



together  
now

**Together Now Annual report and accounts 2020/21**

Our core principle is that all families should be able to live together if they choose to.

## **Together Now Annual report and accounts 2020/21**

### **Index**

Administrative information	1
Trustees' Report	2 – 11
Independent Examiners Report	12
Receipts and payments	13
Statement of assets and liabilities	14

**Together Now Annual report and accounts 2020/21**  
**Administrative information**

<b>Trustees</b>	H Slee (Chair) A Lythgoe A Smith
<b>Address</b>	46 Alden Road Helmshore Rossendale Lancashire BB4 4AQ
<b>Independent Examiner &amp; Accountants</b>	Peter Smith BA FCA DChA HGA Accountants & Financial Consultants Ltd t/a Chittenden Horley – Chartered Accountants 456 Chester Road Old Trafford Manchester M16 9HD
<b>Charity number</b>	1183639

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**

**Structure, Governance and Management**

Type of Governing Document:	Constitution
How the Charity is Constituted:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee Selection Methods:	Trustees can only be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

**Objectives and Activities**

The charity's objectives, for the public benefit, are: "The relief of refugees, and their family dependents who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress, in such ways as are exclusively charitable under the law of England and Wales".

The Trustees have complied with section 2(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011, having due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.



### **Highlights**

We have supported more families this year than in our previous 10 years combined, with 248 families being supported through our programme and many more being signposted to appropriate services. We have had 762 individuals directly benefit from our service including 280 children, some of whom were reunited with siblings in the absence of either parent.

Our agile approach has allowed us to quickly react to changes in the operating environment and continue to work throughout the Covid-19 restrictions.

We are particularly pleased to have recruited new volunteers and trustees to join us and support the development of our work. This has included recruitment of our informal peer mentors, interpreters and family support volunteers.

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now For the year ended September 30 2021



### Our work

We have booked flights for 110 families through Miles4Migrants, supported 77 families who had made their own booking and funded flights for 16 families from fundraising activity for service delivery completed by Together Now.

In addition to the international travel:

- 26 families received support with the costs of obtaining a visa, for example DNA and TB testing, travel to visa application centres and document costs.
- 19 families were supported with the additional costs of reunion, particularly those whose families arrived into London and needed to travel to regional airports
- 14 families received grants to assist with immediate costs post arrival.

We have also tried to reach families earlier in the process to avoid their reaching crisis point. This has included the delivery of a workshop on the costs of family reunion to a number of refugee and asylum charities, as well as speaking to individual organisations on this issue and developing resources translated into a number of languages, which can be accessed for free by individuals and organisations so they can be proactive in preparing for family reunion.

In addition to providing services, we work strategically to advocate for and raise awareness of issues affecting refugees wanting to reunite with family. We recently contributed to bringing about exemptions for the costs of COVID-related managed self-isolation for reunited refugee families on arrival to the UK. We have briefed MPs on the need to extend the 30-day entry limit on visas for refugee family reunion. We currently lead national quarterly meetings on operational travel assistance during the pandemic, sharing updates and opportunities for collaboration.

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**

***Ahmed's story***

*"In Yemen I was a university graduate and a business man. It has been more than four years since I left the country in 2017, the war there was raised that forced me to leave my home and everything urgently, it has been very difficult time to me and my family. I have been through many countries before arriving to the UK and my family was in Yemen where the situation was getting worse. I was looking for a chance to be united again.*

*As soon as I got my refugee status in the UK, I immediately arranged for their travel, as Yemen is surrounded by conflict it was very difficult to get them out, the only possible country was Egypt, they stayed for three months waiting for the process which was a bit difficult and long.*

*I do recommend those who are applying for family reunion from Yemen to put into consideration the high costs of the travel and the stay in Egypt, furthermore, they need to have a good immigration solicitor for their family reunion application.*

*My future plan is to settle down with my family again and start working as soon as possible, I have been taking a training course in software development, and I will soon become a software engineer.*

*Finally, I thank Together Now for the massive help and support with my family reunion travel process and costs, Amy has been giving support and follow every stage carefully, I am so grateful and appreciated."*

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**



**Operating context**

The demand for our services has grown significantly but aside from those requiring significant financial aid, we have not turned away any family meeting our criteria.

Following the opening up of international travel, introduction of hotel quarantine and Covid testing requirements our work significantly changed. Families who previously would have been in a position to book their own travel now faced extensive guidance to navigate, bureaucratic processes to complete, and vastly increased costs for those requiring hotel quarantine. Whilst necessary for safety these measures placed many families in very difficult situations as they tried to make arrangements in a quickly changing context.

