

# Impact Report

**SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUGUST 2021**



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Photo: Tom Price/Ella's



# A message from Sade



Photo: staff/Ella's

*'It's like a trust tree, with everyone included. No leaf is allowed to fall from that tree, and there's time to bring more people under it because the tree is growing every day.'*

**Welcome to the Ella's Impact Report for 2020 – 2021. I am so inspired to see how Ella's is developing, and I hope you will be inspired too.**

Ella's is a special organisation, where every individual has a voice. It's like a 'trust tree', with everyone included. No leaf is allowed to fall from that tree, and there's time to bring more people under it because the tree is growing every day...

In the past, I didn't know what trafficking was, even though I'd lived it. That's why Ella's is so important: to ensure that survivors are supported, and to grow awareness.

Ella's' work is vital for survivors. Take me as an example. When I became free, I was not street wise even though I am book smart. People assume that because you are an adult, that you know all these things about life, but you don't.

Survivors need the guidance that Ella's provides, otherwise they will end up falling back to the situation they escaped from.

With the right support, people can come from dark places and become confident. In the safe environment at Ella's, where everyone is treated and respected as an individual, people can recover and build a safe life.

I hope that Ella's will continue to grow, so more people can be helped in the way I have been helped.

**To all those supporting the work of Ella's, thank you.**

*Sade*

***Sade is a survivor, advocate and part of the Ella's community.***

# A message from our directors



Photo: Tom Price/Ella's



Photo: staff/Ella's

**What a year this, Ella's' seventh, has been. There have been challenges, but we've also taken huge steps forward, including registering as an independent charity. We have so much to be thankful for.**

We've evaluated and refined our service to maximise as well as evidence our impact among survivors, and lay a strong foundation for growth.

We've refreshed our brand and launched a new website, and increased our team from eight to 11 brilliant members of staff. We've also expanded our community work and are preparing to open our third safe house.

Between September 2020 and August 2021, 36 women and 28 children had benefited from our work.

## **Progress in pandemic times**

Covid-19 has been a challenge. The pandemic is frightening for the women we work with, and has restricted access to therapies, legal support, skills training and other activities crucial to their rehabilitation and long-term safety.

We have been extremely concerned about

the wellbeing of those we work with, as well as the impact of the pandemic on our staff and income, but are pleased to say that we have weathered the storm so far and are on track to emerge stronger than before.

Our brilliant supporters, partners and volunteers have been more important than ever this year, as have trusts and foundations including TRIBE Freedom Foundation, London Community Foundation, Barrow Cadbury and the Smallwood Trust who donated to help us respond to covid-19 as well as continue our core work.

## **Unlocking freedom**

Despite these pandemic times, we have many highlights and stories to share and much progress to celebrate.

We hope you enjoy reading this report. And we look forward to seeing even more progress and lives changed in the year to come.

Together, we can help unlock freedom among women who have survived trafficking and exploitation.

Thank you,

**Emily Chalke and Minke van Til,  
Co-Directors at Ella's**

# Introduction

**Our mission at Ella's is to do everything we can to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free.**

To help us achieve our mission, we launched a three-year strategy in September 2020. This strategy is focused on strengthening our organisation, to provide a sustainable foundation for our work, and to maximise the impact of our work among survivors.

Our strategic goals and plans fall into three pillars of work:

- 1. Provide expert care in London**
- 2. Grow influence and develop**
- 3. Run an excellent organisation**

This Impact Report marks the end of the first year of our current three-year strategy, September 2020 to August 2021.

It contains key highlights, achievements and numbers from the year, and a summary of our direction for year two.

Most importantly, it includes testimonials and stories\* from the women we work with, who are and always will be at the very heart of everything we do.

*'On my first day at Ella's, it felt like being welcomed home. I felt safe. I slept that night for the first time in two weeks.'*

**SHARON**



\*Where we use names, please assume these have been changed for the protection of the women we work with.

# Pillar 1: Provide expert care in London

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

The need for what we do is urgent, vast and growing. Many more survivors are referred to Ella's than we are able to support. In 2020, we could only offer rooms to 18 per cent of the women referred to our safe houses.

For these reasons, we are committed to ensuring that the support we provide is as excellent as it can be, and that we can grow sustainably to reach more women.

