## citizensuk



# ANNUAL REPORT

Organising and Social Impact 2021



## CONTENTS

4	Introduction from our Chair & Executive Director
6	Developing Leaders
12	Making Change
18	Organisational Development
20	Financial Summary
21	A Year in Numbers

As Chair of Trustees of this amazing charity, I want to thank my fellow trustees and Citizens UK staff for the significant work that has been undertaken in this most difficult of years. The achievements highlighted in this report are testament to a healthy organisation delivering its strategic aims and staying focussed on its core purpose through tumultuous social upheaval.

#### REVD CANON KAREN ROOMS CHAIR OF TRUSTEES



Much of the energy for winning justice and change comes from the joy and challenge of relationships and working together. This has required considerable extra effort over an extended period, with the ebb and flow of changing regulations around meeting with others and the managing of myriad individuals' anxieties and health considerations. I pay tribute to the resilience of staff, Community Organisers and local leaders, who have navigated in-person and online relationship building, Organising and actions, whilst continuing to maintain the momentum of listening, taking action, negotiation, and winning justice.

This work has not been without personal cost, and I am grateful for the organisational focus on wellbeing underpinned by three of Citizens UK's values: solidarity, inclusion, and kindness. I am also heartened that extra attention is being given to Diversity and Inclusion to strengthen the precious currency of different people and institutions working well together.

I am proud of Citizens UK's financial resilience, the trust that partners and funders place in the organisation, and its responsiveness to community needs by making the changes that have been required in and through a crisis. I look forward to continuing to work with my fellow trustees in oversight responsibilities as the organisation continues to deliver real impact and to adapt to the future. Citizens UK has a growing identity in Britain, and I am confident that this will keep evolving in a way which is inclusive, true to our heritage and responsive to these rapidly changing times.

I want to give a massive thanks to the thousands of local leaders who've contributed to Citizens UK campaigns and projects through this most difficult year.



**MATTHEW BOLTON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** 

Young people facing upheaval in their time at school yet showing the courage to organise for improved mental health provision. Nurses, teachers and clergy who are already going above and beyond in their own community and still finding time to campaign for the Living Wage for key workers. So many inspiring examples. All the social change outlined in this report is powered by people, so many of whom are

experiencing injustice and pressure, and all of whom deserve real credit.

We have three strategic aims that have guided us through this turbulent year. Through this report, you'll read stories and examples of the wide variety of people and projects, and that will brings these numbers to life:

**DEVELOPING LOCAL LEADERSHIP:** 6.836

people building their power for change

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS: *530* 

diverse communities in membership

MAKING **CHANGE:** 566,054 people benefitting from our campaigns

First, that trust and relationships at a local level are what really matters in how a community can respond to a crisis and support those needing help. We've seen that in our network this year through a whole array of Covid support projects, such as faith communities tackling loneliness or promoting vaccinations and schools supporting families in hunger or making PPE for local care homes. For this reason, we are recommitting ourselves to the local community and to our core aims of strengthening local communities and developing local leaders. We'll put this into practice by ramping up our training and increasing our specialist support for different types of local communities.

The second lesson is that there are deep injustices common across regions and nations that need big strategies for change: the social care crisis, climate change, racial injustice, and the refugee crisis. To play our part in addressing these challenges, Citizens UK needs to evolve - and rapidly. We commit to being bolder, more focussed, and more ready to act in solidarity across the whole network. We are ready to embrace new partnerships and innovative approaches to increase our impact.

Whether it's neighbourhood level Community Organising or UK-level campaigns, it's people and relationships that hold it together so we're doing everything we can to support wellbeing, work-life balance and 1-2-1 conversations.



**Developing people to be more effective Community leaders is a vital part of Citizens** UK's mission - and our training is key to making sure more and more people have access to Community Organising skills. The pandemic meant that we were not able to run any of our residential training courses this year, but we adapted our curriculum and moved it online - with fantastic results!

#### **250 LEADERS PARTICIPATED**

Citizens UK ran a series of multi-day training courses throughout the year, and over 250 leaders participated. Far from being 'Death-by-Zoom', the courses received positive feedback, especially the development of mini Learning Groups to help support learning in a more intimate context;

#### **'LEARNING THURSDAYS'**

Necessity proved to be the mother of invention in Lockdown as we developed the 16:00 slot on Thursday afternoons as 'Learning Thursdays'. Over a thousand leaders drawn from every chapter in Citizens UK participated in one of these sessions, on themes ranging from raising 'hard money' to Black Lives Matter;

#### **TRAINING VIA ZOOM**

The Guild of Community Organisers developed its ability to deliver training via Zoom, as well as learning what makes for an effective 'Learning' Thursday'. Almost every Organiser contributed to this amazing effort - and it is a testament to their adaptability that we ended up training more leaders during the Lockdown than we would have done without the pandemic!



