

The Manna Society Annual Report 2008 - 2009



"Working with those in need"
Registered Charity 294691



Patrons of the Manna Society

Most Rev Kevin McDonald, Archbishop of RC Archdiocese of Southwark
Rt Revd Peter Price, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Bath & Wells

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Committee Members

- Bill Dodwell Chairperson
- Tony Charlton Treasurer
- Canon Michael Cooley, Pauline Emmerson, Nannette Ffrench, Cha Power, Lynda Smith, Marc Thurgood & Alex Wilson.

The Committee was elected at the Manna Society Annual General Meeting, held at the Manna Centre, 17th September 2008.

The **Manna Society** began in 1982 and formed under a constitution in 1988 (amended in August 1989). Our Charity Registration number: 294691.

The Society's objects and purpose:

'to relieve poor persons who are homeless and/or unemployed by the provision of food, shelter and other forms of Christian care with the object of promoting the physical, mental and spiritual welfare of such persons and of improving their conditions of life.'

(Constitution No 2a)

The Ethos of the Manna

Our vision is the creation of a just society that respects the dignity of every individual.

The Manna Day Centre is a place of unconditional acceptance. Our task, as we see it, is not to judge but to love.

We aim to respect the dignity and worth of each person with whom we come in contact. Each and every one has an intrinsic value that deserves to be respected. No one is dispensable.

Our task is to feed and care for homeless people and those in need who seek our help, but we cannot be content with this. We must also seek to challenge the structures of society that lead to homelessness and poverty.



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Website: www.mannasociety.org.uk



Director's Report

By

Paddy Boyle

Throughout the year we continued to meet the most immediate needs of the poorest members of our society through the provision of food, clothing, toilet & washing facilities (including showers), housing & welfare advice and medical care. On average 200 clients used our services every day, over 60% of whom are homeless, either sleeping rough or living in squats (48% sleeping rough & 14% living in squats - May 09 statistics). In the twelve months to June 09 we found accommodation for 150 people, the majority of whom previously slept rough on London's streets.

Practically everyone who comes to the centre has a breakfast and/or a lunch here. It is by far our most popular service. For many of our clients this is their main (and for some their only) meal of the day. Every week we serve over 1,000 meals and over 300 mugs of soup/stew. We are only able to do so because of the 40 – 50,000 tins of food we receive from churches and schools at Harvest Festival time and throughout the year. From June 2007 we have been recycling all of these tins, as well as any paper or plastic products we use.

Again, it is solely due to the generosity of our supporters that we have been able to continue to provide the next two most popular services (in terms of numbers using them), clothing and showers/ washing facilities. Without donations of clothing and towels & toiletries both services would grind to a halt.

Once again this year has seen an increase in the number of A10 clients (Eastern & Central Europeans) using our services. About 40% of all of our clients are now from A10 countries. As they have no entitlement to Social Security Benefits (unless they have been in paid employment and paying National Insurance contributions for at least a year), the traditional route out of homelessness i.e. via the hostel system, is not open to them. Their sole source of income will be the savings that they have brought with them. Their only route out of poverty and homelessness is via employment.

Due to this fact and because of the huge demand for advice on employment issues from our A10 clients we decided to make our A10 Advice Worker's post a full time one from April 09. In the three months from April to June our advice worker (Milena) saw 144 clients. Monthly advice reports for both our A10 & non A10 clients can be found on our website under the aptly named "Monthly Advice Reports" tag.

In addition to meeting the immediate needs of those who find themselves homeless or poor, we also feel it is important to look at the reasons for such poverty. This we do via our Campaigns Work. Our Campaigns Worker's role is to firstly make people aware that such poverty does indeed exist and secondly to look for ways to address and eventually remove it. One of the ways he did so this year was by our involvement with the 'Get Fair' campaign. More details of which can be found in Bandi's report on page 6.

As always we have only been able to offer the services we do thanks to the generosity of our supporters. One of our best supporters over the years has been our Landlord, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark. Without their generosity in giving us our building rent free, none of what we have been able to achieve in the last 27 years would have been possible. We are truly grateful to them for their generosity.