## YEAR 1 AIMS

In year one, our focus was on strengthening and improving our current service, guided by feedback from the women we work with as well as our frontline staff.

We also aimed to open a third safe house in the second half of the year, enabling us to provide a greater number of survivors with the supported accommodation crucial to their rehabilitation and long-term safety.



## WHAT WE DO

For anyone new to Ella's, we are an organisation providing urgent and long-term support for women who have survived trafficking and exploitation.

Our mission is to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free.

To achieve this, we offer safe house accommodation for women when they are most vulnerable, care to help them recover and move forward, and long-term community-based support to help survivors build safe, independent lives.

**For more, visit [www.ellas.org.uk](http://www.ellas.org.uk)**

## YEAR 1 ACHIEVEMENTS

### Our approach

Based on feedback from the women we work with as well as frontline staff, we have refined our model of support for survivors.

Our new model has a more defined progression for women, from the time they enter Ella's' service to the time they are ready to exit.

This provides a crucial roadmap for survivors and staff, leading to survivor empowerment and independence. It also ensures that there are spaces opening up for new women to enter our service, as others become ready to move on safely and independently.

### Frontline staff

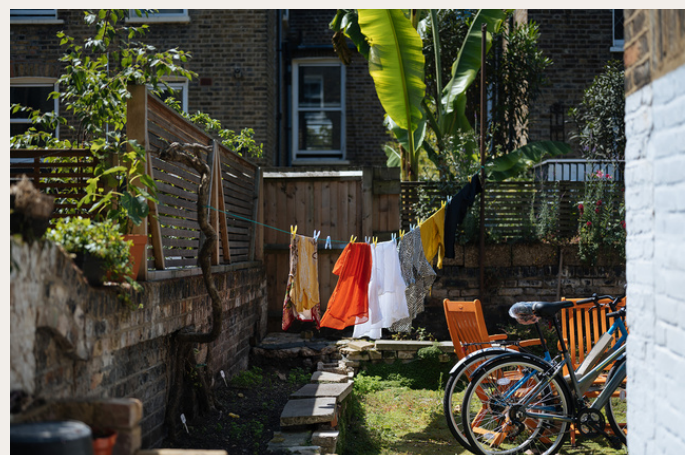
Our frontline staff are brilliant at what they do, much-loved and appreciated by the women we work with and crucial to their rehabilitation.

To help increase the reach of our frontline staff, outwork our new model and protect wellbeing by ensuring that workloads are manageable, we restructured the team and created two new roles.

### A third safe house

Towards the end of year one, we secured investment for our third safe house from the Resonance Women in Safe Homes (WISH) fund.

We are now working with WISH to find the right property, and hope to open the new safe house, with three to five bed spaces, in early 2022.



## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

36

**women supported  
in total**

28

**children benefiting from  
our work**

2

**women supported to testify  
against their traffickers**

16

**women enrolled in skills  
training**

12

**women helped through  
pregnancy and postnatally**

9

**women assisted with  
immigration status**

41

**online community sessions  
including yoga and baking**



## THE YEAR AHEAD

In year 2 of our current strategy, September 2021 to August 2022, we will embed our revised approach to make sure roles and systems are working well.

We will open our third safe house, increase our partnership working in local communities and across the sector, and grow our number of trained volunteers.

We hope to increase the number of women benefiting from our work from 35 per year to around 45.

*'Thank you  
team Ella's for  
all the help you  
gave me. I  
breathe life  
today, the  
freedom of a  
human being...'*

**LUCIA**



# Marie's story

**Marie was trafficked to the UK by family when she was just a child. She was kept in forced labour for eight years, during which time she was physically, emotionally and mentally abused.**

When she was a teenager, Marie was sent back to West Africa, but things became even worse. She was deeply traumatised by what she'd been through and suffered a serious mental breakdown.



## Trauma after trauma

No-one knew what to do, so Marie was locked in a room and subjected to more abuse, including exorcism. 'I felt hopeless,' says Marie.

Eventually, Marie was hospitalised, where medics recognised her vulnerability. They worked with an organisation to help Marie return to the UK for her safety, which is when she was referred to our safe house.