## Leaders graduate!

Having completed national training and 50 hours of Community Organising in their local communities, these individuals received their Level 4 Graduate Certificate in Community Leadership, accredited by Newman University in collaborative partnership with Citizens UK.

Congratulations to our graduating colleagues Afsana Salik, Community Organiser for Tower Hamlets, and Sylvie Pope, Communications and Campaigns Officer. A big thank you to Organisers for supporting the following leaders who also graduated: Sufia Alam, Razna Al-Faradhi, Kulsuma Begum, Najma Khalid, Aysha Khanom, Kwame Lowe, Conor McGurran, Rowha Mohid, Steven North, Adnan Shafi, Nirushan Sudarsan, Jack Swan.

**Afsana reflects** on her experience graduating with her leaders

When I was working through portfolios with my leaders, we began to realise how much we had achieved together.

> AFSANA SALIK **COMMUNITY ORGANISER** FOR TOWER HAMLETS

Through 1-2-1 conversations, leaders better understood their self-interest reflected on how much graduating means to them. Even though they've been Community Organising for so long, this was a really new thing for them.

We train so many leaders per year, but how many of these leaders actually expect to complete the 50 hours and graduate with a certificate? We need to focus on that more, especially for leaders from ethnic minority communities, young leaders, parents and mothers or those with gaps in their CVs.

This was a great opportunity to have something to show for all the Community Organising they've done, encouraging them to seek out more ways to grow, and is also great for future employment.

Some of my leaders were reflecting on their undergraduate or masters degrees, and for some who are mothers of three or four grown children, they noted how they still had the opportunity to learn and get a qualification.

This really boosted their confidence. They told me it feels like something they have achieved, not for their community, not for their families, but for themselves. Leaders also brought generations of family members along to celebrate with them!



I also took some time to reflect on myself... as Community Organisers, we focus so much on developing leaders and growing institutions, but we don't always prioritise our own development and growth. Every Organiser – and indeed many other colleagues - have done the training and more than 50 hours of putting this into practice. We should encourage each other to get the certificate, otherwise we are teaching something that we are not practising ourselves.

It's really nice to feel that I've achieved something for myself. Here is my time and I'm celebrating that I'm so proud of myself for doing it!

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My leaders and I celebrated this big day together, and the process has definitely brought us closer and built our trust.

It was very special for me to see that my leaders have grown so much. Also, for my leaders and their institutions to see me celebrating with them - and all that we have achieved together - that was very meaningful.

## **Munira shares PACT's training** and support has changed my life

We moved to Southwark a year ago. I was so isolated and felt insecure. I worried whether my kids would cope with moving to a new area and new schools.

> **MUNIRA** MUM OF THREE CHILDREN; A GIRL AND TWO BOYS



The first person who welcomed me in my building was a lovely neighbour. I was lucky as she invited me to the MumSpace group at Parents And Communities Together (PACT). Her name was Abi, and she is a Parent Champion and Welcomer for the project. I cannot express how this changed my life and that of my kids. I met lovely mums from different backgrounds and cultures and we now call each other sisters! I look forward to seeing them every Friday.

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Since I joined PACT, I have attended two training courses. One in Community Organising and leadership and also a parenting course for 2 - 4 years old. I am now representing parents on the PACT Steering Group.

On the Steering Group, I have met community leaders and professionals whom I would not meet every day. I also went to a Citizens UK

accountability assembly where I met lots of amazing people from other institutions, as well as MPs. Recently, I was invited by our Project Manager to a Women Interfaith Network Lunch where again I met other people from around London and elsewhere. I even took a picture with the Guest Speaker, our ex-prime minister Tony Blair!

I am also volunteering in our piggy bank every first Friday of the month. We receive donations and sell them at very cheap prices to families in our community as a way of fundraising. I was involved in Organising the PACT Assembly too. What a busy life! What a great year! I am looking forward to more amazing opportunities and taking part in events in our community, building new relationships, empowering others and making change for a better life.

What a busy life! What a great year! I am looking forward to more amazing opportunities.

## STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

A question any leader in a Citizens UK member institution should ask is. 'how has our membership of Citizens UK strengthened our own institution this year?'