The Diocese has indicated to us that they have plans to develop the site on which the Manna Centre stands. As already stated they have been and continue to be very supportive of our work

and we have been informed that our centre will be integrated into any new development on this site. To date no concrete plans have been drawn up and at the very earliest it will be a minimum of two years before any work begins.

We are merely the conduit through which our supporters show their concern for those facing hardships in their lives. On behalf of all of those who have benefitted from our services in the past year I would like to say a genuine “thank you”.



Treasurer's Report By Tony Charlton

This annual report contains a summary of our financial position for the year ended 31.3.09. The full management report and audited financial statement will be available at the Annual General Meeting.

Excluding restricted funds, which sometimes can distort the figures, our income for the year was £437,564. Our costs were £368,259, which means we had a surplus for the year of £69,305, which is equivalent to slightly over two months' running costs.

Our total costs for the year were very similar to the previous year, although there were some differences in the way that money was spent. The costs of maintaining the Centre were higher than previously, especially after taking into account the increase in the cost of our utility bills – a situation which we all will have noticed in our own homes. To counter balance that, we spent less money on the Robes Project than in the previous year. We continued to work as closely as before with the Robes Project, but our financial support was not required in the same way – for the first time, the project was almost financially self sufficient, and that is a measure of the progress that has been made.

We are grateful to all those individuals, schools, groups, churches, charitable trusts, businesses etc. who made the surplus possible. It is a tribute to our donors that we have been able to achieve this financial position at a time when things are financially difficult for many people. Thanks to the charity of so many, we find ourselves in a financially very sound position.

Because of the downturn in the economy, we are budgeting for a significant shortfall in the current financial year. We also expect to incur some significant building costs some time in the following year or so. Because of that projected shortfall, we expect to have to draw on our reserves in this current year. The Charity Commission recommends that charities of our size ideally have reserves equal to six months overhead. At the last financial year end our reserves were enough to cover around seven months' costs. We anticipate that, at the end of this financial year, they will be more or less equal to that six months recommendation once again.

I have already thanked those who have contributed financially. I would also like to thank the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark, which provides us with the Centre. If we did not have the use of this building, we quite simply would not be able to do our work.



Campaigns Report

Keeping an eye on the big picture

By
Bandi Mbubi

It is easy to lose sight of the big picture, to be concerned for people only when we see them sleeping rough, undergoing a crisis after a painful relationship breakup, or whatever unfortunate circumstances life may have thrown their way. Especially because we have a wonderful day centre, a real oasis where about 200 people come every day to quench their thirst for better conditions. For that we have 6 services all geared towards helping to address their needs, from comprehensive healthcare, food, shower, clothing and furniture, to welfare and housing advice.

Thankfully, our work does not end in the day centre; we go out and share our experience with not only our supporters but also with organisations, local governments and Whitehall. This is what we have attempted to do this past year and will continue to do this coming year and hopefully many years to come until there is no more the need to demand policies to end poverty and every God's child has a decent home.

Our campaigns are fuelled by our experience of working with people who come for assistance to the Manna Day Centre. We have used this experience to raise awareness wherever we have been invited to speak about our work to end homelessness. We have undertaken numerous activities with the view to generate sympathetic attitudes towards homeless people and all those experience poverty. Along the way, many people have supported us financially as a response to our message for which we are very grateful.

It was a privilege to have been invited by so many schools during the Harvest Festival to receive what school children had donated to the Manna Society. As in previous years, they were magnificent in their singing, their poems, their recitals and prayers. Perhaps, I owe it to them that I have not lost my idealism and the hope of a better world. I suspect that this coming year will not be any different. Yet again, children would be our best advocates when it comes to encouraging their parents to support our work.

Major differences this year, in our work with schools have been that at least two schools have not only donated their harvest to us but also have involved us in many of their other activities. They visited us in groups, volunteered for a day to better understand what we do. I acted as a guest of honour at an end of year celebration. I was impressed by the depth of knowledge and generosity of students in my seminars. In one of them, a five year-old pupil asked whether I would accept his pocket money to help our service users. The head-teacher stepped in before I could say a word and promised to send a donation in the name of the whole school. Thinking of him now, I am still in admiration of that little boy who wanted to do something for others.