## Safe and free

'They [Ella's] were so welcoming to me,' says Marie. 'When I opened the door, I fell in love with the room and I felt an instant relief.'

Marie says the support and community at Ella's have helped her in so many ways. Since coming to Ella's, her mental health has improved dramatically.

'Ella's have been more than a family to me. We cook together, we laugh. I just feel really grateful that I am not in this alone.'

*'When I opened the door...  
I felt instant relief. I feel  
so liberated, I feel so free.'*

'They helped me to access my university course. They helped me to get benefits, and I am doing a degree in fashion and textiles. I feel so liberated, I feel so free.'

The casework support and community provided by Ella's have made the world of difference for Marie. She moved out of the safe house into a flat, and is continuing to recover. She is determined to build a life that is independent, safe and free.



'Before I got here, I was really shattered emotionally. But they [Ella's] have just nourished me to become the person I've become today, which is really confident, and it's all thanks to them.'

On the wall of Marie's old bedroom at Ella's is a mural that she painted herself (pictured below). It is of a face that has been split into two halves, surrounded by flowers.

'The dark part symbolises the night,' says Marie. 'And the light part symbolises the day. I drew the flowers to symbolise hope. Because regardless of the season, they grow.'

*'I was really shattered emotionally. But they [Ella's] have just nourished me to become the person I've become today, which is really confident, and it's all thanks to them.'*

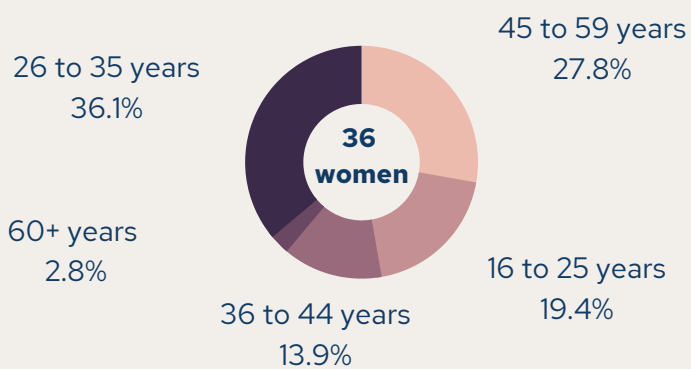
Photos of Marie: Tom Price/Ella's



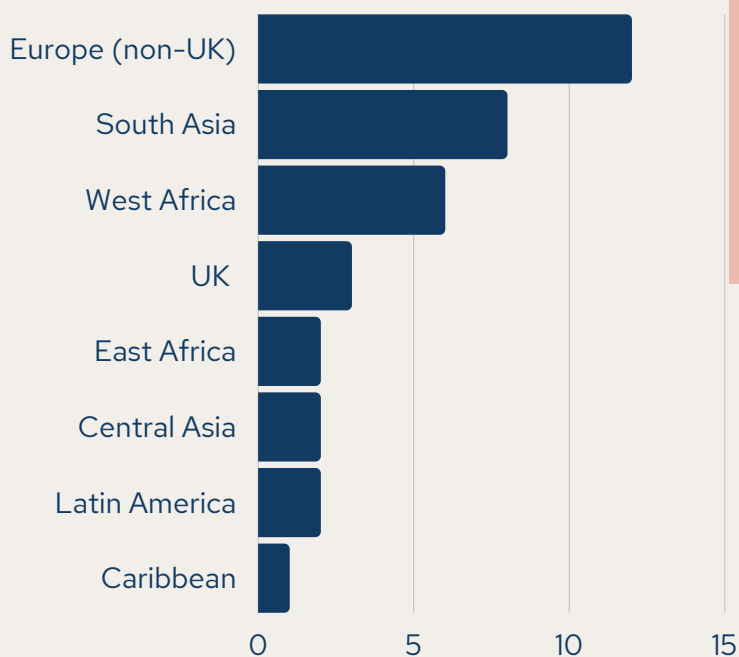
# Our community of survivors 2020/21

The women we work with are amazing. Here's some information on who they are and what they've been through.

