



IMPACT REPORT 2022

Covering July 2021 - June 2022



INTRODUCTION

FROM ANDREW COPSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Bringing non-religious people together to create a better society has always been at the core of our mission, and in 2022, Humanists UK is doing that on a larger scale than at any time in our history. Today, we are a major force for good with sizeable social and political impact, all of which is entirely due to the generosity and support of our members. As ever, this year's *Impact Report* covers only a small slice of the work we've been doing (we couldn't fit it all in!), but I hope it gives you a sense of the scale of positive change your support is making possible.

Putting together this year's *Impact Report*, I couldn't help but realise it tells a very timely story of resilience against adversity. It was the generosity of members and donors that carried us through a challenging two-year period of lockdowns and furloughs. This enabled our large volunteer force, and small team of staff, to make significant advances in our campaigns, as well as big strides in the development and promotion of our services. Of course, these are not easy times for anyone, with war, financial struggle, and disease never far from the headlines, or from our minds.

Charities, like ours, are very squeezed at the moment too. But I know that through the ongoing generosity of our members, our achievements can continue, and our work can keep on changing lives. By being part of Humanists UK, you are helping to make an impact for the good of society. And for that, I can't thank you enough.



We want a world where **rational thinking** and **kindness** prevail

By advancing the humanist approach to life, we **inspire and support** non-religious people to be **happy, confident, and ethical**, and work with them **for a better society**.

We're a national charity working on behalf of non-religious people, and we've been at the forefront of progressive social change in this country for over 125 years. Today, we're powered by over 100,000 members and supporters. The ingenuity, enthusiasm, and generosity of every single person in our movement is absolutely vital to what we do. It's what allows our important work to grow, expand, and flourish – as this report details.

Our policies are formed with the support of more than 190 of the world's most prominent thinkers and experts, including scientists, philosophers, writers, academics, and public figures. We also work to advance our policies with the help of over 115 parliamentarians who are members of the All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG).

CHAMPIONING IDEAS FOR THE ONE LIFE WE HAVE

We promote wider awareness and an enriched understanding of the humanist approach to life.

THINK FOR YOURSELF, ACT FOR EVERYONE

We provide resources and services to help people navigate difficult moments and important occasions in life, and to connect with like-minded people.

LASTING CHANGE FOR A FAIRER SOCIETY

We promote freedom of thought and choice for everyone, changing law and public opinion through our campaigns.

BRINGING NON-RELIGIOUS PEOPLE TOGETHER

We speak up on behalf of non-religious people and give them a voice in public debate. We champion and defend their rights and freedoms.

YEAR IN NUMBERS



A quick snapshot of our impact in the last 12 months



Over 60,000,000 people reached through our social media



563 humanist celebrants in our Humanist Ceremonies network



150,000 people took our 'How humanist are you?' online quiz



25,000 people attended our online lectures and events



19 out of 22 areas in Wales now have a humanist advising on the RE curriculum, up from just seven



6,000,000 minutes spent watching our YouTube videos worldwide



10 NHS-employed humanist pastoral carers, plus 87 in volunteer positions



26,000 pupils heard from one of our Understanding Humanism humanist school speakers

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

Our first aim as a charity is very simple: we want more people to know what humanism is!

Our work in schools, for example, continued to make strides with approximately 26,000 pupils encountering humanism in school lessons through one of our trained school speakers. Over 35,000 teachers, parents, and carers downloaded resources from our *Understanding Humanism* website, which received an overhaul earlier this year to be even more user-friendly. The site offers videos, downloadable presentations, print-outs, and other kinds of resources to help with creating lessons about the humanist approach to life. We also continued to support *BBC Bitesize* with the creation of brand new high-quality video resources all about humanist ethics.

We also produced content for the wider public outside of schools. Our ongoing podcast, *What I Believe*, had its third and fourth seasons, with upwards of 150,000 people tuning into interviews with famous humanists about how humanist values, convictions, and opinions inform their lives, including the likes of John

Amaechi MBE, Shaparak Khorsandi, Carol Smillie, and Jim Al-Khalili. And of course, we continued to sell copies of *The Little Book of Humanism* in the thousands at bookstores across the country.