This year was special too because the Year 8 of Ursuline High School won us a £3,000 prize as part of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative sponsored by the Institute for Philanthropy. We provided the group representing us in the competition with necessary materials on the Manna Society to enable them to make the best case for us. They competed with 11 other groups and won. They had worked hard and I was again touched by their dedication and enthusiasm. There is scope to develop further work not only with Ursuline High School, but also with many other schools we have been to this year.

After three years of faithfully attending the ROBES Project's meetings and closely participating in many of their deliberations, I have taken a step back from them. They have made great strides in establishing themselves in our area providing a much needed emergency winter

shelter for homeless people. I have been privileged to have taken part in this great adventure from its very beginning until now. As they have become more and more independent with their own trusteeship and stance on how to proceed to tackle homelessness, I have become less involved. During the 27 years we have been in existence we have learnt plenty and we have also shared the knowledge we have accumulated to all those interested to join us in this journey to be a brother/sister to one another.

Churches are our largest contributor, donating half of all our money to operate. We have spoken during church services to raise funds and the awareness of Christians about homelessness and poverty, in London and the surrounding. Many Christian associations have also had us as their guest speaker during weekly church meetings either to raise funds or awareness, sometimes both. In additions, I have spoken to business groups and organisations about our work.

I have maintained contact and worked with sister organisations such as Housing Justice and Church Action on Poverty to contribute nationally to better policies for homeless people and those experiencing poverty. The Manna Society joined the Get Fair campaign to call for an end to poverty in Britain. As part of this coalition, I have spoken in events held by Christian groups to mobilise support for the campaign and lobby politicians of all persuasion to sign up. Locally, we have partnered with statutory and voluntary agencies to address local issues, such as the increasing number of refugees coming to London after being granted asylum and the difficulties they face. We are also monitoring the implementation of the new strategy, called No One Left Out, pledging to end homelessness by 2012.



Housing & Welfare Report

By

Margaret Shapland



"Treat a man as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be." Ralph Waldo Emerson

I was reminded of this quotation when last week two clients that we worked with came to see us and give us a plant for the office as a token of appreciation for the help we gave them. They were also a reminder of how much our work has changed over the year – with additional categories of work such as looking at employment opportunities blending in with the more traditional areas of advice

Ivana and Lukas

Ivana and Lukas came to London at the end of last year looking for work. They had been working in a factory as agency staff in Portsmouth but on a contract which ended. We initially helped them by placing them in the ROBES night shelter project while we both looked at their employment prospects and also looked to see if they had any entitlement to benefits in the UK. Both of them had worked for some time in the UK. They came to see us at the time when the “credit crunch” was making employment that much harder to find.

As it turned out, one of them would have been approved for benefits as they were registered under the Worker Registration scheme. The other had been working for an employer who had not asked him if he was registered (it is the employee’s responsibility to register) and was refused benefits.

At the same time, we worked on getting their curriculum vitae in good order, talking to previous employers who could provide references, registering them with employment agencies who specialize in working with clients from Eastern Europe, doing work search sessions with them at the Manna Centre and they also worked with the advocacy worker at the night shelter with respect to other job searches.

Eventually, it paid off and a recruitment agency was able to introduce them to a hotel group in Brighton who employed Ivana as a housekeeper and Lukas was employed by a cleaning company based in the area – we made links with a night shelter in the Brighton area and they were able to let them stay while they saved their money. With two salaries, they were able to get a deposit together for a flat and are now happily living in Brighton. It took quite intensive work with them to deliver a fruitful contact but once the ball got rolling, the rest is history, as they say.

They emailed me to say that they had got employment and all was going well and then when they were next in London, we became the custodians of a very bright, colourful pepper plant, they brought as a “thank you” and which serves as a constant reminder that, with a little effort, we can change our circumstances for the better despite the fact that conditions may not be to our advantage.

