

The City Bridge Trust

Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Organisation Details

Name of your organisation:

Asylum Support Appeals Project

If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name?

In which London Borough is your organisation based?

Tower Hamlets

Contact person:

Ms Kat Lorenz

Position:

Director

Website:

<http://www.asaproject.org>

Social Media Accounts:

https://twitter.com/_a_s_a_p?lang=en

What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold?

Advice Quality Standard in Refugees and Asylum Seekers

London Legal Support Trust Centre of Excellence

Our solicitor and 45 Duty Scheme volunteers are all regulated by the SRA.

Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: **Registered Charity**

Charity Number:

1105625

Company Number:

04763838

CIC Number:

Bencom Number:

When was your organisation established? **14/05/2003**

Aims of your organisation:

We aim to reduce destitution amongst asylum seekers by protecting their legal rights to food and shelter.

The Charity's objects (as described in our governing document) are:

1.1 the relief of poverty, suffering and distress among individuals seeking asylum and support in the United Kingdom and in particular, but not limited to, the provision of legal advice and representation and other assistance;

1.2 the advancement of education through the provision of training to persons to enable them to give legal advice and representation and other assistance to the individuals referred to in Article 2.1; and

1.3 the promotion of such other purposes being exclusively charitable according to the law of England and Wales as the Trustees may from time to time determine.

Main activities of your organisation:

ASAP prevents destitution amongst asylum seekers by protecting their legal rights to food and shelter. Based in London, we do this by working nationally in three ways:

- 1) free in-depth legal representation through our 45+ volunteer lawyers at the Asylum Support Tribunal overturning 69% of refusals for 600 destitute asylum seekers per year appealing against an asylum support refusal;
- 2) building the skills of advisors from over 200 organisations across the UK, increasing the quality of support applications. We offer face to face, webinar and e-learning courses, a second tier advice line (600 calls per year), and a network of over 850 advisors to share best practice on asylum support;
- 3) challenging the unlawful asylum support policies and processes that leave thousands destitute, through advocacy and strategic litigation.

Our women's project runs alongside this, reducing barriers to asylum support for women including those fleeing domestic violence.

Your Staff & Volunteers

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
5	4	7	46
Do you have a Safeguarding policy? Yes			
Are the following people in your organisation subject to DBS checks?			
Paid Staff No	Volunteers No	Trustees / Management Committee Members No	

Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
Leased	Until June 2021

Environmental Impact**What action have you taken in the past year to progress environmentally sustainability principles and practice?**

Our office premises are container buildings, very environmentally friendly through their use of recycled construction materials. We have a recycling policy for all paper waste and a contract to recycle confidential waste as well. We train staff and volunteers in how to confidentially dispose of waste in an environmentally friendly manner. We recycle other materials on site (plastics, glass, paper etc). ASAP offers a season ticket loan to encourage the use of public transport to work.

Finance Details

Organisation Finances

	Year of most recent audited / examined accounts	Current financial year forecast	Next financial year budget
End of financial year date	31/03/2017	31/03/2019	
Grants & donations:	£484,264	£561,490	£0
Earned income:	£2,695	£3,500	£0
Other income:	£272	£200	£0
Total income:	487,231	£565,190	£0
Charitable activity costs:	£471,134	£568,391	£0
Cost of raising funds:	£0	£0	£0
Other costs:	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure:	£471,134	£568,391	£0
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£198,143	£198,630	£0
<p>What is your organisation's reserves policy? ASAP has a detailed reserves policy, reviewed every year - please do let us know if you would like a copy of the latest version reviewed in April 2018. Currently ASAP is aiming for reserves of £201,396 based on likely costs of closure or responding to other unforeseen events. As a result our current unrestricted reserves are slightly under the level outlined by our policy but only by £2766.</p>			
<p>For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources? 0%</p>			

Organisational changes

Describe any significant organisational changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts.

Changes to Management Committee:

? **Michael Spencer became Chair in March 2017**

? **Alasdair Mackenzie joined in May 2017**

? **Joana Ball resigned in May 2017**

? **Kat Lorenz resigned in October 2017 to ensure no conflict of interest when applying for Director role**

Hazel Williams, former Director left ASAP in Nov 2017, replaced by Kat Lorenz in Feb 2018

Grant Request

Which of the Trust's programmes and priority areas will your application deliver?
Advice and Support/Provision of advice and support

Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?
Advice & Support/More Londoners have Improved economic circumstances
Advice & Support/More people access debt and legal services for support before they hit crisis point

Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence.
To reduce the destitution amongst asylum seekers by providing them and the agencies who support them with expert advice and representation on asylum support.

