About

Who we are

- Pauline Nandoo, Director (full-time)
- Judith Ahikire, Administrator
- Bettina Dreier, Day Centre Leader
- Peter Williams, Day Centre Leader (to August)
- Vanessa Sutherland, Play Leader
- Warren Lee, Early Action Development Worker
- Olabisi Taiwo, Early Action Development Worker
- Maddy Evans, Volunteer Co-ordinator (since October)
- Weronika Habowska/Clara Marnitz, ARSP volunteers

Trustees

- Alan Robertson, Chair (since October)
- Sally Inman, Deputy (interim Chair till October)
- Caroline McGill, Treasurer
- Sallie Barnes (resigned)
- Gay Barry
- Mary Boley
- Tod Heyda
- Jane Kelly (resigned)
- Ajoke Sarah Ojie
- Gillian Reeve
- John Rhodes
- Andy Roberts (resigned)
- Simon Taylor

We operate through 3 Day Centres:

- Copleston Centre, Copleston Road SE15 4AN, open Tuesdays, 12.30-5.00pm
- Peckham Park Baptist Church, 121 Peckham Park Rd SE15 6SX, open Wednesdays, 11.30am-4.30pm
- St Mary Newington, Kennington Park Road SE11 4JQ, open Thursdays, 1.00-5.00pm

During COVID restrictions we operate an emergency food bank at Peckham Park Road, 10-12pm on Wednesdays, a clothing bank and a remote advice service, as our day centres are closed.

Cover photo: SDCAS runs an emergency foodbank during the pandemic

1. Chair’s introduction
1. Director’s report
3. What SDCAS achieved in 2020
4. The ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic
6. An introduction to SDCAS
8. Volunteering at SDCAS
10. Thank you to our partners, patrons and funders
12. Treasurer’s report
**Director’s report**

It’s been an extraordinary year.

SDCAS provides much-needed holistic activities such as English language classes, hot meals, advice sessions, health clinic, storytelling, creche facilities, socialising and much more. But we closed the centres in March due to COVID and swiftly found new ways of working to support those seeking asylum. We found renewed energy at the height of the pandemic to help combat the various forms of exclusion our clients continued to face – the poverty and health inequalities that permeate BAME communities.

There has been strong commitment from our brilliant team of trustees, volunteers and staff, hosts, partner groups and funders. Thanks to them we are well-placed to provide emergency assistance to help address often
Our services had to change completely in 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The difficulties are not to be underestimated, it’s taken a huge effort from many people to meet the challenge.

Our weekly drop-in centres closed in March 2020. Staff members called our most vulnerable clients and asked if they needed any immediate help; most required assistance with food and essentials.

What SDCAS:

hidden hunger, cashlessness, homelessness, unresolved immigration matters and much more. Support from volunteers, food suppliers and public donations (including our wonderful book stall supporters and the Anne-Catherine Memorial Fund) exceeded our expectations at a time most needed and helped in many ways.

From April to December our weekly emergency service provided over 4,000 parcels of food, toiletries and other essentials, kept safe by a COVID Steward recruited during the year, while our gardening sessions continued to provide much needed outdoor activities for many isolated people. Moving forward we now need to strengthen our remote advice capacity for the long term. In this way the service created during the emergency - providing access to trained remote advisers through laptops, mobile phones and interpreters – can continue after COVID.

Within SDCAS, we appointed Madeleine Evans to help recruit, connect and support our volunteers. We also welcome our new Chair Alan Robertson, Sally Inman as Deputy Chair of Trustees to take the organisation forward, and express our thanks and sincerest appreciation to Gillian Reeve who is no longer Chair of trustees but remains on the board, and Jane Kelly who stood down as trustee after many years. Both are founder members and a major part of SDCAS.

Pauline Nandoo

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers
Achieved in 2020 – an extraordinary year

As a result, we pivoted our service to become a weekly food bank service reaching over 300 people per week, operating each Wednesday from Peckham Park Road Baptist Church or by home delivery. The organisation of this emergency service has been no mean feat – from sourcing and collecting essentials; creating food supply partnerships; arranging storage, packing, delivery, PPE and cleaning; building shelter to protect the long outdoor queue from the worst of the weather. We are particularly grateful to the Reverend Ann at the Baptist Church for enabling us to maintain our help to clients in this way.

In the same period we transitioned from our usual face-to-face advisory service to a remote one to help clients navigating immigration, benefits, housing and other problems. This new service has meant providing laptops for advisers and phones for some clients, remote interpreters, and a triage system to prioritise and schedule calls. New volunteers shadow experienced advisors’ calls for 3 months in addition to receiving training. In this way we recruit and train a bigger team, free up experienced staff to work on the most complex cases, and ultimately help more people.