Over the year we have supported 196 families with Covid-19 related arrangements. This has included:

- 92 hotel bookings at a saving to families of well over £185,000
- 109 test bookings at a saving to families of well over £15,000
- 167 Passenger Locator Forms completed

For many of these families, funding these additional COVID-19 related costs would have been impossible, leaving loved ones stranded and at even greater risk.

Post Brexit changes have also impacted on service delivery. The new requirement for airport transit visas for Schengen countries, on top of routes being cancelled due to the pandemic, has further restricted the options we have to offer clients and has resulted in a need to revise our ways of working to adapt to these changes.



**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**

***Alain's story***

*"I left Congo Brazzaville on 19 October 2015 and on arrival in the United Kingdom the following day claimed asylum. I left my wife with seven children in Congo Brazzaville and she was relocated to her parents for her safety due to my political activities and arrest and investigation. In 2017 my wife and children were relocated to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).*

*In December 2019, I had been granted Asylum in the United which allowed starting new life giving me the eligibility public fund and assistance.*

*In September 2020, when some countries started lifting the COVID-19 restrictions I started my family Reunion application through ECF exception cases funding approved Legal Aids given the size of family and my low income on which I could not afford to pay the Solicitors and DNA costs.*

*With the kind assistance of Together Now, who worked harder to assistance me financially with the TBs costs, Covid-test (PCR tests), travel arrangement /assistance, my wife and seven children were granted visa in March 2021 and joined me in the UK on 30 May 2021, after a long Journey flying from Kinshasa to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Cairo, Egypt to London Heathrow and spending 10 days in hotel quarantine.*

*The issues I faced to my family to the United Kingdom are as follow:*

- In January 2021, passengers with UK VISA could not travel through EU Country without a Schengen transit visa. France embassy in Congo had refused to issue my family transit visa.*
- Due COVID-19 DHL refused to ship my family DNA samples that delayed the family reunion application. The Samples were shipped by FEDEX*
- It was not easy to find the flights route for my family to travel to the UK due the traffic light system implemented for countries which have high case of Covid -19, flights were cancelled all the time.*

*We (me and my family) all could not forget the financial and travel arrangement received from Together Now"*

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**



**Aspirations**

This year has been a real turning point for us and we are keen to make the most of the opportunities offered through the context and continue to develop our impact.

Our strategic direction continues to focus on proactive approaches to empowering families, to have the knowledge and resource to go through the family reunion process safely and positively. We will continue to work with other organisations to grow their knowledge and understanding of the financial and practical considerations around family reunion, to allow them to better support their service users.

This year has demonstrated more than ever the value of being able to speak to someone with lived experience. Clients who have stepped forward to act as peer mentors and interpreters have been an invaluable resource, and with increased capacity at board level we want to develop these individuals and others to be integral in leadership roles within Together Now.

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**

***Zema's story***

*Zema studied public health and was a project facilitator at the YMCA Ethiopia, Yosef studied IT was an IT co-ordinator and graphic designer at YMCA Ethiopia as well.*

*"I have been forced to leave my home country because I have been receiving threats from the government and unknown people to stop what I am doing in my political party. Which was being the voice for minority groups which needs support to stop false propaganda about Amharan people and regions. After I left my country my partner also has been receiving threat to tell them where I want.*

*I have been separated from my family for 2 years. It feels like I am alone in this world because I only have one sister and one little brother and am the youngest of all. We lost our parents when we were children so being apart from them as well as from my partner was the end of the world but it was the only option to survive, I hope I will bring them one day. After I came here I never slept peacefully. Being responsible for your family is the most difficult thing when you are not around.*

*Yosef lived in his grandmother's house and my sister and brother keep changing address (as we were living in renting house) so that they can be safer. Through that time, my husband had been by their side no matter what.*

*The visa application process wasn't easy for us. He had difficulty when he tried to attend his appointment at the visa centre because he wasn't having a passport. My lawyer told us it was possible without it, but they were not willing to do that so they turn him back (Ethiopia). He was really upset even cannot go work but applied for passport and again it takes so long without any enough reason. That time was the worst time of our lives. Finally, he got it and applied for the visa.*

*Our advice for those in the same situation is to keep supporting each other no matter what and find other way, don't give up. We are in UK where we can live peacefully in the most democratic country where we can get support whenever we want.*

*Our future plan is to have a quality life without any fear and study more further as well as keep supporting charity like Together Now as a volunteer because what you have done for us matters in our life so we want to be a part of it."*

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now For the year ended September 30 2021



### Thankyous

In this extraordinary year we and the families we have supported are incredibly grateful to a number of individuals. Primarily, Natalie at CTM for her extraordinary commitment and willingness to go well out of her way to help families in crisis, also Onyinyechi and Anya at DHSC for their patience and understanding. Many families would have run out of time without your help.