We took advantage of our large social media reach with the relaunch of our popular *That's Humanism!* campaign on social media last August. Featuring all-new animations, and narration from our patron Stephen Fry, the campaign emphasised humanist attitudes to death, morality, the scientific method, and finding happiness in the one life we have. Over 60,000,000 people saw our social media posts across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram last year. The videos are available to watch at any time at humanists.uk/thatshumanism



More people knowing what humanism is and more non-religious people with humanist beliefs and values recognising themselves as humanists

ANNUAL LECTURES AND MEDALS

Our Annual Lecture and Medals series has continued to go from strength to strength, and 2022 marked a turning point as we were able to return to in-person events, at least some of the time, following the last national lockdown. In February 2022, we were together in Conway Hall for a fantastic celebration of Darwin Day with *People and pathogens: the evolution of infections*, by our Darwin Day Lecture medallist, the epidemiologist Professor Dame Anne Johnson. The event was chaired our by Professor Alice Roberts.

Alice also chaired our Voltaire Lecture last summer, delivered by biologist Professor Nichola Raihani. *The Social Instinct* looked into the evolutionary origins of cooperation, friendship, and kindness and was attended online by nearly 1,000 people. This was followed last October by Dr Laura Schwartz's Holyoake Lecture, *Infidel feminism*, on the inspiring freethinking women of the 19th century humanist movement. Our most recent medallist was Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, space scientist and *The Sky At Night* presenter, who took us on a tour of global scientific achievement, women in science, and up into the cosmos for our Rosalind Franklin Lecture in March, chaired by Samira Ahmed.



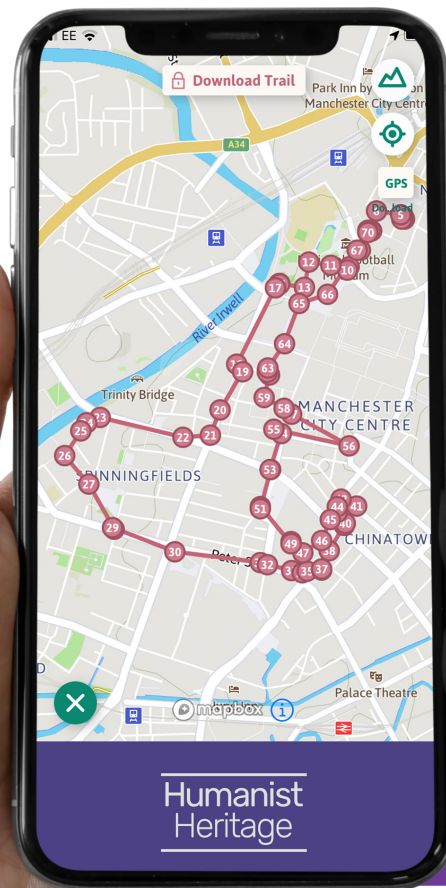
Watch our events
online on our
YouTube channel:
[youtube.com/
humanistsuk](https://www.youtube.com/humanistsuk)

We had many other highlights in our programme outside the big named lectures. In May 2022, we brought together Professor Nichola Raihani with our former Darwin Day Lecturer, anthropologist Dr Oliver Scott-Curry, and humanist philosopher Professor Richard Norman, for an exploration of *The Nature of Morality*, attended by 500 people online.

We also held special Humanist Heritage events following our 125th anniversary in 2021. In December, we held *Education not Indoctrination: 125 Years of Advancing Children's Rights*. In March, we joined historian S I Martin for *The Beliefs of Black Georgians* to highlight the complexity and depth of religion and belief among Black people in Georgian Britain. In April, we joined author Nan Sloane for *Uncontrollable Women*, to hear stories about the often overlooked women of the early humanist movement. And in May, we celebrated decades of humanist activism in *LGBT Humanists: A History*.

HUMANIST HERITAGE... ON TOUR!