Outdoor activities have continued between lockdowns. Our gardening project continues to operate with reduced numbers, and we have also started a walking group, run by our volunteers Claire and Keith.

Volunteers Viviane and Annie and many others have done an amazing job in collecting food, clothes and other essentials. And towards the end of the year we opened a winter clothing bank which provides warm clothes for our poorest clients.

In 2020 we have:

- Delivered over 4,000 emergency parcels to our most needy clients
- Supported 300 clients to access benefits, housing and immigration advice
- Helped well over 1,000 people from over 30 different countries, notably ones in West Africa, and Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan
The ongoing impact of the pandemic

Our clients have been hit hard by the pandemic. Many who were allowed to work had just about been making ends meet, but work disappeared during the first lockdown. And many have No Recourse to Public Funds – meaning they cannot claim benefits – so a lot of work goes into challenging this for clients. We have also given small hardship grants or cards to people who are destitute. For those able to claim, the temporary £20 increase in Universal Credit has been welcome but access to the system is now harder for those previously dependent on public wifi in libraries etc.

Our weekly food deliveries mean we now regularly confront the reality of where and how so many of our clients live. This has been eye-opening – we’ve seen families of four living in a single room, as well as one man living rough in a scrap yard to avoid COVID risks at his hotel.

Homelessness is always a problem for our clients – around a third of the people who use our centres at any one time are homeless – and the pandemic has made the situation increasingly complex. Though many were given hotel rooms during the first lockdown, this didn’t solve all problems.

While it was a positive move to have respite from being street homeless, for most it simply meant shifting to a life of lonely destitution in a single room. Inevitably some remain or become street homeless as lockdowns strain relationships and increase the risk of domestic violence. But options are increasingly limited with many of London’s normal shelters closed.

The goal of our homelessness advisors continues to be to find short-term accommodation for clients; once they have shelter, we can begin to work with them on their immigration status and a longer-term housing solution.

Even for those who have accommodation – and short-term
Refugees: A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution or natural disaster. In the UK, refugees are granted different forms of 'leave to remain', often temporary and requiring a hefty fee to renew. Not all are allowed to work.

Asylum seekers: An asylum seeker has left their country because of war, persecution or natural disaster but has not yet received a decision from the government on whether they are allowed to stay. The government has a responsibility to house asylum seekers, although the standard of accommodation is often extremely poor. Asylum seekers may not work, some receive a £37/week allowance.

Migrants: A migrant has come to the UK to live – perhaps because they have family here or to seek employment opportunities – but is not claiming asylum. Migrants must also ask the Home Office for permission to stay in the UK.

Who we help: Asylum seekers, migrants & refugees

Yesterday the day care centre came to my location and brought me some warm clothes as well as socks and jackets. They all fit me and I’m very grateful for helping me in these hard times.
While we worked to manage these changes, asylum seekers continued to face challenges living in the UK. Many are isolated, traumatised, and living in substandard accommodation with little money.

This made social distancing, quarantine and lockdown particularly hard for many of our clients, with their mental health particularly impacted.

Asylum seekers face a long and uncertain process to gain asylum in the UK with few places to go for help.

It can also be a struggle to gain the skills and confidence to live here independently.

SDCAS exists to support people through these challenges, working closely with other local and national charities.

The Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers opened its doors in 1997. Prior to the pandemic, we operated three drop-in day centres in the borough, each of which was open one day a week to provide support to refugees and asylum seekers.

At our centres, vulnerable people are advised about their rights, can socialise, learn skills and access healthcare and other support. In 2019 there were over 5700 visits to our centres by 1145 people.

This changed in 2020. While we strive to provide some similar services – such as an advice function and some outdoor activities – our day centres closed in March 2020 and remain shut for the time being. Most classes and activities we offered, from arts and crafts to language and other training, have had to pause.
What stood out in the hardship and uncertainty of last year was the huge relief we felt when hearing of A’s positive ending to a 10 year ordeal. A fled the civil war in Darfur in Sudan as a teenager on his own. On arrival in the UK his age was disputed by the Home Office, he was given a random date of birth and, instead of offering him accommodation while his asylum claim was being considered, he was taken to a detention centre.

For many months A was moved from one detention centre to another – 6 in total - without having committed a crime. After release he was even more traumatised than on arrival and for the following 7 years the battle with the immigration authorities continued. He came very close to giving up on many occasions.

