

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date			Period end date				
From	Day	Month	Year	To	Day	Month	Year
	08	11	2022		07	11	2023

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 16a De Parys Avenue
 Bedford
 Postcode MK40 2TW

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	Robert Muncaster			
3	Samantha Price			
4	Luke Larner			
5	Araba Taylor		08/11/2022 to 28/07/2023	
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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. appointment, election)</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.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

In our last financial year JustUs had a total income of £40,126.94 and a total expenditure of £40,042.03.

Our total casework costs were £23,472.01. This includes caseworkers' holiday and sick pay, caseworkers' professional supervisions and client handovers.

During this year JustUs supported 100 individuals from 51 households. These households comprised of 62 adults and 38 children. From these 51 households:

- 17 have moved into new homes.
- 18 remain in local authority temporary accommodation (TA) with the guarantee of a new home.
- 4 remain in their current accommodation or are living with friends with the guarantee of a new home.
- 1 has had their eviction prevented.
- 1 has temporarily moved from mental health rehabilitation to supported accommodation with the guarantee of a new home once a family member has secured accommodation through the housing register.
- 1 moved into supported accommodation as a personal preference.
- 1 had TA secured but chose to return to the care of an ex-partner.
- 2 decided to approach another Local Authority.
- 2 were not legally homeless.
- 1 was intentionally homeless by their own admission.
- 3 either disengaged or contact was lost.

This means that for reporting purposes we were able to support each individual to a positive housing conclusion (91 people) for an average cost of £258 per person.

JustUs also spent £576.50 giving information to members of the public (25 people), local councillors (on 5 occasions) or other professionals so that they too could support people with their housing issues. Information was given to:

- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (on 8 occasions)
- East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) Cedar House mental health rehabilitation
- The local MP's Office
- Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (on 2 occasions)
- Bedford Probation (on 6 occasions)
- Path 2 Recovery (P2R) substance use treatment service.

- YMCA Hertfordshire
- Mind BLMK
- Bedford Borough Council (BBC) Adult Services (on 3 occasions)
- BBC Children's Services
- BBC Rehousing Team
- ELFT Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) Bedfordshire (on 8 occasions)
- CMHT Braintree
- You Turn Futures (on 2 occasions)
- Bedford Women's Centre (on 4 occasions)
- The Kings Arms Project
- Signposts Luton
- SMART CJS (on 3 occasions)
- Squared
- NOAH
- Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service, and
- Samson's Academy.

JustUs has also supported another 21 individuals from a further 13 households (14 adults and 7 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.

In total JustUs supported 121 individuals (76 adults and 45 children) from 65 households.

From those 65 households:

- 9 individuals (7 female, 2 male) were fleeing domestic abuse (1 whilst pregnant and 1 with children).
- 7 individuals were suffering from other forms of abuse (1 suffering physical abuse whilst in supported accommodation, 1 suffering financial abuse whilst in supported accommodation, 2 suffering physical and/or financial abuse whilst in temporary accommodation, 1 suffering abuse from their private landlord, 1 suffering sexual abuse whilst in a social housing property, and 1 was sexually assaulted whilst rough sleeping).
- 1 individual was suffering from anti-social behaviour whilst in temporary accommodation.
- 2 individuals were suffering from anti-social behaviour whilst in their own home.
- 1 family of 6 had fled persecution/physical abuse from another country.

- 2 whose accommodation had damp and mould (1 which was also overcrowded).
- 1 was supported to change temporary accommodation due to damp and mould.