“Conditions are never just right. People who delay action until all factors are favourable do nothing” William Feather

A review of the year

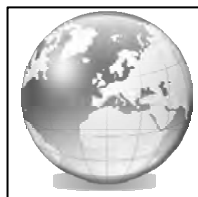
It has, as always been a busy one. The figures in the text box speak for themselves.

No of clients seen over 12 months*	: 1087
Net clients seen	: 958
Number of consultations	: 2492
New clients to the service	: 31%
Number of advice appointments	: 2009
Availability of service (days) **	: 317

*Clients may have come in over more than a one month period ** Out of 357 days when the centre was open

The service saw nearly 1,000 clients and we were able to offer a service for 89% of the time when the centre was open (excluding the one week when Crisis at Christmas is open). On average the service saw 6 clients per session and, on average, clients wanted to talk about two different topics.

The main changes in emphasis



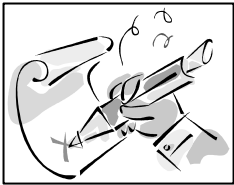
Clients from European mainland continue to grow - Over the last year, clients from Europe have continued to grow as a percentage of Advice and Welfare service users. In 07/08, some 23% came from the European mainland; in 08/09, the percentage grew to 28% primarily from the last 2 nations to join the European Union – Romania and Bulgaria. In contrast, the numbers of service users from Eire and Scotland has reduced.



More clients are known to the rough sleeping teams - Compared to 07/08 when just 15% of clients using the service were known to the street outreach teams who look for people that are rough sleeping; in this year, 29% were known to the outreach teams. This has grown for a number of reasons – over this year, there have been a number of “move-on” tactics used by local authorities to move people on from their rough sleeping sites and thus the service has been used to keep the outreach teams aware of where their clients are now sleeping. We tend to see more clients who have been verified by teams outside of Southwark and this is because many rough sleepers, even if they are known to be rough-sleeping in, say, Westminster, are not provided with services in Westminster as they have no local connection with the borough.



Numbers looking for housing rises to 32% - 307 people approached us for assistance with housing over the last year. Of these, we were able to work with 263 – the remainder either having no recourse to public funds in the UK or having no benefits or suitable identity documents available. Of these, we were able to place 64%. We have always known that housing demand outstrips supply in London but this year, the situation seems to be even more parlous and we are finding that, in many cases, we need to put clients on waiting lists for properties (particularly hostels, if that is what they want) and we are experiencing lengthy waiting times for housing providers to make a decision about whether they will accept a client. This has meant that we have seen an increase in clients who fail to attend appointments when they are offered – 12% of all clients who required housing assistance, despite our best efforts to keep in touch.



More advice work in the area of general support – Over this year we have seen the “other” category of advice work become the largest single category at 19%. In the past, this category used to cover areas such as dealing with utility companies, general issues such as tracing relatives or providing details of miscellaneous services. More recently, the range of advice needs has grown to include setting up National Insurance numbers, setting up individuals in self-employment, dealing with tax affairs, bank accounts etc. Again, this has largely been due to the growth in European clients from the A10 nations but equally, we are working with people to get Working Tax Credits if they are low earners as an aid to getting them back into employment and to help them afford rented properties when they go back to work.

Overall, working in this sector continues to be both immensely satisfying as well as challenging- what continues to make the work so worthwhile are the outcomes such as that outlined at the start of this article. Seeing two people so happy is infectious and heartwarming and the fact they have made a decent life for themselves with a little help from us is what counts.