However, during those 7 long years of waiting he studied tiling and carpentry and in 2018 he qualified as community interpreter. Nearly 8 years living on £37 per week - a long lockdown as he called it - has taken its toll but he used his time constructively.

For the past 2 years, A has been volunteering at the Day Centre and we all appreciate his presence and his kindness towards others. Then finally this summer he was granted refugee status. We celebrated COVID-style, at a safe distance but totally delighted. 10 years after fleeing Darfur A has already found a job and is now hoping to move into his own accommodation, leaving the NASS system behind for good.
Volunteering at SDCAS

Over 40 local people volunteer at SDCAS. Their amazing dedication and flexibility meant that SDCAS could create entirely new services within days of the start of the crisis in March, and set up a remote advisory service a few months later.

Volunteers developed a range of logistics skills as donation sourcers, collectors, food packers, delivery drivers, reception team, queue managers, cleaners, kitchen helpers, short-notice gap fillers, and more.

Our volunteer Claire has helped at our foodbank and with deliveries since March:

“One of my strongest feelings about this period of volunteering has been gratitude for being involved. SDCAS has kept me grounded, given me some routine and a sense of purpose.

The travelling doorstep delivery service has been an eye-opener. It feels important to bear witness to the conditions in which our clients are living. It can be hard to keep clean and maintain social distance for some, and their fear about this is understandable.

I will never forget the surprise and pleasure on clients’ faces as they came to the door, not just at the food bank but also that they had been held in mind and thought worth the journey. The significance of the day centres and their staff go way beyond the practical.

I am glad we have been able to keep our core values going and think our service could emerge stronger from this testing lockdown experience.”

Genet, cook and food-packer, says:

“When I see needy people coming in and receiving good food, I am grateful that good things can come out of bad situations. The food bank has done really well to provide healthy fresh food. I see kind local people bringing it in on the day, old and young. It makes you humble that there are nice people taking trouble to look after others in the bad times.”
Thank you to our volunteers

At SDCAS volunteers come “GIFT” wrapped with a wealth of talents, experience and most of all a broad welcoming smile.

During COVID our volunteers like our clients have had to adapt to new styles of working with the demands of a very different working environment.

Food parcels and social distancing replace hot food and chat, with an online service up and running to keep the flow of advice and support to vulnerable clients. It is because of the adaptability of our volunteers that SDCAS functions even in difficult times.

On behalf of all our clients, trustees, partners and friends, we thank them for their dedication to the task of supporting clients.

If you would like to join the merry band of volunteers please contact Maddy, our newly appointed volunteer co-ordinator.
Email: maddy@sdcas.org.uk

Mary Boley, SDCAS trustee

“I received the clothes, thanks so very much. The jacket came in at the best time. I appreciate”
Thank you to our partners, patrons & funders

SDCAS could not have helped the most vulnerable people in our community without the generosity and hard work of our partners, patrons and funders—we owe all of them a massive THANK YOU. Another upside of the pandemic has been, alongside our regular partners, to form strong relationships with local food suppliers and community networks across Southwark and the wider area. We are bowled over, in particular, by the generosity of Peckham Morrisons and their customers during the whole year.

Donations poured in from across our compassionate local community—money, food, clothes and more.

In March alone, financial donations from our Friends exceeded the amount we normally receive in a year. From big organisations such as Aviva, who organised and topped up a vital crowdfunder, to local schools, and to local children who donated their birthday money or sold their toys. We are touched and thrilled by such extraordinary generosity.

London’s grant funders rushed to help too. The London Community Response Fund came together immediately to provide resources for frontline emergency services such as ours. The Southwark group of this Fund—United St Saviours Charity, Peter Minet Trust, Guys and St Thomas’s Trust—have been particularly generous emergency donors. And a shout-out too to City Bridge Trust, Southwark Council, and the Charities Aid Foundation, all of whom provided emergency funds, and to the generous National Lottery Community Fund.