As well as organising our own events about humanist history, and uploading hundreds of new articles to the Humanist Heritage website, we've taken humanist history on the road! We've delivered talks to humanist branches, groups, and other societies across the UK – including the London Knowledge Quarter. We're presently organising an international conference on humanist freethinkers with the help of Queen Mary University of London, too. We're proud to throw a spotlight on the people and ideas that have shaped the humanist movement for over a century. You might even be surprised to find humanist heritage sites in your local area! View our interactive Humanist Heritage map today to find out. And, if you live in London, Manchester (pictured), or Belfast, we've have specially curated Humanist Heritage walking tours too. To step into humanist heritage, visit: heritage.humanists.uk/walks



SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Our network of humanists working on the ground now includes 563 humanist celebrants, 206 active school speakers, 150 representatives on council bodies which set RE syllabuses, 244 pastoral carers in hospitals and prisons, and 13 trained volunteers supporting so-called 'apostates', right across England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands.

Our services

- **Humanist Ceremonies**, including non-religious weddings, namings, funerals, and memorials
- **Non-religious pastoral care**, in settings like prisons, hospitals, hospices, and universities
- **Faith to Faithless**, providing community events and peer support for 'apostates' (people who've left high-control religions)
- **Asylum support** for humanists who would otherwise be deported to countries where they face death or persecution
- **Humanist communities**, including events and activities organised by LGBT Humanists, Defence Humanists, Young Humanists, London Humanist Choir, and Humanist Students
- **Local groups**, including Humanists UK branches and partner groups



Photo credit: Nikki van der Molen

THE LITTLE BOOK OF HUMANIST WEDDINGS

Following the enormous success of Alice Roberts and Andrew Copson's best-selling *The Little Book of Humanism*, publishers were quick to commission a follow-up: *The Little Book of Humanist Weddings*, which came out last September.

A perfect pint-sized guide to all things love, romance, and commitment, the book was compiled by Alice, Andrew, and wedding celebrant Zena Birch, with tonnes of support, stories, and contributions from the whole of the Humanist Ceremonies celebrant network.

Written to inspire and stimulate couples' thoughts around the ideas, beliefs, and values at the foundation of their humanist wedding or relationship, it's the perfect complement to making a wedding a day to remember, and a memory to cherish. It's also provided invaluable visibility for humanist weddings in bookstores up and down the country.



BEING THERE: NEW INTRODUCTION TO HUMANIST PASTORAL CARE

Last July, we were delighted to publish our pastoral carer Joanna Mutlow's practical guide to humanist pastoral support, *Being There: Responses in Humanist Pastoral Care*, and also send copies to over 1,300 hospitals, hospices, and prisons across the UK. The first-of-its-kind book is based on Joanna's first-hand experience of the support our carers give every day in NHS hospitals.



BREAKTHROUGH CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS APOSTATE SUPPORT PROGRESS

We broke ground with our 2021 Apostasy Conference last August. The first-of-its-kind event brought together so-called 'apostates', academics, and service providers (including NHS professionals, police, and NGOs) to better understand the issues apostates face, and to discuss the much-needed reforms to keep them safe from harm. Later, we expanded our Faith to Faithless programme further with the recruitment of a dedicated, full-time Service Manager.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY



More people enjoying greater
freedom of thought, of expression,
and of choice over their own lives

**FREEDOM
OF
CHOICE**

 Humanists UK

**ACT FOR THE
INCURABLY
SUFFERING**



HUMANISTS EXCLUDED FROM ENGLAND AND WALES MARRIAGE REFORMS

We were frustrated in March when the UK Government pressed ahead with outdoor

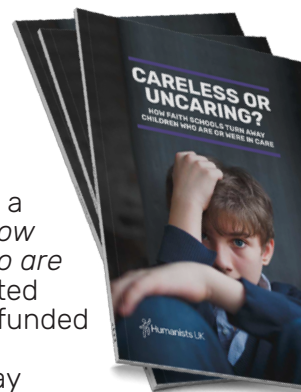
marriage reforms in England and Wales that excluded humanists. The UK Government said it would wait for the outcome of the Law Commission report on marriage law before taking a decision on whether to extend legal recognition to our weddings. It has had the power to legally recognise humanist marriages since 2013 following a vote by Parliament, but has refused to act, and we've been waiting ever since.

The UK Government has justified its decision to not act on humanist marriages because it does not want 'piecemeal' reform. However, the decision to legally recognise outdoor civil marriages is the definition of piecemeal reform. This undermines the logic used against us. The UK Government was grilled intensely on this point during an All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group-organised debate on humanist marriage in the House of Lords earlier this year. The former Communities Secretary under David Cameron, Lord Pickles, was among those who strongly challenged the UK Government to recognise it as an issue of discrimination.