While most organisations are attracted to Citizens UK by our social justice wins and our leadership training, those that stay for the long-term are the ones that work out how their membership helps them to better live out their own vision and mission.



across

16 **CITIZENS** ALLIANCES

supported by

**PROFESSIONAL** COMMUNITY **ORGANISERS** 



#### SECTOR-SPECIFIC TRAINING

for school-teachers, faith leaders, higher education professionals, and community sponsorship groups.

#### **ONLINE DELIVERY**

made our training accessible to a group of leaders who would previously have struggled to participate.

## **Community Sponsorship Groups, Alliance and Member Organisations Plan Alternative Tomorrows** with Hope (PATH)

Thanks to Covid-response funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, Citizens UK developed new training in a Person-Centred Planning Approach called PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope).

#### **OUR SPONSOR REFUGEES TEAM**

Our Sponsor Refugees team took the lead in working with a team of Educational Psychologists to apply the PATH approach for resettled refugee families as well as for the community sponsorship groups that

support them to integrate. Dozens of people attended the training, and have been putting it in to practice to make sure that refugee families have real agency in determining their future.

#### LEADERS FROM CITIZENS SOMERSET

Leaders from Citizens Somerset also took up the offer of training in PATH, and subsequently developed a PATH for their chapter which has helped to guide their Leadership Team ever since (see below).

## The training helps to:

**Envision** a meaningful and positive future.

Set coherent, achievable, and incremental goals which help to orient your life and project over the course of a year.

Facilitate active listening and foster a sense of common purpose within your community.

**Recruit allies** and strengthen your collective efficacy.

Identify challenges which may inhibit your progress and think about how to stay resilient in the face of them.

## **CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL Community Organising** for Public Value

Since 2015 Cardiff Business School has put Public Value at the heart of its organisational strategy. In simple terms, the Public Value ethos aims to deliver social improvement alongside economic development, recognising the role that business and management has to play in tackling some of the grand challenges in contemporary society.

#### **'SOCIETY AND ECONOMY' MODULE**

When the Business School joined Citizens Cymru Wales, the local Community Organisers spent time understanding the Public Value Mission, and how Community Organising could help them deliver that. The result of that dialogue is a pioneering 'Society and Economy' module run in collaboration with Citizens Cymru Wales Organiser Fiona Meldrum, in which each year 300 first-year undergraduates are trained in Community Organising as part of a Public Value Leadership Academy.

#### '5 STEPS TO SOCIAL CHANGE' ADAPTATION

Fiona worked with Dr Deborah Hann and Dr Marcus Gomes to adapt the '5 Steps to Social Change' curriculum to engage the students, and help them to connect with local communities most in need of social and economic change. Following their training, every student had to plan and carry out an action, which this year led to 60 leeks being sent on St David's Day to a range of local employers asking them to 'do a little thing' and accredit as a Living Wage employer and sign the Community Jobs Compact.



## MAKING CHANGE

Our work is powered by the people in our membership and it's their experiences that set our priorities. Across the Citizens network, there are hundreds of neighbourhood projects with local leaders campaigning for a zebra crossing outside a school or welcoming a refugee family through community sponsorship. In this section on making change, we'll feature three strands of work where the local connects to the UK-level: Living Wage; housing and homelessness; and keeping women and girls safe from hate crime.



### LIVING WAGE

Our biggest campaign, that has now won over £1.7bn for low-paid workers, started from local community listening in East London 20 years ago.

The Living Wage campaign has grown into a UK-wide (and soon to be international) movement of workers, communities, and employers, but the local Community Organising remains a core part of our approach. We're going to look at that local to UK connection through the story of the Newcastle University Living Wage campaign and then into the headline successes of our Living Wage Foundation.

## LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN The Story of Newcastle University

When we launched Tyne & Wear Citizens in 2017, only 30 organisations were accredited as Real Living Wage Employers. Yet the region was blighted by poverty, driven largely by low pay and insecure jobs. We held some embarrassing titles as a region: biggest used food bank in the country; highest percentage of zero-hour contracts and the highest number of children on Free School Meals. Unsurprisingly, leaders in Tyne & Wear voted to make tackling poverty a priority campaign.

Inspired by the Living Wage Movement, we knew increasing the number of real Living Wage Employers would make a tangible difference. But could we do it here? We had no universities or Local Authorities in our region accredited, and as large employers, these became our target.

