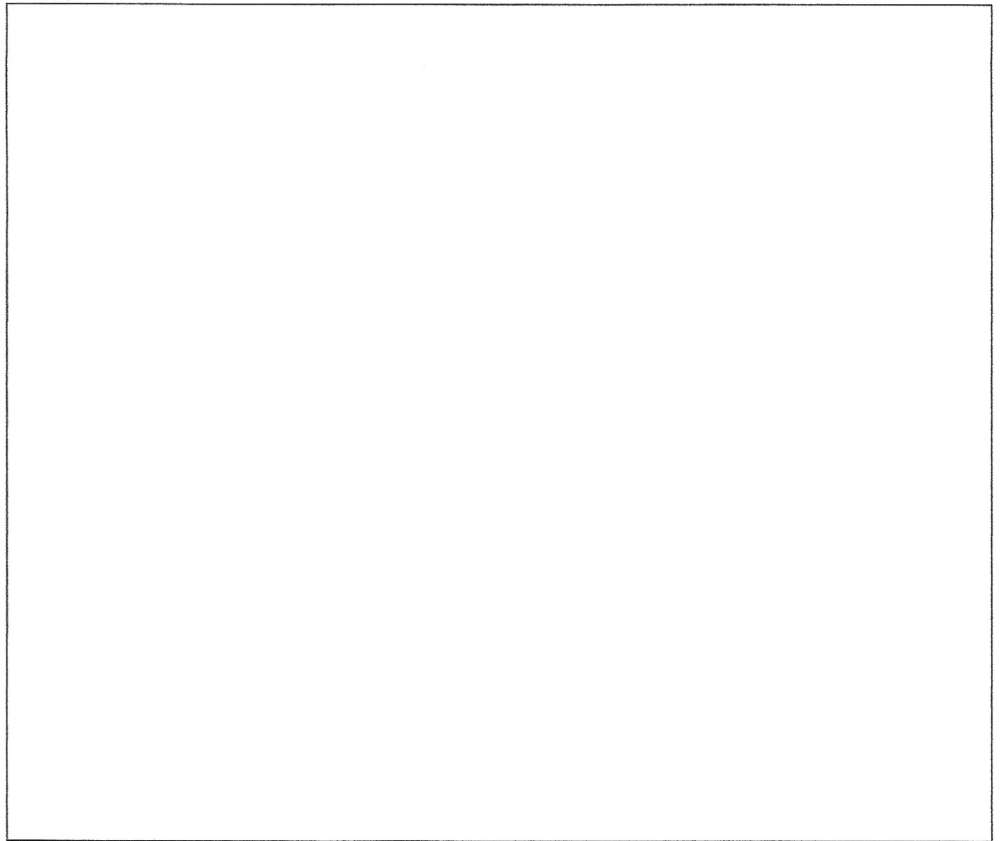
The trustees are aware of, and have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

**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.



**Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year**

In our last financial year JustUs had a total income of £60,000.68 and a total expenditure of £69,070.82. This is the first year since being founded that our expenditure has exceeded our income.

Our total casework costs were £28,602.20. This includes caseworkers' holiday pay and caseworkers' professional supervisions.

During this year JustUs supported 99 individuals from 53 households. These households comprised of 63 adults and 36 children.

From these 53 households:

- 12 have moved into new homes.
- 14 remain in local authority temporary accommodation (TA) with the guarantee of a new home.
- 10 remain in their current accommodation with the guarantee of a new home.
- 2 moved into supported accommodation as a personal preference.
- 1 moved into a refuge as a personal preference.
- 2 were supported to have their eviction prevented.
- 3 were Main Duty accepted either by Bedford Borough Council or another Local Authority
- 1 is owed a Main Duty under Part 7 only following a conviction of housing fraud.
- 2 had no local connection so were referred to another Local Authority.
- 1 had TA secured in Bedford but decided to approach another Local Authority.
- 1 declined TA from another Local Authority.
- 4 either disengaged or contact was lost.

This means that for reporting purposes we were able to support each individual to a positive conclusion (91 people) for an average cost of £314 per person.

JustUs also spent £789.80 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 Adult Social Care
- East London Foundation NHS Trust (ELFT) Community Mental Health Team
- ELFT Cedar House (Mental Health Rehabilitation)

- ELFT Path 2 Recovery (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service)
- ELFT Recovery College
- Bedford Probation
- Reactiv8 (Supported Accommodation Provider)
- The Bedford Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) Services
- The Bail Hostel
- SMART
- Powher Advocacy
- Faces
- One Housing One Support
- Queen's Park Community Organisation
- The Community Led Initiative (CLI)
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre
- A local Councillor
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Bedfordshire & Luton Perinatal Mental Health Team
- The Red Cross
- YouTurn Futures
- Expert Link
- Barnardo's
- East Northants Community Service

JustUs has also supported another 27 individuals from a further 15 households (15 adults and 12 children) whose future housing has yet to be determined. These individuals remain open to us and will continue to receive support from JustUs throughout the next financial year until their housing situation reaches a conclusion. Most are currently residing in TA.

In total JustUs supported 126 individuals (78 adults and 48 children) from 75 households.

From those 75 households:

- 21 individuals and/or families were fleeing domestic abuse.
- 6 individuals were suffering from other forms of abuse including sexual assault (2 in the home and 1 whilst homeless), hate crime and abuse from the property owner.
- 2 individual was suffering from anti-social behaviour.