## Age



## Place of birth



## Trauma

The women at Ella's have survived multiple kinds of abuse and trauma. Of the women at Ella's the last year:

- 69%** have experienced trafficking
- 72%** have experienced sexual exploitation
- 42%** have experienced domestic servitude
- 42%** have experienced sexual assault
- 69%** have experienced other forms of abuse including honour-based violence and domestic abuse



# Pillar 2: Grow influence and develop

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

We are committed to raising awareness of the impact of trafficking and the need for long-term aftercare for survivors, among policy makers as well as the general public.

We amplify the voices of the women we work with, sharing stories and learning in order to increase support and help prevent trafficking.

## YEAR 1 AIMS

In year one, we set out to refresh our brand and create a new website to help grow our profile as an effective, independent charity and communicate more effectively.

We planned to attend key sector meetings, share stories via digital channels and speaking engagements, and grow our number of supporters.



## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

7

pieces of press coverage

300

new Instagram followers

11+

key sector meetings attended

15

speaking engagements

‘Organisations like Ella’s play a crucial role in work to prevent human trafficking. By sharing anonymised data they ensure that the stories and information bravely shared by survivors can help prevent crime, bring perpetrators to justice and inform both rescue and prevention work.’

**Rebekah Lisgarten,  
StopTheTraffik**

## YEAR 1 ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Increasing support and engagement**

We attended more than 11 key sector meetings and spoke at 15 events. We achieved positive media coverage over the year, national as well as local, saw an increase in audience size and engagement across all of our social media channels, and formed new relationships with business and other partners.

### **Collaboration across the sector**

We continued to be an active member of the Free for Good coalition, calling on the government to provide longer-term support for survivors of modern slavery. We also formed a new partnership with StopTheTraffik, sharing knowledge to help prevent trafficking, and worked with Justice & Care and others to contribute to a number of key policy and research reports.

### **Brand and communication**

Guided by input from the women we work with as well as external audiences, we relaunched the Ella's brand. We also created a new website, and obtained funding to commission some professional photos as well as a multi-purpose film about what we do and why, to help engage people with our work and raise support.

*'Every single step forward I do, you guys [Ella's] are by my side. Thanks for transforming life, bringing colour to it.'*

**ANA**

## THE YEAR AHEAD

Moving ahead into year two of our current strategy, September 2021 to August 2022, we will change the name of this pillar to Influencing Change.

We will seek to build on and create new partnerships and relationships to bring about positive change for the survivors we work with, and help prevent trafficking and exploitation.

We will continue to grow awareness, audience reach and our supporter base in order to increase our impact among survivors.



# Pillar 3: Running an excellent organisation

## ABOUT THIS PILLAR

In order to provide the best care for as many survivors as possible, we're committed to making sure that our organisation runs efficiently, that we use our resources wisely, and that we can provide a safe and positive working environment.

## YEAR 1 AIMS

Our priorities in year 1 of our strategy were to establish ourselves as an independent and highly functioning charity, following our independence from the umbrella organisation in which we operated for the previous six years.

This included developing and updating our policies and procedures, growing and diversifying funding streams, developing a business plan and embedding monitoring and evaluation across our services.

## YEAR 1 ACHIEVEMENTS

### Independence

Ella's was founded in 2014 by our Co-Director Emily Chalke, incubated within an umbrella organisation called Kahaila.

Following six years of growth and impact, we registered as a charity in our own right in September 2020. To lay the foundation for continued growth and excellence, we developed and updated a number of crucial policies and procedures this year.

We also established rigorous financial reporting systems, and have taken a number of measures to invest in staff wellbeing and equality, equity and diversity.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

We have refined our theory of change, adjusting our working model accordingly. We have also implemented a new monitoring and evaluation process, incorporating an assessment tool from the IJM (International Justice Mission).

This means we are now better able to critique, improve and evidence our impact. It will also enable us to monitor survivors' progress accurately, and tailor our support accordingly to ensure the best outcomes for them.

### Growing funding streams

Our fundraising activities in the last year have exceeded our overall targets, allowing Ella's to strengthen its reserve and begin to grow.

We are grateful for the support of a large number of new trusts and foundations, including the London Community Foundation and Barrow Cadbury, as well as our long-term partners such as TRIBE Freedom Foundation, and every one of our donors and fundraisers.



## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

2

**new board members  
recruited**

100

**% staff would recommend  
Ella's as a workplace**

172

**new individual  
givers**

15

**new or improved policies  
and procedures in place**

## THE YEAR AHEAD

In year 2 of our current strategy, September 2021 to August 2022, we will continue to strengthen our organisation to support our work with survivors. We have created a new role to ensure the voices and views of survivors help drive more of what we do, and ensure we continue to improve our frontline work. We will also be drawing on input from business development, finance and social investment experts thanks to support recently secured from the Enterprise Development Fund, in order to develop our business plans and funding strategies.

## MORE ON OUR INDEPENDENCE

Six years since we were founded in 2014, Ella's registered as an independent charity in September 2020. Up until this point, we were operating within an umbrella organisation called Kahaila. By the time we achieved independence, we had gained a staff team of eight and were running two safe houses.

All staff, assets, knowledge, experience and expertise gained during our first six years

of work came with us when we went independent, a solid base for future growth and development.

Our work with women has remained both constant and consistent during this time of change, and is set to expand to benefit even more people as a result of our status as an independent charity.

Thank you for being with us on the journey.

'We've been partnering with Ella's for nearly three years, and we are so inspired by their work with survivors. It's been great to support Ella's' growth and development in the last year, as they have refined their model and strengthened their monitoring and evaluation. We know that more lies ahead, and that so many more lives will be changed in the years to come.'

**Tom Stancliffe, TRIBE Freedom Foundation**



# Emina's story

**Emina was trafficked from southern Europe to the UK a number of years ago, and was hurt and exploited in many different ways.**

Emina lives with post traumatic stress disorder as a result of her past. The memories are so traumatic that Emina is unable to talk about those times, but she loves to talk about her life as it is now.

## Like a hug

'Ella's is like a hug!' says Emina, wrapping her arms around herself. 'If someone needs help, they are welcome at Ella's. It's safe and protecting. The people, the place, the work – all of it.'

Emina moved into one of our safe houses two years ago. She cries when she remembers what it was like to feel safe for the first time in so long.

*'No-one is hurting me here. They are only protecting me.'*

'When I first came here, I felt like a queen,' says Emina. 'I could never have imagined that I'd be able to live in a place like this. My own room, a bathroom, a kitchen to use when I want. It was a lot to take in.'

'It is so different to my past, because no-one is hurting me here. They are only protecting me.'

## Hope for the future

Emina has come so far during her time at Ella's. We've helped her access the counselling and mental health support she needs, apply for benefits, go to English language classes and more.



She is now more confident and is building relationships with other people for the first time in a long time.

*'Now, I can think about my future'*

Emina has started to think about her goals for the future, and has taken the step of moving on from our safe house.





'Before, I was thinking only of how to survive day-to-day. But now, I can think about my future. I would like to have my own place to live, and I would like to do a job where I can help other people who need help.'

'At Ella's, I have been given the space and support to grow stronger. The people here truly help people like me. I want Ella's to grow and help more women.'

*'At Ella's, I have been given the space and support to grow stronger. I want Ella's to grow and help more women.'*

## Our support

Our support for women like Emina is tailored to every individual, including help with:

- Medical care/therapies
- Emotional support
- Education/skills training
- Employment opportunities
- Reuniting with family
- Finding and moving into new homes
- Immigration and legal support
- Bringing abusers to justice
- Emergency money and essentials
- Budgeting/managing money
- Confidence/life skills
- Community integration
- Attending appointments
- Moving countries if wanted