Newcastle University declined our invitation to accredit, for two main reasons: they wanted to maintain independent control over pay scales and they believed they had good terms and conditions already. After all, they retained staff and didn't have any problems recruiting.

Deciding to act, leaders from Newcastle University and Tyne & Wear Citizens Action Team, launched a listening campaign, to hear directly from A, B and C grade staff whether they would want a real Living Wage. They knew that workers' testimony would be the key to winning the campaign.

45 staff and students spoke to over 220 minimum wage workers at the University such as caterers, cleaners, porters, and gardeners. Many staff were struggling to get by on their pay, which was slightly above the government's

Living Wage. People said that 'every month was a struggle to survive', or that they 'can't afford days out'. A real Living Wage would enable people to start a family, eat decent food, pay their bills and live with dignity. Initially, workers were sceptical that anything would change, but were angry enough to get involved and challenge poverty pay. It was clear that this movement was galvanising people to take action, and regular meetings of over 50 people started to take place at the University.

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As an institution with a strong commitment to social justice, the testimonies from the listening campaign were compelling. However, it looked like the executive team would vote to increase pay but not formally accredit with the Living Wage Foundation. By not accrediting, we couldn't know for sure that all contracted workers would receive a real Living Wage. It also meant we weren't guaranteed a year-onyear commitment to paying a Living Wage as the independently calculated rates increased. This distinction is important, and we knew that formal accreditation would set a benchmark for the other Universities and employers in our region to follow, so we had to increase the pressure. Catering staff who served the executive meeting discussed writing personal notes on napkins alongside serving tea and coffee, and the threat of this action received a big response. Finally, the University agreed to formal accreditation.

The result of powerful first-hand accounts together with a unique partnership approach with university managers and workers made this a hugely successful campaign. In the end, it took 17 months for the University to accredit and award a pay rise to over 700 members of staff.

The win is not just fantastic for workers in the North East but will place important pressure on other local employers to follow suit. University worker and member of the campaign team, Julie Hounam, recently spoke

at a Living Wage Parliamentary Reception about the difference it has made to her colleagues' lives. Julie is now chairing an Action Team at the university to tackle other issues raised through the listening campaign.

In 2021, Newcastle University and Tyne & Wear Citizens won Campaign of the Year Award from the Living Wage Foundation. After much celebration we now move onto our next target -Sunderland University.

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Newcastle University in collaboration with Tyne & Wear Citizens

### LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION: 2020-21 HEADLINES

Campaigns like the one targeting Newcastle University keep the Living Wage movement alive and rooted in communities, complementing the increasingly sophisticated approach we take to promoting and scaling up the Living Wage through our Living Wage Foundation. Despite the challenging circumstances for businesses because of the pandemic, we have continued to make significant strides in increasing the number of Living Wage accredited employers and building upon an expanding programme of activity to reduce in-work poverty.

Our business plan priorities remained to deepen our engagement with accredited employers; build our intelligence of the impact of the Living Wage and the barriers to adoption; expand our "diversification" programmes to tackle in-work poverty in the UK and beyond – including our Living Hours programme and Global Living Wage Initiative; and to use effective communications and campaigns work to mobilise and amplify the work of Living Wage advocates.

## **Headline impact figures**

- 1,650 new employers became Living Wage accredited last year, and we retained 94% of the network during the pandemic, taking us over 8,000 Living Wage Employers.
- New accreditations included employers in retail, hospitality, and other hard-hit industries. Household names committing to the Living Wage included Tate and Lyle Sugars, The All-England Lawn Tennis Club, the University of Cambridge, bp, Danone, Network Rail, Johnson Matthey Plc, TalkTalk, Abel and Cole and Capital One UK.
- Over 30,000 more people received pay rises through the Living Wage, with 15,000 in key worker industries, including 1,900 social care workers. There are now 340 key worker employers accredited. As a result, the campaign has now provided a pay rise to more than 275,000 people since it began.

- Aviva and abrdn became our first accredited Living Hours Employers in October 2020, with SSE, Datagraphic, and First Alliance Credit Union following suit in 2021, providing workers with further security of hours and shift patterns to add to a real Living Wage.
- We produced a range of research on the impact of low pay and the Living Wage including research on the prevalence and impact of insecure hours and the need for Living Hours; the scale and impact of low pay throughout the UK; and public support for the prioritisation of pay rises.