Clients’ comments on advice service

“The advisor worked very hard to explain the possibilities I might have for housing”

“Took time with me and thought about extra things I might need which was very useful”

“Worked hard to find me some temporary accommodation on the day and did – it was good, they were more helpful than other services I approached”

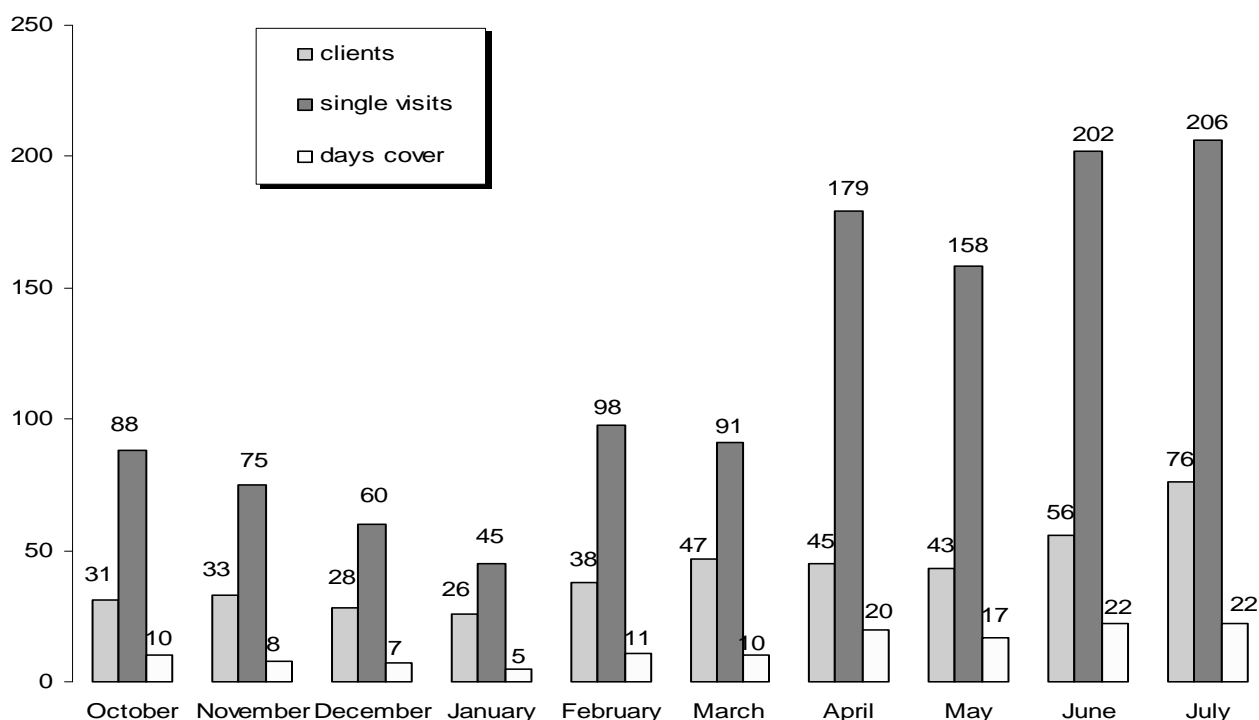




A10 Nationals Advice Report By Milena Koczaska

This report covers the period from 01/10/2008 until 31/07/2009. During that time **220 clients** came seeking advice. In total there were **1,202 visits**. The number of visits increased considerably from April when we began offering advice 5 days a week (previous to this it was 2 days a week - see chart below). Normally we would see **9 clients per day** (approx).

On many occasions clients sought advice on more than one topic (consultations). The number of consultations ranged from 80 in January 2009 to 370 in July 2009. In total there were **2,000 consultations** during that period.



Overall 66% of clients seen were Polish nationals, 13% Romanians, 6.5%, Czech, 3.5% Lithuanians, 3% Slovaks, 2% Latvians, 2% Hungarians and the remaining nationalities the Estonians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians and French accounted for 1% respectively.

Overall 87% of the clients were male. In January there was only 1 women client but in July there were 14 female clients.

Eastern European nationals are usually sleeping rough (approx 45%) or squatting (approx 35%), others stay in hostels (usually with the Missionaries of Charity but also in St Mungo's, the Passage hostel, a Salvation Army hostel or a Providence Row hostel), with friends or private rented accommodation. Sometimes they also use 'Shelter From The Storm' accommodation (I referred 8 clients to this shelter and 4 of them were given accommodation, the others failed to turn up there). 43 clients were referred to the Missionaries of Charity and at least 10 of them were offered accommodation. From December until March 9 clients were referred to the ROBES Project and 7 were given accommodation. 2 clients were also placed in the Hackney Night Shelter and in February 5 clients spent the coldest nights of the winter in a Severe Weather Emergency Project.