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 or Housing Providers at various stages in the process. This has resulted in:

- The overturn of a 4 not-homeless decisions following review or through informal complaint
- A housing provider conceding they did not follow their own Allocations Policy and further conceding a case of mistaken identity due to their inadequate recording processes.
- The same housing provider agreeing to financially compensate for unnecessary bureaucratic delays.
- 2 successful s.188 (denial of TA) challenges. 1 by informal complaint and 1 by threatening to go to judicial review.
- The overturn of a not-homeless gatekeeping incident through complaint., with another complaint being partially upheld.

JustUs also has 7 complaints awaiting a decision. 6 are complaints for gatekeeping where 1 individual was kept sleeping rough, 1 individual who had fled domestic abuse was told to return home where they were further abused, 1 was discriminated against by ignoring a disability, 1 had their data breached, and 2 weren't recognised as homeless under part 7 despite a part 6 application being accepted. The other complaint awaiting a decision is for maladministration where the person was misinformed about paying for their own TA. JustUs is also currently challenging Bedford Borough Council on its access criteria to the Covid-19 emergency accommodation, waiting times on the housing register for people with disabilities, homelessness safeguarding issues and its data sharing practices, and as a result is leading the work on improving data sharing practices within the sector.

For those that have been newly housed JustUs has spent £3,044.19 on furniture and household goods by using our own funds or from funds kindly donated by:

- The Arnold Clark Community Fund
- The Bedford Homeless Partnership Real Change Fund
- Tesco Community Grants
- 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.

JustUs continues to push to improve practice within the homeless sector by regularly putting forward questions to the mayor and local councillors sitting on Bedford Borough Council's Housing Committee, involvement with the development of the Homeless Outcomes Framework, through our social media and by delivering our own bespoke training. This year c.275 delegates nationwide have attended the delivery of:

- 14 full days of the Introduction to Homelessness Law training, 4 of

which were exclusive to the King's Arms Project, SMART, Barnardo's and CLI.

- 1 bespoke version of the same training specifically tailored to the request of the Westminster Drug Project.
- 5 full days of An Introduction to Domestic Abuse and Homeless Law training, 3 of which were exclusive to Crisis and 2 IDVA services.
- 1 full day of Challenging Council Homelessness Decisions training
- 1 full day of Understanding Drug and Alcohol Use training
- 1 full day Data Protection Law training, and
- 1 full day of Equality Law training.

JustUs, in partnership with Doughty Street Chambers and Expert Link, also hosted a Trauma, Homelessness and Priority Need YouTube webinar with panellists including our own Mike Hyden, a barrister and deputy district judge from Doughty Street Chambers, the founder and CEO of Expert Link, an NHS consultant psychiatrist, a researcher and sociologist and the mental health lead from Amicus Trust.

Delegates attending our training came from:

- The King's Arms Project
- ELFT (Various Departments)
- One Housing One Support
- Bedford Women's Centre
- Citizen's Advice Bureau Bedford
- St Mary's Church
- Faces
- SMART
- IDVA Service Bedford
- IDVA Service Surrey County Council
- Community Led Initiatives
- East Northants Community Service
- Penrose
- Westminster Drug Project
- Crisis
- Woughton Community Council Hub
- Cumbria County Council
- Centre 33



- Advocacy Focus
- Heart of Bucks
- The Salvation Army
- Barnardo's
- The Ron Todd Foundation
- Squared
- Proud 2 Be
- NHS Hertfordshire
- The City of Liverpool College
- Islamic Human Rights Commission
- RISE Domestic Abuse Service
- Change Grow Live
- Signposts
- NOAH
- C2C Social Action, and
- Cambridgeshire County Council

Although the training is a source of income for JustUs it does have its costs (£8,660.80) to implement. These costs are for:

- Administration £745.44
- Stationery £134.09
- Development £2,678.77
- Delivery £3,020.86
- External trainers £877.00, and
- Work done and renewal of CPD Accreditation £1,204.64

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 £2,401.45 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) £5,682.85.
- Other admin costs (stationery, postage, office equipment etc.) £3,393.81
- Social media (hours worked) £2,323.29.
- Promoting better practice (hours worked) £9,137.39.

- Fundraising costs £733.14
- IT maintenance £645.52
- The purchase of textbooks £143.39
- Travel £1,932.24
- Parking £82.80
- Insurance £424.40, and
- Client ID costs £172.50.

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

- The Harpur Trust Main Grant fourth and fifth tranches of 3-year funding £25,000
- The Harpur Trust Covid-19 Fund £10,000
- The Arnold Clark Community Fund £1,000
- Tesco Community Grants £500, and
- The Bedford Homeless Partnership Real Change Fund £1,000

And last but in no way least, very generous regular monthly donations from our members of the public core supporters amounting to an amazing £9,375.88. We are eternally grateful to you.

## Section E Financial review

**Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves**

At a meeting of the Trustees held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Trustees considered what level of funding the charity should hold in reserve. It was agreed that JustUs would hold 3 month's operational costs in reserve up until the review date of January 2024. Based upon current levels of expenditure (a mean average of 3 month's operational costs equalling £6,262) £6,300 would remain in reserve.

**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

## Section G Declaration

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

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

<b>Signature(s)</b>		Mark, A. Stedman
<b>Full name(s)</b>	LUKE LARNER	MARKIA, STEDMAN
<b>Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)</b>	TRUSTEE	TRUSTEE
<b>Date</b>	14/02/2023	