In 2019/20 SDCAS income was nearly £280,000 with expenditure of £189,000 as shown in the 19/20 accounts overpage which set out how we sourced and spent our funds. The resulting surplus will boost our depleted reserves in expectation of a difficult funding climate after the pandemic.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our Partners:
- Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP)
- Albrighton Community Fridge (East Dulwich Tenants and Residents’ Association)
- Blackbird Bakery
- Citizens Advice Southwark
- Fairbeats

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers
Thank you to our generous grant Funders:
- Adrian Swire Charitable Trust
- Catholic Women's League
- Charities Aid Foundation
- City Bridge Trust
- C&M Fleming
- Fund for Human Need
- Garfield Weston Foundation

We also thank our Patrons for their continued support:
- Riz Ahmed – Actor
- Councillor Anood Al-Samerai – London Borough of Southwark

Annual Report 2020
# Treasurer’s report

## Detailed Statement of Financial Activities – 31 March 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2020 (£)</th>
<th>2019 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>39,178</td>
<td>54,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>16,429</td>
<td>10,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfield Weston Foundation</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark Council</td>
<td>45,321</td>
<td>45,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Women’s League</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield and Tetley</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>4,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Zakat Foundation</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Maritime Museum</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td>8,920</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Smith</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Swire Charitable Trust</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peoples Health Trust</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>4,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Community Foundation</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercers Trustee</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards for All</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C&amp;M Fleming</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothworkers Foundation</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horniman Museum</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Action</td>
<td>29,009</td>
<td>21,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey Docks Farm</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truemark Trust</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Saviour’s Trust</td>
<td>18,750</td>
<td>26,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Edith Maud Emeliss Trust</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room for Refugees</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttle</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>279,452</strong></td>
<td><strong>215,148</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>2020 (£)</th>
<th>2019 (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages and salaries</td>
<td>111,543</td>
<td>92,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer’s NIC</td>
<td>4,165</td>
<td>2,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer’s pension</td>
<td>3,350</td>
<td>1,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>22,015</td>
<td>21,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>3,530</td>
<td>4,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountancy fees</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>4,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>1,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other office costs</td>
<td>4,905</td>
<td>4,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Expenses</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>5,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>9,314</td>
<td>8,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardship Allowance</td>
<td>8,398</td>
<td>5,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry Expenses</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>2,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>4,814</td>
<td>3,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>3,784</td>
<td>2,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Fees</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>1,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening Project</td>
<td>2,906</td>
<td>14,782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total costs** | **188,854** | **182,810**
A thank you to Gary Goddard ...

Many personal stories turned positive with the help of Gary Goddard, immigration advisor for the Citizens Advice Southwark, who offered advice sessions at our Day Centre once a month for around 9 years. Gary took on many extremely complicated immigration cases and achieved the right result. He also made many family reunion applications such as this one:

Mohamed came to the UK alone aged 15. He was taken into care and concentrated on his education. For many years he did not have any contact with the family he had to leave behind. He still has not managed to find out where his mother is but last year he located a younger brother with the help of social media. His brother is currently living in Egypt as an undocumented minor.

Mohamed and his brother met in Cairo recently after having been separated for around 6 years - he sent us a picture of the two of them sightseeing near the pyramids.

Mohamed, now a university student, asked Gary to help with a family reunion application for his 17-year-old brother. This was one of the last things Gary did before moving on to another job and now Mohamed is anxiously awaiting the arrival of his brother. We all wish Gary good luck for the future. He will be greatly missed at our Day Centre.

SDCAS garden project ...

At the beginning of 2020 we made a good start, we painted our greenhouse and rebuilt our shed and continued work on our new pizza oven in preparation for the year ahead. Unfortunately things didn’t run so smoothly and by March we were in lockdown and the garden was initially closed for group activity.

Later in the year we resumed with weekly pizza making and gardening sessions under new measures for everyone’s health and safety. Despite all the challenges of the year spirits have been high when in the garden and it has proved a most valuable resource in these most testing of times.

Robert, gardener
How to find us

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers
Director: Pauline Nandoo
Administrator: Judith Ahikire
Copleston Centre
Copleston Road
London SE15 4AN

020 7732 0505
office@sdcas.org.uk
www.sdcas.org.uk

SDCAS
@Southwark Asylum

Charity Reg No 1143912
Company Reg No 07519992
OISC Exemption No N200100580
Advice Quality Standard

Tuesday
12.30-5.00 pm
Copleston Centre,
Copleston Road,
London
SE15 4AN

Wednesday
11.30 am-4.30 pm
Peckham Park Road
Baptist Church,
121 Peckham Park Road,
London
SE15 6SX

Thursday
1.00-5.00 pm
St Mary Newington,
Kennington Park Road,
London
SE11 4JQ

During COVID restrictions we operate an emergency food bank at Peckham Park Road, 10-12pm on Wednesdays, a clothing bank and a remote advice service, as our day centres are closed.

How to get involved
Volunteers, supporters and funders – please join us.
Contact us on office@sdcas.org.uk, call us on 020 7732 0505,
or check out our website at sdcas.org.uk if you’d like to know more.