Meanwhile, 53 MPs and peers from all parties signed an open letter to the UK Government calling for equality, ahead of a backbench debate in Parliament in January. Humanist wedding ceremonies have legal recognition in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Republic of Ireland. The Welsh Government has also said it wants to legally recognise humanist marriages in Wales, but can't, as the matter is reserved to the UK Government.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS FAITH SCHOOLS' DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE MOST VULNERABLE

We made headlines last August with a new report, *Careless or uncaring? How faith schools turn away children who are or were in care*. The report investigated the shocking extent to which state-funded religious schools are making use of discriminatory powers to turn away vulnerable children. It found that 41% of religious secondary schools do this, rising to 76% of Catholic schools and 100% of Jewish schools, but only 1% of Church of England schools. We used the report to argue that the time had come to do away with faith schools altogether and make all state schools open to all local families.



ASSISTED DYING LEGISLATION MAKES WAVES IN UK, JERSEY, SCOTTISH, AND MANX PARLIAMENTS

We were part of a huge rally outside the UK parliament last October. With our members and supporters, we supported the Assisted Dying Bill, debated in the Lords that day, and called for an end to the UK's inhumane ban on assisted dying. Ahead of the debate, our patron Dr Henry Marsh, and our Chief Executive Andrew Copson, spoke powerfully in favour of a compassionate law that would recognise choice, dignity, and the autonomy of terminally ill or incurably suffering people. The Lords voted in favour of the Bill, but it didn't become law as the Government stopped it from having further parliamentary time.

But across the UK and crown dependencies, the debate on assisted dying continues, as many of the other legislatures appear to be considering the issue seriously. In Jersey, where our evidence shaped a Citizens' Jury proposal to pass a law for assisted dying, lawmakers are now progressing to legislation after a vote in favour. Meanwhile in Scotland, a new Assisted Dying Bill is picking up popular support in the Scottish Parliament. Most recently, in May, the Parliament of the Isle of Man voted in favour of moving forward with legislation on assisted dying by a margin of 22 votes to 2.



Action to bring about a humane right to die law anywhere in these isles would represent a leap forward, and would put pressure on the UK Parliament. We have also continued work with MPs to intensify calls for a public inquiry on assisted dying, which as with the Citizen's Jury in Jersey, is seen as one measure which could 'unblock' the Government and Commons.

HISTORIC NORTHERN IRELAND PROGRESS WITH EDUCATION LAWS AND NEW BUFFER ZONES

Ahead of the Northern Ireland elections in May 2022, the Northern Ireland Assembly made history by passing into law two Acts of the Assembly that will have a transformative effect

on the lives of people in Northern Ireland – and which have thrown down the gauntlet for the rest of the UK to catch up. We lobbied MLAs in support of both Bills.

The first of these, on education, makes it unlawful for religious schools to discriminate against teachers on the basis of religion, as is sadly still common in England, Wales, and Scotland. The second, on buffer zones, brings Northern Ireland ahead of Great Britain in protecting women from religious harassment and victimisation outside abortion clinics by forcing religious protesters to operate at a safe distance.

A BAN ON 'CONVERSION THERAPY'

After years of repeated and broken promises, the UK Government announced a ban on the abusive religious pseudoscience known as 'conversion therapy' in April. The ban, however, fails to include trans people, and therefore fails to deliver what was originally promised by Theresa May in 2018 and again by Boris Johnson last year.

Our LGBT Humanists section was part of a large protest outside Downing Street which called on the UK Government to implement a full and enforceable ban. We condemned the UK Government for its failure to take action sooner and put forward legislation for scrutiny, which has allowed lurid speculation to take hold in the absence of any concrete proposals.

AT-HOME ABORTION MADE PERMANENT ACROSS GB

In February, after the UK Government announced an end to Covid-related measures to allow early terminations of pregnancies at home in England, we reacted by lobbying MPs to resist a change back to the old system. We did so after the new approach was found to have increased access to abortion for women in vulnerable circumstances. Meanwhile, the Scottish and Welsh Governments took steps to make the same pandemic provisions permanent.