Our communications and campaigns work, in conjunction with our research and intelligence gathering, has led to:

3,000+ **MENTIONS** in national, local and trade media with...

an estimated **AD VALUE EQUIVALENCY:** £6.6m+ including coverage...

across all national newspapers and major broadcast outlets -BBC NEWS, BBC BREAKFAST, C4, ITN AND SKY NEWS

## **Housing & Homelessness**

It all started with Malachi Justin, a ten-yearold boy who became concerned about people sleeping rough in Ilford. When his first tooth fell out at the age of five, Malachi gave the £5 he got from the tooth fairy to Ilford Salvation Army, a member of TELCO Citizens, along with a note asking them to spend it on helping homeless people.

This led to a local campaign that has seen a £5m centre built in Redbridge – Project Malachi - to house 42 single people experiencing homelessness, including those with no recourse to public funds. We owe a great deal to Captains John and Naomi Clifton, who have worked tirelessly to develop leaders with lived experience, such as Stephen Serrant. This local Community Organising success then grew national as we launched a Citizens UK partnership with the Salvation Army and Hill Group to deliver £12m worth of highquality accommodation for people experiencing homelessness across the UK.

In early 2021, this campaign to tackle homelessness was featured in a series of Citizens Housing Summit events alongside Citizens UK campaigns for permanently affordable housing through Community Land Trusts and for more genuinely affordable housing in new developments. We brought people experiencing the injustice of poor housing together with policymakers, MPs, Peers and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, to discuss solutions to housing and homelessness challenges across the UK.



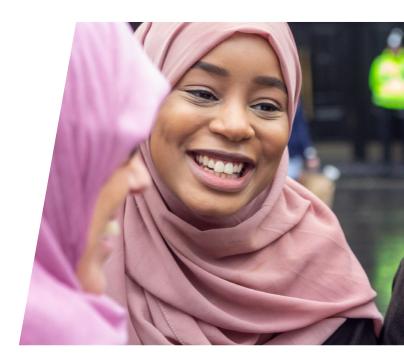
I can't believe this has actually happened and we have built a home for the homeless! I'm really happy that The Salvation Army used my money to do this. No one should have to sleep on the streets. Everyone should have a home. I'm still only ten but I know that homelessness is getting worse, but this shows there is something we can all do to help.

> **MALACHI JUSTIN** TEN-YEAR OLD WHO INSPIRED A CAMPAIGN TO HELP THE HOMELESS

## **Keeping women & girls safe**

In March 2020, the Government instructed all police forces to record misogyny hate crime. This is a huge victory for the thousands of Citizens leaders that have led this work over the last five years, and it's a big step forward in our campaign to keep women and girls safer. The new developments mean:

- All police forces are charged with recording and mapping hate crime against women.
- · We can now understand better other forms of hate crime such as around race and religion and how it intersects with gender.
- Survivors of misogynistic hate have options outside the criminal justice system for redress.



We're over the moon the Government has listened to communities like mine and acknowledged misogyny hate crime. It is a significant step towards transforming the harmful attitudes that exist and making society safer for women and girls. This development will allow tracking and recording of misogynistic crimes so that patterns can be identified, and perpetrators can be accountable.

TAJ KHAN TYNE & WEAR CITIZENS, AND LEADER ON MISOGYNY HATE CRIME AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

This builds on our success last year in persuading the Law Commission to recommend that misogyny is formally classified as a category of hate crime and opens space for more local and national organising in the coming months.

This started like all our work does, with a local listening campaign. Nottingham Citizens led this in 2016, and from there it has grown into a national movement that is changing Government policy.

None of this would have happened without the courage of women and girls speaking up about their traumatic experiences and turning that private pain into a powerful, public call for change, alongside the thousands of local leaders in Citizens UK who are Community Organising; carrying out the UK's largest hate crime research project; taking public action; lobbying politicians and police forces and joining together in solidarity.

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



By 2023, we will have developed the culture, policies, and business model to ensure we are an employer of choice, financially resilient and able to pursue our mission now and into the future.

## **Top line aims for 2018-2023:**

- 1. Culture and values embedding the six organisational values into all aspects of the organisation.
- **2. Staffing** achieving a step-change in wellbeing, training, and career progression, resulting in improved motivation, performance, and retention. Improving our diversity & inclusion processes including in recruitment, progression and pay.
- **3. Finances** addressing key risk areas by increasing undesignated unrestricted reserves to the current target of £600k); improving cashflow position and planning.
- 4. Policy development and implementation - improved processes for policy co-design and for policy implementation and tracking, including safeguarding, extremism, and incident reporting.