As always, we would like to thank the staff at Miles4Migrants, not just for the flights they have provided but the passion and creativity in surmounting the many obstacles this year has thrown at them, and their continued kindness towards the situations faced by individuals.

We'd also like to thank our funders DM Thomas Foundation, Help Refugees, Edith Ellis and Blue Moon for contributing to our various programmes of work and playing an integral part in the increased impact we've been able to deliver this year.

This year we have also truly seen other charities in the sector be tested more and more. We are grateful for the staff we work with at partner organisations for their work in increasingly difficult times and the help they have offered to families.

We would also like to thank the airport staff, strangers and others who have helped our families by giving directions, advice, guidance, ad hoc interpreting, Wi-Fi and reassurance as they travel. You've all made a really stressful experience a little bit easier for someone.

The most important thank you needs to go to our families who, in some cases, have dealt with seemingly impossible barriers to being with their loved ones but have faced this with amazing resilience, determination, drive and good humour. Particular thanks to those who have also helped to support others in the same situation by sharing their experience.

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now For the year ended September 30 2021

### Financial review

The charity had a cash surplus for the year on unrestricted funds of £8,237. We are pleased to report that donations income has continued to increase rising to £9,049 (prior year £4,635).

### Reserves policy

#### Background

Together Now has no ongoing financial commitments and since our conception has maintained a flexible model allowing operations to grow or contract in relation to income. This has been core to our sustainability.

In the event of no further funding being received service delivery would temporarily contract and there would be no threat to the ongoing viability of the organisation.

#### Service delivery

Any long-term financial commitments, for example staff appointments, will be only entered into where there is funding allocated for the lifetime of the contract. Any change to this policy will require a full review of the Reserves Policy.

The Casework Policy states that cases will only be accepted if there is adequate financial backing to complete the requirements with appropriate contingency. Each case will be financially risk assessed on its own merit in the current financial context.

#### Agreed reserves

Reserves will be maintained to allow all current cases to be completed. This figure will vary depending on the characteristics of the current casework commitments.

#### Triggers for review of reserve policy

- I. Acquisition of commitments that do not have funding secured to cover the lifetime of the contract.
- II. Recruitment of staff into long term or permanent posts where ending a contract would adversely impact service delivery.

Currently unrestricted cash reserves stand at £8,237.

### Approval

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Trustee: Alex Smith

Date: 11/11/2021



Trustee: Helen Slee

Date: 11/11/2021

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Together Now  
For the year ended September 30 2021**

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the period October 1 2020 to September 30 2021, set out on pages 13 and 14.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- a) accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- b) the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter Smith BA FCA DChA



HGA Accountants & Financial Consultants

t/a Chittenden Horley -Chartered Accountants

456 Chester Road

Old Trafford

Manchester M16 9HD

Date:

**Together Now Annual report and accounts 2020/21**  
**Receipts and payments**  
**For the year ended September 30 2021**

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grants		44,106		44,106	8,340
Personal donations	8,999			8,999	4,635
Casework income	3,178			3,178	120
Gift Aid	788			788	693
Fundraising	-			-	927
				-	-
<i>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</i>	12,964	44,106	-	57,070	14,715
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total receipts</i>	12,964	44,106	-	57,070	14,715
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Family reunion cases	4,777	38,553		43,330	14,663
Operational development (specific grant received previous year)		5,553		5,553	7,071
				-	
				-	
				-	
				-	
				-	
				-	
<i>Sub total</i>	4,777	44,106	-	48,883	21,734
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total payments</i>	4,777	44,106	-	48,883	21,734
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	8,187	0	-	8,187	- 7,019
A5 Transfers between funds			-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end		688		688	638
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	8,187	688	-	8,875	- 6,381

**Together Now Annual report and accounts 2020/21**  
**Statement of assets and liabilities as at September 30 2021**

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank account	8,187	688	-
				-
		-	-	-
	<i>Total cash funds</i>	8,187	688	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK		OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	