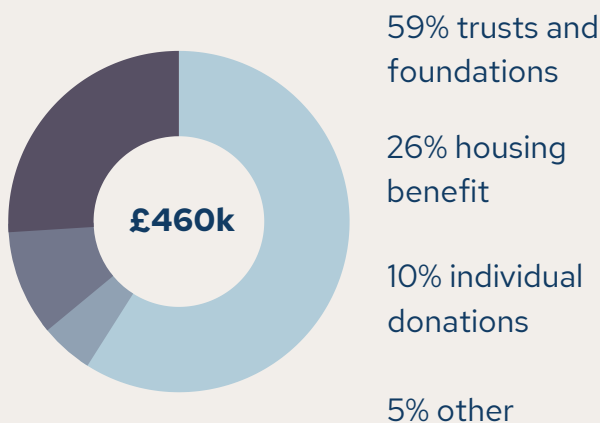
Photos of Emina: Tom Price/Ella's



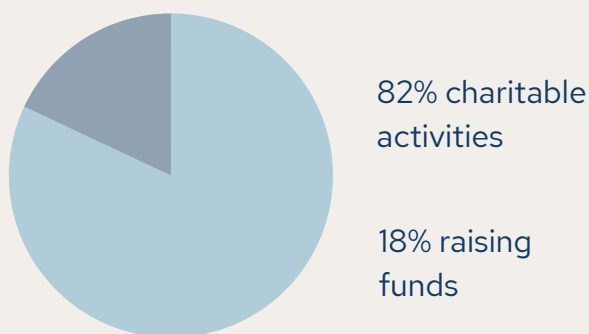
# Summary of financials: September 2020 to August 2021

Despite the uncertain fundraising landscape and some cancelled plans as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, we have raised enough over the last year to sustain our work with survivors of trafficking and exploitation, and begin to grow. To all those who have supported us, thank you.

## WHAT WE RAISED



## WHAT WE SPENT



'Ella's supports women affected by trafficking and exploitation to heal and rediscover their freedom in a compassionate and safe environment. The tailored, long term support that Ella's provides underlies a determination to support every woman as an individual. I have seen first-hand how much Ella's means to the women they support and I am grateful to them for the vital work they do.'

*Dame Sara Thornton,  
Independent Anti-Slavery  
Commissioner*

# Our year in pictures

We do everything we can to ensure survivors of trafficking and exploitation have all they need to recover and build lives that are safe and free. And we are a community. Thank you for being part of it.



Left to right from top:

1. Twenty-eight children benefited from our work last year. Here's Peter on his first day at nursery. (Photo: Faith/Ella's)
2. Derrina and Simon Thomas donated in celebration of their marriage, with cake favours baked by one of the survivors we work with. (Photo: Tom and Lizzie Redman)
3. We've marked so many big moments with the women we work with this year, from Pride to birthdays and more. (Photo: Lucia/Ella's)
4. Lydia ran a half marathon and raised more than £1.5k for Ella's. We gained 172 new individual givers this year. (Photo: Lydia McAllister)
5. Ella's featured in the media seven times this year, including Stylist magazine.
6. We are grateful to all of the trusts and foundations that supported us last year, including our long-term partner, TRIBE. (Photo: staff/Ella's)



Left to right from top:

1. Olive (10) published a book and is donating the proceeds to Ella's. (Photo: Dana Jamieson)
2. Long-term supporters at Balham Baptist Church sent Christmas presents for the women and children we work with. (Photo: staff/Ella's)
3. We supported 12 survivors during pregnancy and postnatally this year. (Photo: staff/Ella's)
4. We made a number of improvements in our safe houses thanks to the support of the Sam Cottman Foundation, Quaker Housing Trust, B&Q, Tapi and Screwfix. (Photo: staff/Ella's)
5. Beautiful face masks donated by Baujken, just one example of the incredible support we received during covid. (Photo: staff/Ella's)
6. The Women In Residential Property network raised more than £1.6k. (Photo: Emma Vigus)
7. Big thanks to our retail supporters, including Recognised jewellery. (Photo: Recognised)
8. Volunteers from supporting business, AXA XL. (Photo: staff/Ella's)
9. We held 41 online sessions for the women we work with, including yoga with volunteer instructor, Rhona. (Photo: Rhona Croker)

# Thank you

We've seen some inspiring growth and change over the last year, in Ella's as an organisation as well as in the lives of the women we work with. We have so much to celebrate. However, we are not complacent. Our work is urgent and vital for survivors, and we must continue to strengthen and grow in order to reach more women.

# Join us

If you would like to support or partner with Ella's, we would love to hear from you. Together, we can help unlock freedom among women who have survived trafficking and exploitation.

*'I have so much to thank Ella's for. I trust that my support worker is always fighting for my rights.'*



**YETA**



**ELLA'S**

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Ella's is a company limited charity (company number 12178531) with a registered office address (England and Wales). We are also a charity registered in England and Wales, charity registration number 1187529.