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

- 1 gatekept homeless application overturned following stage 1 complaint resulting in the person being forced to sleep rough further resulting in an award of financial compensation from Bedford Borough Council (BBC) of £200.
- 1 gatekept homeless application, where the individual was told to return home following fleeing domestic abuse and who then suffered further abuse, overturned following stage 1 complaint resulting in an award of financial compensation from BBC of £800.
- £3,500 compensation awarded from Southend-on-Sea City Council following a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to a person fleeing domestic abuse with Southend-on-Sea City Council committing themselves to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Standards as a result.
- £700 compensation and the main housing duty awarded from North Northants Council following a complaint to the LGO.
- 1 gatekept homeless application (overcrowding and damp and mould) overturned following stage 2 complaint.
- 1 not homeless decision overturned on review (sexual assault from neighbour) and stage 2 complaint upheld as BBC had not adhered to the Equality Act, disregarding the person's learning disability.
- 1 gatekept homeless application (fleeing domestic abuse) on lone approach resolved when supported by JustUs on a second approach. No complaint made.
- 1 gatekept homeless application (not eligible) on lone approach resolved when supported by JustUs on a second approach. No complaint made.
- 1 gatekept from temporary accommodation on lone approach following fleeing domestic abuse resolved when supported by JustUs on a second approach. No complaint made.
- The main housing duty being accepted, and housing register banding issue resolved by BBC following a stage 1 complaint.
- The main housing duty being accepted by Central Bedfordshire Council following a stage 2 complaint.
- The (un)suitability of emergency temporary accommodation being resolved on 6 occasions following upheld reviews and persons being moved to self-contained temporary accommodation. 2

review decisions pending.

- A homeless application and temporary accommodation Housing Benefit claim not being processed on lone approach resolved. No complaint made.
- 2 non-priority decisions overturned on review.
- An intentionally homeless review decision still pending.

JustUs is also continuing to challenge Bedford Borough Council on their reluctance to develop a stand-alone Domestic Abuse Policy for Homeless People and will be endeavouring to get them to commit to one in the pending Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

For those that have been newly rehoused, either temporarily or permanently JustUs has spent £2,157.13 on furniture and small household goods by using our own funds or from funds kindly donated by:

- Help the Homeless
- The Bedford Homeless Partnership Real Change Fund
- St Paul's Church Bedford, and
- Members of the public

JustUs also gave further assistance to those that moved into permanent accommodation by supporting them to complete Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims and to set-up utilities at a cost of £697.56.

JustUs continues to push to improve practice within the homeless sector through our social media, as a member of the Bedford Homeless Partnership and by regularly putting forward questions to the mayor and local councillors sitting on Bedford Borough Council's Housing Committee.

Unfortunately, JustUs' training came to an end earlier in the financial year. However, we can still report on 2 final successful sessions, 1 session on Homeless Law and 1 session on the Equality Act reaching 20 delegates from:

- Centre 33
- Bedford Probation
- Change Grow Live
- Turning Tides
- Helping Hands Charity
- Signposts
- SMART CJS
- Bedford Community Mental Health Team, and
- Age UK Torbay.

However, these 2 sessions were not without cost to JustUs (£219.06). These costs were for:

- Administration £46.11, and
- Delivery £172.95.

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 £784.04 on the training of both existing and previous caseworkers.

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

- Administration (hours worked) £3,352.52.
- Other admin costs (professional registrations, Facebook ads, stationery, postage, printer ink website hosting) £974.02.
- Social media (hours worked) £1,387.27.
- Promoting better practice (hours worked) £4,648.49.
- Caseworker reporting to trustees (hours worked) £420.84.
- Travel £997.71
- Parking £77.50
- Community Organising £500.00.
- IT maintenance £301.05
- Insurance £433.32
- Client ID costs £76.00, and
- Promotional Christmas tree and 'thank you' flowers £55.00.

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

- The Harpur Trust Main Grant final tranche of 3-year funding £13,000
- The Harpur Trust Main Grant first tranche of new 3-year funding £8,596.50
- The Bedford Homeless Partnership Real Change Fund £2,000
- The Frank Branston Trust first tranche of 1-year funding £7,000

We also raised money through the sale of 2 laptops (£544.00), had income from past training (£3,884.52) and continued to receive regular monthly donations from our general public core supporters amounting to an amazing £5,101.92. We are eternally grateful to you.

Section E

Financial review

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

At a virtual meeting of the Trustees via email held during January 2024 Trustees considered what level of funding the charity should hold in reserve.

It was agreed that JustUs would continue to hold 3 month's operational costs in reserve up until the review date of January 2025. Based upon current levels of expenditure (a mean average of 3 month's operational costs at the new hourly rates and with the departure of one caseworker equalling £5,835) £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

Signature(s)

S Price

Mark A. Stegman

Full name(s)

SAMANTHA JANE PRICE

MARK A. STEGMAN

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Date

28.02.2024