During this reporting period, we have made steady progress against all the before-mentioned aims. To live and breathe our values, we have ensured our revised and newly developed policy and procedures are explicitly putting our values at its heart. Our staff meetings are always themed around one or more of our values where agenda items are specifically chosen to highlight how we are led by our values.

#### **STAFF WELLBEING**

The national lockdowns and global pandemic during the last 18 months shone a bright light on the importance of staff wellbeing. Although the management had already identified staff wellbeing as a top priority for the organisation, the national lockdowns meant that we could waste no time in taking steps to address this. We have signed up to a 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme, a confidential helpline for all employees to access support as and when needed. Furthermore, we have made it mandatory for all managers to include wellbeing discussions as part of their supervision meetings to ensure staff are looked after as best as possible and to refer them for further support. However, the management acknowledges that this is a long-term commitment and requires further and sustained active engagement for it to have lasting impact.

#### STAFF ATTRACTIONS AND RETENTION

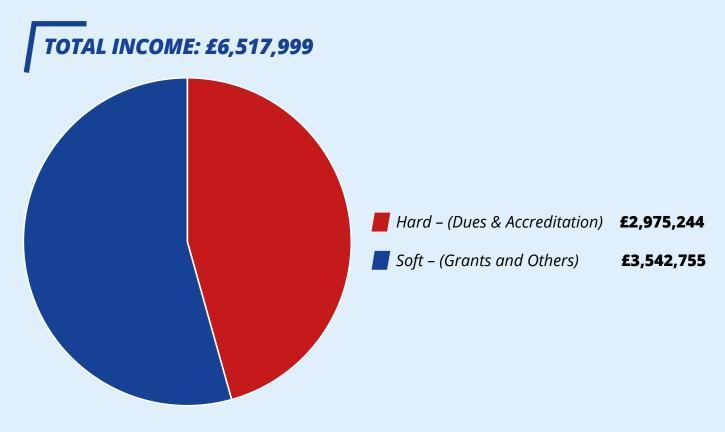
In terms of staff attractions and retention, our two-year-long process of redesigning our entire human resource management approach was concluded. As a result, a transparent recruitment and promotion policies were drawn, clear career progression charts were designed, a performance appraisal system was introduced, and a cloud-based HR suite was launched. The HR system has enabled staff to access their personal information and payroll details; submit their leave requests; create and update personal and professional goals or objectives; and conduct periodical performance appraisals.

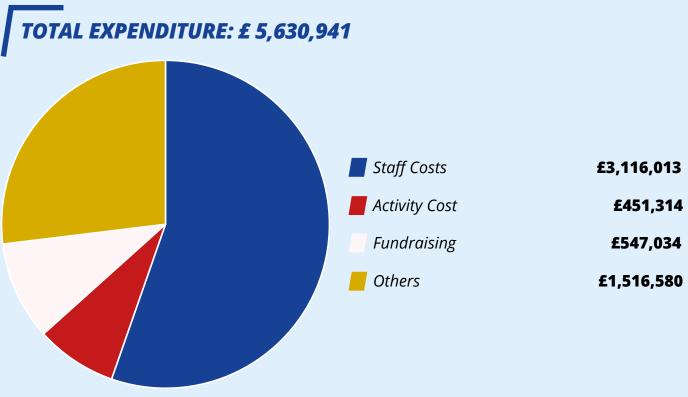
#### FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Lastly, the organisation has made significant strides to build on the financial success of previous years by not only improving operational liquidity but also building a resilient and robust financial control that can manage the organisation's growth and meets the everchanging demand of our regulators, funders, and member institutions. As such, we have managed to significantly improve our cash position (standing at £1.8m at the year-end) and have added over £170K to our general reserves. This has all been achieved through the hard work of the Trustees, management and staff members.









## A YEAR IN NUMBERS

17 **CHAPTERS** 

485 (MARCH 2021)\*

\*Up from 453 (March 2020)

6,836 PEOPLE **DEVELOPED LOCALLY TO BUILD** THEIR POWER FOR CHANGE

407 LEADERS COMPLETED OUR 3-DA ACCREDITED COMMUNIT ORGANISING TRAINING

9,000+\* EMPLOYERS **PROVIDING A PAY RISE** TO MORE THAN 275,000 PEOPLE SINCE THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN

(\*Up from over 8,000 for the year ending March 2021)

**200** COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP GROUPS SUPPORTED, AND 57 REFUGEES WELCOMED

400+ PARENTS SUPPORTED THROUGH PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES **TOGETHER** (PACT)

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