Two pregnant women received help with accommodation (with the support of the Albany Women Centre). One of them was picked up from the hospital and offered a space in a flat for her and her child of two months (she also received help with living costs). The other woman was offered secure accommodation in private rented accommodation but declined the offer.

Clients also got support with educational issues: 35 were referred to Crisis and UR4Jobs for CSCS training and exam (for those wishing to work in the construction industry) and 14 were given help to improve their English (ESOL courses at Crisis & Ur4Jobs).

186 contacts related to identification (ID) issues. We provided letters to confirm the client's ID. Up until May 5 clients were referred to Crisis in order to get a new passport but since May, as my cooperation with the Polish Consulate has developed, I am now able to get passports for our Polish clients without a consular fee – up until now 4 clients have been successful and 4 others are in the queue. I have also managed to establish closer cooperation with the Hungarian Consulate and 2 of our Hungarian clients have received temporary passports without a consular fee. I have also dealt with passport issues for two Czech and one Slovakian client, but as these Consulates are not open to support their nationals in need, I could only provide information about fees and the rules on how to apply for a passport.

Although 350 single consultations were connected with employment (searching the internet, looking at job ads in newspapers, making telephone calls, completing and sending job applications, referring to recruitment agencies) many clients did not find employment on the day they contacted the prospective employer or agency. However we do know that a few clients have been successful – a client has been offered a job in a Polish bakery, another client got a job in a removals company, another became a cleaner and a fourth works as a chef in central London.

Five clients were offered jobs by a recruitment agency called Prodrive Solutions. Unfortunately all of these jobs were temporary ones only. A few female clients started working as cleaners for Complete Cleaning & Maintenance Services. Clients were also referred to the Cue Personnel agency but in the present economic environment they are only able to assist clients who speak good English and are registered with the Home Office. No more than 3 clients were offered a job there since October. I prepared CVs for 36 clients.

30 clients were registered as self employed (mostly Romanian clients), another 16 obtained National Insurance Number (there are some difficulties obtaining these for homeless clients now as the rules concerning a client's address has changed. Previously a correspondence address such as our own was sufficient but now only a residential address is acceptable). We also helped 35 clients with employment related travel fares.

Since October we have also dealt with various tax issues including: Self Assessments (6 clients), Tax Refunds (11 clients), Tax Credit frauds (3 clients), outstanding National Insurance contributions (7 clients). We also helped 19 clients with debt management or legal/penalty issues. Penalties were usually either remitted or a special repayment plan was put in place.

There were also 93 consultations connected with general health (arranging medical appointments, ordering HC1 forms, applying for HC2 Medical Certificates & GP registration). 6 clients were successful in obtaining benefits and other financial help (2 x Pension Credit, 3 x Job Seeker Allowance, 1 x Winter Fuel Payment).

Up until April I had some difficulties in helping Polish clients who wished to return home but did not have the finances to do so. The Barka Foundation (a Polish charity who help in such situations) was unable to accept clients from the Southwark area. I did however refer 7 clients to

them and 3 of them were helped to return to Poland. Since April we have developed a very fruitful relationship with the London Reconnection Project run by Thames Reach. Of the 9 clients (mostly Czechs and Slovaks) referred to them, all of them were given help to return home. The London Reconnection Project helps vulnerable rough sleepers from Central and Eastern Europe to return to their home countries.

Thanks to the ongoing support of the Catholic Housing Aid Society (West London) we have been able to help rough sleeping clients pay for their accommodation over that crucial period between getting a job and their first wage packet. Up until now two Polish clients have benefitted from this scheme and have found accommodation in Streatham. It is very reasonably priced accommodation offered by a Polish lady who has been helping homeless people for many years. The Manna Centre covered Kamil's first two weeks rent (120 pounds) and Pawel's first week rent (40 pounds). The rent covers both accommodation and some meals. Above all our clients have a chance to stay in an unbelievably warm atmosphere which hopefully will help them find their feet in London and avoid having to sleep rough again.