We were delighted when in March, MPs voted by 215 to 188 to overrule the UK Government over home abortions in England, making the provisions permanent across Great Britain.





NI BLASPHEMY LAW REPEAL EDGES CLOSER

Our long-running campaign to end the blasphemy laws in Northern Ireland continued to gather steam, as the then Northern Ireland

Justice Minister and Alliance Party leader Naomi Long MLA (pictured) continued to restate her commitment to repeal of the law. Northern Ireland's blasphemy laws are the only remaining blasphemy laws the UK. We were delighted to see the issue make it into party manifestos ahead of the 5 May elections.

We have continued to build up support for a change in the law, and we've confirmed the support of all the Northern Ireland political parties apart from the DUP and the UUP (which has no policy on this). However, MLAs from those parties also support repeal.

Ahead of the Assembly's dissolution in April, we called on the Department of Justice to use upcoming legislation on hate crime to repeal the blasphemy law. The main barrier to action now is the fact that the Northern Ireland Assembly is currently unable to reconvene due to Brexit-related political disagreements.

MAJOR VICTORY: ACTION NOW BEING TAKEN TO SHUT DOWN ILLEGAL SCHOOLS

Our campaign to close illegal religious schools in England reached a pivotal moment in May, when the UK Government introduced a Bill to shut them down for good.

This is a testament to eight years of our campaigning with whistleblowers, Ofsted, parents, ministers, civil servants, and MPs. When we first raised the issue of illegal schools the problem was not largely acknowledged to exist. It has been a long road to build political awareness and willingness to act. Our job now is to hold the Government's feet to the fire and make sure proposals become law. However, the very same Bill also has problematic elements which double down on the UK's unusual, discriminatory laws permitting religious discrimination in schools, and forcing children into daily acts of Christian worship. While it's unusual to see any government re-legislate very old and unpopular pieces of legislation, the fact that they are doing so creates an opening for us to debate these old laws anew, and potentially amend them into better shape. We have continued, including throughout the last session of Parliament, to build up support for replacing collective worship with inclusive assemblies.

WORK AGAINST A SEGREGATED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Across the UK, we've continued to challenge the discriminatory system of faith schools which divide up children by religions they are too young to have confidently chosen for themselves.

In Northern Ireland, we gave evidence at numerous points and worked with our members to write to MLAs in favour of a successful Integrated Education Act which will help to increase the number of schools that mix pupils from different religious backgrounds together. Integrated schools are far from perfect, and retain a strong Christian character, but they represent a major step up from the severe divide between Catholic and Protestant-majority controlled schools.

In England and Wales, we have continued to oppose the approval of new faith schools, and have worked with local residents in various communities around the UK where faith schools have been imposed on the community in spite of majority local opposition to them. In June last year, this activism led to a startling admission in a Kingston upon Thames council meeting where a councillor explained that due to discriminatory funding rules, councillors had to consider the frank ultimatum that 'it's this school or no school'.

RALLYING TO FREE MUBARAK BALA

Our colleague Mubarak Bala, President of the Nigerian Humanist Association, was sentenced to 24 years in prison for posting 'blasphemous' content online. He was sentenced in April by the High Court in Kano, Nigeria, and two years after his initial arrest and subsequent imprisonment.

We took to the streets in April to protest his sentence outside the Nigeria High Commission, London. During the lively protest, our Chief Executive spoke alongside British Nigerian humanist Clive Aruede from the Association of Black Humanists, to call for immediate action on Mubarak's behalf. Our patron, actor Eddie Marsan, also spoke at the rally. Eddie read Mubarak's own written testimony to the UK Foreign Affairs Committee's 2019 inquiry into freedom of religion or belief. This detailed the persecution he had already faced, both from the terrorist organisation Boko Haram, from Nigerian authorities, and from the wider community he grew up in. We have urged the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office to do more to advance his case with Nigerian officials, and have also met with the Nigerian High Commissioner ourselves to discuss his case.