When will the funding be required? **01/04/2019**

Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:

City Bridge Trust?
Yes

Another funder? (if so which)

How much funding are you requesting?

Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Year 4:	Year 5:
£45,000	£45,000	£0	£0	£0

Total Requested: £90,000

What 3 main differences or outcomes do you want to achieve through your funding proposal?

1200 destitute asylum seekers will be able to access free legal advice and representation at the Asylum Support Tribunal enabling them to have a better understanding of their rights and the Tribunal process and increasing their chances of a successful outcome.

600 destitute asylum seekers will win successful outcomes at the Tribunal and will be able to access their legal rights to support and accommodation, reducing their poverty.

Advice agencies advising asylum seekers will be better equipped to advise them on how to access asylum support, improving their chances of accessing asylum support and reducing destitution.

What are the main activities or outputs you will deliver to achieve these differences?

We will provide expert legal representation and advice for 1200 destitute asylum seekers over two years appealing at the Tribunal in East London.

We will provide face to face, webinar and e-learning training and advice for 140 people from organisations in London advising asylum seekers, to improve their understanding and legal knowledge of asylum support.

We will operate a second tier advice line 3 days a week and will manage the Asylum Support Advisors Network for advice agencies and organisations seeking information on asylum support in London. We will disseminate information on asylum support through this network and chair triannual meetings.

You and your grant request

What, specifically, are you applying for (your project)?

We are applying for continuation funding based on our existing City Bridge grant, in order to reduce the poverty of destitute asylum seekers in London by enabling them to access their legal rights to food and shelter. We will do this by:

- Providing free legal representation and advice to 600 destitute asylum seekers per year who are appealing a refusal or withdrawal of asylum support at the Asylum Support Tribunal (Tribunal) in East London.
- Providing free face to face, webinar and e-learning training to over 200 advisors alongside information and advice on asylum support through an advice line and online group for over 800 advisors from organisations who are supporting destitute asylum seekers. This will enable advice agencies to have a better understanding of asylum support law, ensuring that more people can access the support they need.

How will the project described achieve your stated outcomes?

1. Reduction in homelessness amongst asylum seekers through free legal representation for 600 destitute asylum seekers per year appealing against a refusal or withdrawal of support at the Asylum Support Tribunal (AST).
2. Destitute asylum seekers have increased access to specialist asylum support advice around the UK, increasing their chances of a successful asylum support application thereby preventing their homelessness. We will increase the skills and confidence of community organisations, advice agencies and legal providers in asylum support law through:
 - a. Face to face training, webinars and e-learning courses for 200 advisors per year (70 from London)
 - b. Assistance with 600 individual asylum support queries via our advice line open 3 days per week (200 from London)
 - c. Access to a sustainable network of over 850 advisors able to offer peer support on asylum support around the UK via our Asylum Support Advice Network

How do you know there's a need for this work?

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or access mainstream benefits and must apply to the Home Office for support. There are significant numbers of destitute asylum seekers in need of support - the Red Cross supported 15,000 last year and latest Home Office figures show 46,987 asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support, vulnerable to having that support withdrawn.

ASAP's research found support is often refused or terminated unlawfully. There is usually a right of appeal, but no funded legal advice. Without ASAP's work asylum seekers and their families would be left to navigate complex asylum support law alone, defending themselves to a judge despite language and cultural barriers. Independent research found that our representation increases success at appeal by up to 30%.

Government funding for asylum support advice was cut in 2013, leaving smaller organisations without expertise filling the gap. Our advice line took 633 calls last year.

How will the work be delivered - specifically, what will you do?

1. We will offer free legal advice or representation to 600 destitute asylum seekers/year at the London based Tribunal through our volunteer scheme of 45 pro bono lawyers. We will train volunteers on asylum support law and oversee the quality of their work.
2. We will build the skills of other organisations assisting asylum seekers to apply for asylum support through:
 - ? A second tier advice line open three days a week taking 600 calls per year (200 from organisations based in London) advising on asylum support
 - ? Our Asylum Support Advice Network, an online group for 850 advisors, providing updates on asylum support law and practice and convening meetings 3 times per year.
 - ? 4 face to face trainings per year (2 in London), 11 webinars and 2 new e-learning packages
 - ? Overall we will train 200 advisors per year on asylum support law and practice (70 in London).