The Manna Society has also supported another client in a very special way. D was a Manna client for a few months before he was admitted to a hospital in Poland. He phoned us asking if we could cash the cheque which came for him to our address. Although he had a Barclays Bank account, neither they nor Money Shop could cash the cheque without D being present himself. As he did not have sufficient funds to get him back to London himself he asked if we could help pay his fare back to London. Our Director and Treasurer agreed to cover the necessary fare and he was able to come back to London. On his return he cashed his cheque and repaid us the price of his ticket.

Since my full time employment started in April I have been able to attend outside meeting with clients. From then until now there have been 27 outside appointments where I have assisted clients. These have been quite varied and have included meetings with Barclays, Lloyds and HSBC Banks; Job Centres in London Bridge, Streatham and Whitechapel; visits to Southwark Police Station, the Tax Office in Stamford Street, and meetings regarding Tax Aid and job interviews.



The Manna Society

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2009

	Restricted Funds 2009 £	Unrestricted Funds 2009 £	Total Funds 2009 £	Total Funds 2008 £
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Voluntary income	16,000	419,473	435,473	356,977
Investment income	-	18,091	18,091	19,416
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Total incoming resources	16,000	437,564	453,564	376,393
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Resources expended				
Costs of generating funds:				
Costs of generating voluntary income	-	11,520	11,520	11,692
Charitable activities	12,825	333,061	345,886	341,788
Governance costs	-	23,678	23,678	23,804
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Total resources expended	12,825	368,259	381,084	377,284
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Movement in total funds for the year - Net income/(expenditure) for the year	3,175	69,305	72,480	(891)
<i>Total funds at 1 April 2008</i>	<i>12,151</i>	<i>140,463</i>	<i>152,614</i>	<i>153,505</i>
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Total funds at 31 March 2009	15,326	209,768	225,094	152,614
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All activities relate to continuing operations.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The Manna Society

**Balance sheet
as at 31 March 2009**

	£	2009 £	£	2008 £
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets		13,657		1,284
Current assets				
Debtors	968		6,373	
Cash at bank and in hand	260,503		245,560	
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
	261,471		251,933	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(50,034)		(100,603)	
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
Net current assets		211,437		151,330
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
Total assets less current liabilities		225,094		152,614
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
Charity Funds				
Restricted funds		15,326		12,151
Unrestricted funds		209,768		140,463
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
Total funds		225,094		152,614
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The financial statements were approved by the Management committee on 5 August 2009 and signed on their behalf, by: Tony Charlton, Manna Society Treasurer.

**Manna Centre, 6 Melior Street,
London SE1 3QP
(Tel: 020 7403 1931)**

Open Seven Days a Week 8.30am – 1.30pm

***** All Services are Free *****

Daily Services: **Food: Breakfast & Lunch;**
Showers: Toiletries & Towels provided;
Housing and Welfare Advice

Additional Services:

Monday: 9.00 – 10.00 SPOT Outreach Clinic
9.00 – 1.30 Advice for A10 Nationals
10.00 Clothing Store
10.00 - 12.00 Chiropodist (fortnightly)

Tuesday: 9.00 – 1.30 Advice for A10 Nationals
10.00 - 11.30 Nurse
10.00 - 1.00 Mental Health Worker

Wednesday: 9.00 – 1.30 Advice for A10 Nationals
10.00 Clothing Store
10.00 - 1.00 Osteopath

Thursday: 9.00 – 1.30 Advice for A10 Nationals
9.30 - 12.00 Social Security Benefits Advice

Friday: 9.00 – 1.30 Advice for A10 Nationals
9.30 – 11.00 Dentist (fortnightly)
10.00 - 1.00 Nurse
10.00 – 12.00 Alcohol & Drugs Advice (CDP Blenheim)

Sunday: 10.30 - 11.30 Clothing Store
(2nd & last Sunday of every month October - May)