GROWTH & ESTEEM

HUMANISTS UK LEADS CEREMONY FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS AT NHS ANNIVERSARY EVENT

In July 2021, our Chief Executive Andrew Copson was invited to lead the special ceremony organised by NHS England to pay tribute to NHS workers who died during the pandemic. The ceremony was part of the opening of a new Blossom Memorial Garden in Stratford in London. The garden will stand as a living tribute to all the key workers who died during the pandemic and all those who tirelessly worked to care for hundreds of thousands of Covid patients.

Andrew said at the time, 'In our society, for the last seven decades, we have made a promise to each other that when any one of us falls ill, is suffering, or needs care, then all of us will meet that need together. That is what the NHS represents – that pledge, unique in human history, that every one of us

living in this country has made to each other every day, all our lives.'

The ceremony was one of several events that marked the anniversary of the National Health Service, which was founded in July 1948 by the humanist Nye Bevan.



**Humanists UK: respected for our
expertise and professionalism and
recognised as the leading national
voice for the non-religious**

NEW STRATEGY LAUNCH

We were delighted to unveil the new Humanists UK strategy, delayed from 2020 by the pandemic, by email to all of our members. We launched it with a glossy digital report summarising some of our key ambitions for 2025 and how we propose to go about meeting them.



By advancing the humanist approach to life, we inspire and support non-religious people to be happy, confident, and ethical, and work with them for a better society.

The renewed strategy sees us increasing our investment in promoting understanding of humanism, further expansion of some of our most important

services for the general public, and defining six strategically important campaigns where we can hope to have the biggest impact on society by 2025. It's available to read at humanists.uk/our-strategy.



MARKING FIVE YEARS OF NORTHERN IRELAND HUMANISTS

In November, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of our section Northern Ireland Humanists with a report detailing all our achievements to date – legally recognised humanist marriages, same-sex marriages, and abortion provision – and priorities we still aim to meet. As a marker of how much has changed in just five short years, the report featured messages of congratulations from the leaders of every Northern Ireland political party.

It marked a coming of age for our section, which, through the popularity of our weddings and campaigns, has become a major force for good in Northern Ireland society. We also celebrated the launch at a well-attended online event with Northern Ireland Humanists members, celebrants, and patrons (pictured above) – hosted by comedian Tim McGarry. Download the report at humanists.uk/5YNI.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
 INCLUDING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Funds 2021			Funds 2020
	£ restricted	£ unrestricted	£ total	£ total
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from general funds				
Legacies and donations	156,469	1,231,063	1,387,532	1,985,125
Other trading activities	-	-	-	240
Investments	-	8,536	8,536	2,408
Incoming resources from charitable activities	-	1,297,248	1,297,248	1,209,104
Total incoming resources	156,469	2,536,847	2,693,316	3,196,877
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Costs of generating income	-	(183,015)	(183,015)	(173,558)
Costs of charitable activities	(166,921)	(1,970,044)	(2,136,965)	(2,033,048)
Total resources expended	(166,921)	(2,153,059)	(2,319,980)	(2,206,606)
NET INCOMING RESOURCES/(RESOURCES EXPENDED) BEFORE TRANSFERS AND INVESTMENTS	(10,452)	383,788	373,336	990,271

OUR FULL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR IS AVAILABLE ON THE CHARITY COMMISSION WEBSITE AND AT [HUMANISTS.UK/MEMBERS](https://www.humanists.uk/members)



**Humanists UK: an expanding,
financially healthy, and
sustainable movement**

	Funds 2021			Funds 2020
	£ restricted	£ unrestricted	£ total	£ total
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES <i>(continued)</i>				
Net gains/(losses) on investments	-	11,786	11,786	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(10,452)	395,574	385,122	990,271
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(10,452)	395,574	385,122	990,271
Balances brought forward at 1 January	129,075	2,533,076	2,662,151	1,671,880
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER	118,623	2,928,650	3,047,273	2,662,151

SENIOR STAFF

Chief Executive Andrew Copson
Director of Public Affairs and Policy Richy Thompson
Head of People Vicky Ball
Director of Operations Catriona McLellan
Director of Communications Liam Whitton
Director of IT Andrew West

BOARD OFFICERS

Chair Tamar Ghosh
Vice Chair Ann O'Connell
Treasurer John Adams

Auditors Knox Cropper
Bank The Co-Operative



THINK FOR YOURSELF, ACT FOR EVERYONE

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