Why are you the right organisation to do this work?

ASAP is a small organisation that has a high impact. We achieved a success rate of 69% last year, winning support for over 350 destitute asylum seekers. Independent research identified that ASAP's representation increased likelihood of success by up to 32%. Client feedback is 99% positive, with quotes like: "Now I can say with certainty that every asylum seeker should use this service".

Our training sessions and webinars are over-subscribed with very positive feedback. Our first e-learning course had over 500 enrolments in just two months. Our staff have been recognised as "experts in asylum support law" through feedback on our advice line. Our Asylum Support Advice Network grew from 620 to over 850 in a year, with one organisation describing it as "one of the best initiatives in the sector".

There is no other organisation offering free legal representation for asylum support appeals.

How does your work complement and not duplicate other services within your area?

There is no other organisation offering representation at asylum support appeals, however other organisations support asylum seekers to submit an initial application for asylum support, and to fill in the initial appeal form. This includes a wide range of organisations from the larger national NGOs (Red Cross, Refugee Council, Refugee Action) to small local organisations. We offer training to these organisations to enable them to upskill staff and volunteers on asylum support law.

Our ASAN network attempts to bring together advisors from across these organisations in one coordinated space, to share best practice and identify trends for escalation to policy fora. Our triannual ASAN meetings include identification of potential crossover, and we work in partnership with organisations to reduce duplication and increase influence. We meet regularly with organisations at all levels to discuss potential areas for collaboration, and will be doing so as part of our strategic planning cycle 2020-25.

How will you ensure that your project will hear and represent the views and needs of disadvantaged people and/or diverse communities?

We seek feedback from asylum seekers we represent at the Tribunal on our service, and on their experience of appealing against asylum support refusals. We use this feedback to improve our service to better support destitute asylum seekers. As many people we support are in an insecure situation at the point we meet them, without support and worried about how they and their families will survive, we have developed our feedback mechanisms to be sensitive to this.

Our service users' voices are amplified through our role as co-chair of the Home Office's stakeholder group on asylum support.

We are exploring additional engagement with those with lived experience of asylum support, through partnerships with other organisations with service user focus groups. We would like to explore a steering group comprising of those with lived experience of asylum support and appeals, and would use this funding to scope out this new approach.

How does your project engage and empower individuals and/or communities to come together on this issue? Will you be working with people who are particularly excluded?

We work with destitute asylum seekers, who are some of the most marginalised and excluded in our community.

Our Asylum Support Advice Network brings together over 200 organisations supporting destitute asylum seekers to share best practice, identify partnership projects, and join forces to meet the needs of these individuals. Over 850 advisors are part of this network, and alongside the daily interactions online we bring them together in person 3 times per year to offer training on asylum support and to identify areas for collaboration.

The network includes advisors from large national organisations (eg Red Cross, Refugee Council, Migrant Help) alongside those from very small grass roots organisations, lawyers and experts in supporting particular groups eg women fleeing domestic violence or those with mental health needs. This enables a wide range of individuals and communities to bring their varied expertise to work jointly to reduce destitution amongst asylum seekers.

Is the focus of your project meeting an already identifiable need (acute or otherwise) or are there elements which are preventative and/or incorporate early action?

The project focuses both on addressing an identified need (homelessness amongst asylum seekers), and on taking steps to prevent this at an earlier stage.

Our legal representation at the Asylum Support Tribunal addresses an identifiable need for financial support and accommodation, although it is preventative in its nature - we are representing people so as to prevent destitution.

The training we provide to other organisations assisting asylum seekers aims to increase the quality of initial applications for asylum support on behalf of individual asylum seekers. This prevents the initial refusal of an asylum support application, and the need to appeal.

We are also seeking to pilot an early intervention model for women fleeing domestic violence, offering in-depth advice and support to organisations assisting women to submit the initial application for support. If this results in increased success in initial applications we would look at rolling this out within our service.

Who might you need to work closely with in delivering this project - whether before, during or afterwards?

We will need to work closely with the organisations that assist Individuals to apply for asylum support, both in terms of preparing for an appeal, and follow up work afterwards. We have developed various mechanisms to enable us to do this effectively including:

1. Referrals process for organisations to refer asylum seekers to us for representation at appeal. This enables us to give the asylum seeker and the organisation advice about the evidence they will need to bring to their appeal to demonstrate their eligibility for asylum support, increasing the chances of success at appeal.

2. Capacity Building (face to face, webinars, e-learning) - this enables us to link with other organisations supporting asylum seekers around the UK.

3. Asylum Support Advisors Network - this enables us to have constant interaction with 850 advisors around the UK, providing them with updated information on asylum support and identifying asylum support trends.

Our aim as a funder is to help people move positively between any of the four stages of Surviving, Coping, Adapting and Thriving. For your project at which of these stages will most people begin their journey?

Most destitute asylum seekers are initially focused on surviving at the point we first meet them. This is because they are at imminent threat of having their support and accommodation cut off. Destitution also leaves asylum seekers at risk of violence and abuse, as our recent research 'Safe from violence in the UK?' found. Once we have represented them, and their support is restored, they are able to stop thinking about their immediate survival - where they will sleep and what they will eat.

Stable housing enables asylum seekers to engage with their asylum claim, access healthcare and regain some control over their lives, rather than having to focus solely on immediate survival. The ability to engage with their asylum claim is absolutely key to their chances of being granted protection in the UK. With protection comes stability, increasing peoples' chances of adapting and thriving.

Will there be any elements of this project that will help you or your beneficiaries to reduce your environmental footprint?

If we were able to increase access to asylum support at an earlier stage, thereby reducing the need for appeals, the level of printing of legal bundles and related paperwork required would significantly reduce.

Our focus on e-learning and webinars not only increases the breadth of our training, enabling smaller organisations to access relevant modules, but also reduces the level of printed waste and travel involved in training.

Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Solicitor 50%	18,472	18,472	0	0	0	36,944
Duty Scheme Coordinator 100%	38,953	38,953	0	0	0	77,905
Women's Legal Advisor 20%	8,127	8,127	0	0	0	16,253
Director 50%	22,243	22,243	0	0	0	44,486
Legal Researcher and Advisor 20%	6,501	6,501	0	0	0	13,003
Finance and Operations Officer 50%	18,034	18,034	0	0	0	36,068
Premises and Facilities	3,525	3,601	0	0	0	7,127
Office running costs and Governance	17,893	18,755	0	0	0	36,648
Service delivery costs including interpreters	8,985	9,684	0	0	0	18,669
TOTAL:	142,733	144,370	0	0	0	287,103

What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Esmee Fairbairn (£45k/yr awarded total but not all allocated to project)	25,000	25,000	0	0	0	50,000
Sigrid Rausing (£55k awarded Y1; £30k Y2 but not all allocated to project)	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	60,000
Tudor Trust (£30k/yr awarded total but not all allocated to project)	15,000	15,000	0	0	0	30,000
TOTAL:	70,000	70,000	0	0	0	140,000

What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
John Ellerman Foundation (Applied for £30k/yr total)	15,000	15,000	0	0	0	30,000
Freshfields (City Law Firm - applied for £15k/yr total)	7,500	7,500	0	0	0	15,000
Herbert Smith Freehills (City Law firm - applied for £15k/yr total)	7,500	7,500	0	0	0	15,000
TOTAL:	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	60,000

How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Solicitor 50%	18,472	18,472	0	0	0	36,944
Duty Scheme Coordinator 40%	15,581	15,581	0	0	0	31,162
Director 10%	4,449	4,449	0	0	0	8,898
Premises and Facilities	3,523	3,523	0	0	0	7,046
Service Delivery Costs Including interpreters	2,875	2,875	0	0	0	5,750
TOTAL:	44,900	44,900	0	0	0	89,800

Who will benefit?

How many people will directly benefit from the grant per year?

1,400

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

Tower Hamlets

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

Yes - please enter details below

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

Refugees and asylum seekers

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

This project will specifically work with Deaf and disabled people:

No

This project will specifically work with LGBTQI groups:

No

This project will specifically work with other groups or communities:

How will you target the groups/communities you have identified? What is your expertise in providing services for these groups?

Through referrals from other advice organisations, and information about our service given to asylum seekers refused support by the Home Office.

Are there any groups or communities you think your organisation will find hard to include through this project?

No

If yes, please specify which groups or communities? Where possible using the categories listed above.

If yes, what steps will you take to make your services accessible to and meet the needs of the groups/communities you have identified?

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Kat Lorenz**

Role within **Director**
Organisation: