



2019/20

ANNUAL REPORT

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum

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CHAIR'S REPORT

IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THE NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE REFUGEE FORUM'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020.

This is my first contribution to an Annual Report as Chair of the Board since I was appointed to this role at the AGM in November 2019. I took over from Patsy Brand – a long term supporter of the Forum who has been a trustee and volunteer for many years – many thanks to her for her passion and commitment.

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers have continued to provide an impressive range of much-needed advice and services for asylum seekers and refugees after they flee trauma and persecution and try to settle in a new and unfamiliar city. Information about the work that they do and the support they offer is set out in this report. Our diverse group of volunteers play a vital role in so many areas and their contributions are invaluable in helping us work effectively and compassionately with the growing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees coming to us for advice, guidance and support. We value our highly skilled and committed paid and unpaid workforce.

We are pleased to have formally recognised UNISON as the union for those staff wishing to join, and look forward to working with them to ensure that NNRF is a safe place to work with good working conditions and practices.

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity meets its charitable objectives and has appropriate systems to oversee the finances and the work of the Forum. We are fortunate at NNRF to have a very knowledgeable, skilled and committed group of trustees who all work to ensure that our work with asylum seekers and refugees not only continues but can grow and develop. Sadly, this year a stalwart supporter of the Forum, Leo Keely, died. Leo had a long involvement with the Forum and was a trustee for many years – also taking on the responsibilities of Treasurer and Chair. We have dedicated a seat at Broadway cinema to his memory.

Although the year was a challenging one, both financially and politically, NNRF prospered, in every sense, by working together as a strong team, so it was particularly heartening when our first staff survey early in 2020 recorded high levels of satisfaction with, and pride in, the organisation from most staff. Whilst we still have things to work on to be the best employer we can be, this shared feeling of commitment, pride and loyalty continues to make the Refugee Forum a very special organisation and one that should look forward with confidence, whatever the challenges ahead.

There are, as always, so many to thank for contributing to our achievements in the year: Our dedicated, resilient, hard-working staff, the amazing volunteers, our funders, donors and supporters, our partners across the City and beyond and my fellow trustees.

As the period covered by this report was coming to an end, we started being seriously affected by Covid-19 and the implications it had for us all. It has profoundly affected the lives of asylum seekers and refugees, both here in Nottingham and around the world, increasing their vulnerability. It has affected our staff and volunteers personally and professionally. I cannot commend the staff enough for how well they worked together and quickly established strong systems for the continuing support of our clients remotely to the best of our ability. Of course, the impact of Covid continues and will shape the work in the next year. However, whatever the challenges, while there is war, calamity and oppression in the world, NNRF will continue to be a proud ambassador for the human rights of those fleeing from danger in their home lands to seek asylum in the UK.



Jennie Fleming
Chair of the Board
October 2020



Unless they have expressed a preference otherwise, throughout this report clients' names have been changed to preserve confidentiality and all photos appear with permission.

HIGHLIGHTS

OF THE YEAR



over **2,800** clients were served **9,000** hot meals from our Café in a year



66

different nationalities recorded across all projects

£18,816

raised in just one fundraising event (Come and Sing with John Rutter)



17

languages of interpreting provided

Across all projects:

1,738

Number of clients served

(This figure does not include any partners or dependents).

10,690

new cases opened

Volunteering:

300 volunteers, of whom 72 (24%) had asylum or refugee background.

48 nationalities, speaking **60** languages.

An average of **40** volunteers helped in General Advice every month.

On average, volunteers give NNRF **760** hours each week – the equivalent of **21** full-time staff!



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

WELCOME TO MY SECOND ANNUAL REPORT.

I am pleased to share that NNRF has moved forward in key areas including campaigning, the working environment and support for staff, our partnership work and our fundraising efforts. This has all happened while we have continued to provide first-rate advice and support to almost 2000 asylum seekers and refugees across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

We have worked hard to improve NNRF's offer to staff. Unison has been formally recognised as the union of NNRF. Numerous policy documents have been rewritten in consultation with staff to ensure they are transparent and supportive of both workers' and organisation needs. Representatives from the staff team attend trustee meetings with the opportunity to raise issues and discussion points. There have also been more opportunities for staff to participate and co-own important decisions within the Forum. The best example of this was during our preparation for lockdown in March 2020 when the entire organisation came together to help plan how services, communication and support would be delivered remotely. We were able to maintain the vast majority of our services by using innovative techniques and modern technology to continue to provide essential advice and support.

Although still work in process, the positive results from our first staff survey showed that we are moving in the right direction. Staff reported being both happy and proud to work for NNRF. We intend to build on this throughout the next year to ensure that NNRF provides a positive, nurturing and supportive environment for staff, volunteers and the people we support.

Hundreds of volunteers have continued to provide their valuable time to support asylum seekers and refugees. It is no exaggeration to say that without volunteers the majority of our services would not be able to function. We would not have been able to run our Drop-in Service, provide food and a welcoming atmosphere in the Café, run our Women's Group and Youth Club, nor provide the same level of service within our ESOL and Interpreter provisions.

The asylum seekers and refugees we support have experienced incredibly traumatic events, both in their home countries, that led them to seek asylum, and during their journey to safety. When they do arrive in the UK they are met with the 'hostile environment' and negative feelings stirred up by politicians and the media. Yet what always strikes me is how so many are still able to display compassion and generosity and present with such humble dignity and resilience. It really does say something that over 24% of our volunteer team come from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds. It's fair to say that both myself and others at NNRF feel inspired and privileged to work with and support such individuals.

The past year has seen NNRF become more proactive in challenging government policy that negatively impacts on our clients. It is more important than ever that those working with and alongside asylum seekers and refugees shout out the truth about the reality of what is actually happening. We should be challenging the unjust policies and hostile views that we see every day. With this in mind NNRF has now become an active participant in several important campaigns including:



- **LIFT THE BAN -**
Challenging the decision not to allow asylum seekers to work while they wait for their asylum decision
- **SCRAP THE VAGRANCY ACT -**
We support many destitute clients and it is wrong that the Vagrancy Act, which goes back to 1824, makes it a crime to sleep rough or beg in England and Wales
- **FAMILIES TOGETHER COALITION -**
Campaigning to expand the eligibility around reuniting families, especially for separated children seeking parents and siblings
- **NNRF was also a signatory** to a joint letter to the Home Office seeking an increase in asylum support

To achieve the best support for asylum seekers and refugees, we must work in partnership with other key organisations across Nottinghamshire. We have actively sought to improve our partnership work this year. Communication, sharing of resources and information as well as mutual support has all improved and we are exploring options for joint funding and the co-running of services. The CEO of one of our close partners has stated: 'Our partnership is the strongest it's ever been'

I would like to end by saying a huge thank you to all of our staff, volunteers and supporters for all they have done for NNRF this year. After another year in post I can still state it is an absolute privilege to be able to lead such dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate people.

MATT ATKINS

NNRF'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Covid-19 has created significant challenges for the Refugee Forum. All decisions we have made have been based on doing all that we can to keep our clients, staff and volunteers safe from Covid-19, and have been based on Government guidance.

Since 23 March 2020, NNRF has been offering remote, contactless services to our clients. We are operating a telephone triage/advice line, supported by our interpreting service, four days a week, linked to specialist caseworkers who can deal with problems and remain in contact with our clients.

A safe and effective delivery system has been put in place to continue supporting destitute clients with food, toiletries and increased cash support to substitute for reduced provision of community meals as our Community Cafe has had to cease operations. We have seen an amazing response from the local community, dropping off donations of essential items every Friday.

Many activities for client groups have moved online, such as our ESOL classes, Youth Club and Women's Group. We have also introduced a new telephone befriending service with volunteers regularly checking in with newly arrived asylum seekers and other vulnerable or isolated clients. The interpreters have been crucial in ensuring that communication between our staff/volunteers and our clients has been efficient.

As circumstances change following updated government guidelines, we have adapted and will continue to adapt our practices to ensure access to services and support for our clients.

Whilst we have been forced to re-think and re-organise our modus operandi, we also see the current situation as an opportunity to modify some of our services longer-term, to improve the safety and wellbeing of everyone at the Forum, and to carry on the spirit of solidarity and cooperation beyond the lockdown.

At the beginning of the lockdown all our volunteers were asked to stay at home to ensure their safety and wellbeing. However, as we adjusted our services to the circumstances and the needs of our clients, volunteers have been the first to offer their help and support. In a series of new or adapted volunteering roles - from delivery drivers and telephone befrienders to fundraisers and interpreters - over 60 volunteers have continued to play a crucial part in helping to maintain and develop our services by reaching out to vulnerable clients and keeping us all connected.

Our fundraising plans have been severely disrupted by the restrictions put in place. Significant income generators such as “Come and Sing” and NNRF’s 20th Birthday celebrations have been cancelled this year. In addition, Hallam, who chose the Refugee Forum as their Charity of the Year for 2020, was unable to hold their annual conference event which potentially would have brought in an income of over £20,000.

However, we have successfully raised over £20,000 from our Covid-19 appeal. We have also had significant success in applying for Covid-related grants, raising more than £218,000. These grants have paid for:

- **New posts created to support NNRF’s Covid support to clients, including 2 additional Specialist Advice Team Caseworkers, 2 Hotel Liaison Workers, 1 additional Anti-Destitution Worker, 1 Food Distribution Worker and 1 Safety Officer**
- **Increased support for destitute clients including additional cash, food and volunteer support**
- **Modification of the Sycamore Centre offices to ensure they are Covid-compliant and in a position to reopen face-to-face services in the future**
- **Funding existing posts that were essential to supporting clients, including the General Advice Coordinator and Anti-Destitution Coordinator**

The above-mentioned income is significant and has allowed us to expand our services supporting refugees and asylum seekers. However these grants are all short-term, lasting only 6 months, apart from one which lasts for a year. There is currently a lack of long-term funding options externally as a high proportion of funders have refocused on these short-term Covid-response grants. Many of the grants that support multi-year services that we expected to apply for have been paused this year.

In addition, programmes such as the Vulnerable Person’s Resettlement Scheme that bring in a large portion of NNRF’s income have been financially reduced because new arrivals have not been allowed into the country during lockdown. Funding from several key funders might be at risk in the coming months, which could have a detrimental affect on NNRF finances.

We are uncertain what the future will look like post-April 2021. The size and scale of our work cannot be predicted due to the above factors. It could be that lockdown ends and grant-funding returns to normal, providing a good opportunity to retain and expand existing services. Alternatively, in 2021 funders could continue to focus on short-term Covid-response funding and continued pauses or reductions to mainstream funding which will put services at risk.



OUR VISION

A society where asylum seekers and refugees are welcomed, receive just and compassionate treatment and support in rebuilding their lives.

OUR MISSION

To support asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in gaining just outcomes, rebuilding their lives and integrating into society.
We do this by:

- Providing a safe and welcoming space where everyone is treated with respect, compassion and dignity
- Offering free and impartial specialist advice
- Empowering service users to rebuild their own lives
- Positively embracing and celebrating differences
- Offering practical support to those who have no means to support themselves
- Building effective partnerships with community groups and relevant organisations

SAFEGUARDING AT NNRF

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum supports asylum seekers and refugees of all ages and from all parts of the world and respects their rights and dignity. NNRF is committed to zero tolerance of abuse and the welfare of the client is regarded as paramount. It is our responsibility to ensure that we create and maintain a safe environment; we are clear that everyone has a right to be safeguarded from abuse irrespective of their culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity. There are culturally different practices and expectations amongst NNRF's diverse group of service users; this needs to be addressed with sensitivity and understanding but does not alter the need to safeguard and follow clear procedures. Safeguarding is a collective responsibility across NNRF.

Key developments

This year, we have established a dedicated Safeguarding Team to oversee all safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding is a key priority and remains a standard agenda item for consideration at Trustees' monthly Board meetings, managers' meetings, staff meetings and supervision meetings.

The Safeguarding Team is chaired by the Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility (Jane Daffé), who reports to the Board. It also currently includes the Director (Designated Safeguarding Lead - DSL), members of the management team and key staff with safeguarding involvement.

Members are expected to be a safeguarding 'champion' within their own teams, working to ensure that safeguarding considerations are embedded. The team also initiates improvements in NNRF working practices and procedures to support effective safeguarding, advises the Board and staff on safeguarding matters, maintains the profile of children and adults' safeguarding in all NNRF's work and raises awareness both internally and externally.

Jane Daffé attended both children's and adults' safeguarding training this year, delivered at Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS), in order to ensure latest documentation, terminology and procedures are in place at NNRF and that our training incorporates new developments in the field.

A commitment has been made to ensure that annual safeguarding refresher training is delivered to all staff. The Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility and Director jointly planned and facilitated the 2019 training round.

We have ensured that specific safeguarding questions are now included in reference requests for all posts at NNRF.

NNRF's DSL attends quarterly meetings coordinated by NCVS, which provide an opportunity to network with other local DSLs in the sector and remain abreast of local and national developments and trends.

Next Steps

The safeguarding team is currently developing a flowchart and new recording procedures for all staff in order to support the DSL's regular monitoring of safeguarding data, trends and effectiveness of practice.

Jane Daffé,

Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility.

ANTI-DESTITUTION

Target group : Refused Asylum Seekers



SATURDAY FOOD GROUP (SFG)

- Food bank offering selection of groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables and toiletries.
- Hot lunch provided for all clients made by volunteers.
- Access to clothes bank.
- ESOL classes

CASH GROUP

- £10 per four weeks given to each individual.
- Four-weekly update with each client.
- On-going casework + referrals

SUPPORT APPLICATIONS

- Applications for Section 4, Schedule 10.
- All follow-up work which includes handling further information requests, preparing appeals, allocation of accommodation and post-dispersal.

REFERRALS

- Internal referrals: Into the Mainstream, ESOL, New Refugee Clinic, Women's Group
- External referrals : Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT), Host Nottingham, Social Services, British Red Cross



39%

AD volunteers are clients or former clients of the project

715

meals served to clients at the Saturday Food Group

68

people moved from destitution into support



11

housed by Nottingham Arimathea Trust

5

people hosted through Host Nottingham



My good memories of the Refugee Forum staff, in Nottingham, when I was a homeless man without any support.

My name is Roohollah and this is my story. I was a homeless man for 7 months. At first, I was very worried, depressed and hopeless of my future, but soon after I met some nice and friendly volunteer staff in the Refugee Forum. Everything has changed, by the very first meeting, their loving looks and behaviours which were accompanied by love and smiles cleared all of my fears and worries of the future.

In fact, they brought hope back to my life somehow. During those 7 months, they provided me with all the different supplies that I needed on a weekly basis. They also paid me some monthly money as well.

When the Coronavirus appeared, they not only did not cancel their care and support but also tried to take care of me even more than before. They delivered the supplies and foods for me themselves. They also increased the monthly money which was very helpful.

To be honest, they were amazing friends because they created the best days for me in the worst days. I appreciate all their efforts and wish them all the very best.

ROOH, 2020

***“You are giving more meaning to our lives with your love and kindness”
(SFG client)***



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

This project aims to reduce social isolation and build stronger social networks among refugee children, young people, and families. We encourage the involvement of parents, and strive to strengthen internal community links, as well as those with the wider society.

We also promote better access and integration to mainstream services and provisions. Through our work we have successfully helped families experiencing serious difficulties into social care and improved their orientation and engagement within Nottingham, supporting vulnerable families regarding children’s health, education, and safety. We are committed to developing communication skills and to lessen the burden of adulthood placed on young lives through holistic and compassionate support, to enable children to thrive in their new home in Nottingham.

Children who attended one or more activity and whose family were supported by the project:

Aged 0-4 years:	78
Aged 5-9 years:	80
Aged 10-15 years:	63



The Children and Families project strives to ensure that every child is cared for and understood, adapting our way of working to meet individual needs.

An example of this is a child who arrived in the U.K with an undiagnosed disability which caused significant barriers to their development. The project supported the child and their family to be seen by the appropriate professionals who were able to provide equipment and resources to elevate the child’s ability to communicate. This was a significant positive change and one through which we supported both the child and the family to adapt to.

The Children and Families project also advocated for the child to be placed in appropriate schooling with other children who have similar needs, and as a result the child is now flourishing; feeling happier, more confident and able to communicate with everyone around them.

“I adored the projects and trips, being surrounded by people with different cultures and languages, learning about them in an amazing environment that’s thriving, healthy and happy. When it was Christmas I loved that too, Christmas isn’t really a celebration in my culture but coming to the party I was welcomed dearly and felt I could still enjoy the holiday just the same as others!”

- Delal, aged 13

“I am thankful and grateful for all the positive things you have done for me and for my kids. You have given pleasure and happiness to my family by supporting us whenever we needed help and by the interesting activities and the enjoyable trips. You have been always there to solve our problems, to guide us and answers our queries. I appreciate your help and all the fun you gave us and all the hard work you are doing.”

- Salma, client



COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY

The Communities of Identity Project is a consortium of 14 organisations that deliver a range of activities and services that help refugees and asylum seekers access information, advice and guidance, and provide a range of skills and confidence building activities including intergenerational work and youth activities, to enable them to become active citizens. Managed by a Partnership Coordinator, it also provides support to smaller groups and organisations through bespoke training/advice and a small grassroots grant scheme. This year the Small Grants Scheme supported 14 groups to develop their groups and run new activities.

The Col project also ran an event in November to bring groups and organisations together to find out more about funding opportunities and developing groups.

Asylum seekers and refugees received:

- Information, Advice and Guidance –
4253 were supported by 7 organisations
- Support for basic needs –
2179 were supported by 3 organisations
- Improving/acquiring English Language skills –
379 people from 3 organisations
- Volunteering –
284 were supported by 4 organisations
- Support for development of group –
28 groups were supported by 3 organisations
- Young people supported –
65 were supported by 2 organisations
- Intergenerational work –
24 people were supported by 1 organisation



Please note due to the way numbers who attend are recorded, people may be counted more than once if they attend more than one organisation. Also each quarter people may be recounted.

AISSD (African Institute for Social Development)

'We are very pleased to be part of the largest consortium that provides information, advice, practical support and services to asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham. We appreciate every help that we get from NNRF and other partners to achieve our objectives.'

NAT (Nottingham Arimathea Trust)

'Being a member of the consortium remains vital for NAT, by not only enabling us to better meet the needs of our residents and members via the extra staffing capacity gained through consortium grant, but also by strengthening our partnership work through the consortium. This is so because the consortium members offer us both referring in and referring out opportunities to our residents. The networking event organised by NNRF on 7th November of 2019 was a good example of how the consortium brings partners and organisations together to share information, expertise and resources for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers. NAT, of course, continues to play a key role in the consortium work, especially in its capacity as a member of the steering group'.

BEGIN (Basic Educational Guidance in Nottinghamshire)

'We would like to thank the consortium for its funding and support. Col funding is a relatively small amount of funding 'in the scheme of things' but vital to maintain our impartiality across the city for all individuals or organisations who need support.'

EAEC (East African Education Centre)

'We value the consortium because it gives us the opportunity to learn from one another and the opportunity to discuss issues facing our client groups and possibly suggest solutions'.

COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Our Community Café provides hot lunch and refreshments to clients, volunteers and staff members four days a week, all year round. Delicious and diverse meals are prepared by our team of friendly and passionate volunteers. They are masters of cooking on a shoestring budget and are particularly excited about preparing their regional delicacies which warm everyone's bellies and hearts.

Our supporters have described it as "the most welcoming cafe in Nottingham"!

THE CAFÉ IS A SPACE FOR EVERYONE

We particularly encourage our clients to let us know what they like/dislike about the Café, what ideas they have for the community space, and what improvements we could make. They told us they like the free drinks, the outside smoking area and delicious food. Café users commented on the very helpful and friendly people. They appreciated meeting people and making friends.

However, there were also things they did not like and they had many ideas for improvements such as: a reading corner with newspapers, new tables and chairs, new toys and separate spaces for women and for prayer. We will continue to work with the users of the café to make improvements.

FEEDBACK FROM CAFÉ USERS:

"The cafe is the heart of the Forum. Beyond hot drinks and delicious food it offers a warm, safe space for waiting, meeting, playing, socialising & sheltering - physically and metaphorically."

"Such a positive and life affirming environment for people to enjoy food and friendship!"

"The Forum contributes so much to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees and provides support and help in many different and essential ways. Thank you for welcoming and supporting so many people."

"The Café providing free hot drinks and hot lunches plays a vital role in the life of the Forum!"



26 volunteers from **16** countries,
half of them are asylum seekers or refugees.

About **45** plates of hot food dished out every day.
We served over **9,000** meals in a year!

Our 2019 Christmas Appeal raised **£4,400** (inc. Gift Aid),
which covers the cost of running the Café for **29** weeks.

EARLY ACTION

The Early Action Project focuses on empowering newly dispersed asylum seekers by providing information and advice and by developing skills, confidence and resilience to navigate through the system, with the aim of preventing and de-escalating the crises they experience as early as possible in their asylum journey.

The project also enhances the experience for clients by positioning their voices at the heart of service design, using their evaluation and feedback. The project evaluates what works within the service, to encourage innovation, seek good outcomes and act in a preventative rather than reactive way to identify the aspects of the system that often lead to crisis.

The New Arrivals Clinic registers newly dispersed asylum seekers and ensures that they are able to access healthcare services, legal advice and other important immediate needs. Via Refugee Action's Asylum Guides programme, we provide information workshops to our clients (with interpreters) on the asylum system to help them understand the process.



187 male,
60 female



118 clients required
an interpreter
129 clients didn't require
an interpreter



Age range:
under 25: 54 clients
over 25: 193 clients



3 clients had
a disability

A newly dispersed asylum seeking family arrived at NNRF and were referred to the New Arrivals Clinic. The advisor provided the client with a range of information including about the services offered by NNRF, the Asylum Support system, ASPEN cards and where to seek legal advice. The client was also shown how to access the Right to Remain website and additional referrals were made to different services within NNRF.

During the appointment the client became overwhelmed and tearful as she didn't have any friends locally. She had just moved from a city where there were members from the same community and she had support from them. She said her children felt bored and didn't have anywhere to go as they didn't have any friends. The whole family felt overwhelmed in general.

However, when she attended NNRF's Pamoja Women's Group she made friends and was able to hear stories from other women who had similar experiences. She knew that she was not alone. This gave her the confidence to attend English classes with her friends and visit each other, share recipes and attend events together. Her children also made friends and became happier and felt like children again. Had this family not been supported by the Early Action Project, they would not have been able to develop these friendships by meeting other clients who have similar experiences.

"Your workshops made me understand more about the system as a whole rather than survive through it"

"The evaluation questionnaire made me take a step back and reflect, something that we don't have time for, because of the pressures of the system, allowing me to evaluate my journey and knowing I have the information to cope with whatever comes my way"

"Thank you NNRF, because you cared"



ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The **ESOL Project** aims to provide a structured approach towards delivering English classes, particularly during our clients' first 6 months in the UK. We have developed a unique assessment system, which identifies a learner's language level and places them in suitable classes, taught by our team of committed volunteer tutors. In addition to curriculum-based classes, we also offer 1-on-1 tutoring, a lively conversation group and local trips with an educational twist!

60+ assessments completed each quarter

40-50 new students joining each quarter

Approximately **400 students** accessed ESOL (100 students each quarter)

More than **850 hours** of ESOL provided



ESOL volunteer Cathy receiving gifts on her birthday

CASE STUDY

A client started learning ESOL with us, attending the Entry 2 class, but found this too easy for their writing ability. Due to their mixed-level profile we allocated them a 1 to 1 tutor. The client has attended their 1 to 1 appointments consistently and undertook focused practice on all skills.

They recently sat exams at college and achieved an improvement in level for both their classes (speaking/ listening & reading/writing).

A HUGE THANK YOU



to Teresa, who has coordinated, developed and diversified our ESOL programme during the past four years. She has been an inspiration and great support to ESOL volunteers. Under her guidance, hundreds of clients had access to learning English at NNRF and with partner organisations and were encouraged to voice their opinions and ideas through client consultation sessions.

We wish Teresa all the best in her new job!



FUNDRAISING

The purpose of this project is to generate income and exposure for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum by engaging with individuals, groups and companies and raising money through online and offline events, campaigns and appeals.

Come and Sing raised **£18,816**, almost 50% more than in January 2019. The success of the event was due to the fundraising committee volunteers and specifically Margaret Levin who helped make this amazing event happen.

The Covid-19 appeal launched in March 2020 in response to the lockdown measures imposed, and has since gone on to raise over **£20,000**. The appeal has helped with the extra strain the pandemic put on our services and clients and allowed us to remotely run our services safely.

£4,400 (inc. Gift Aid) raised for the Christmas Appeal. This was for the Community Café which costs **£120** per week to run.

£2,600 raised by the NNRF team who took part in the 2019 Nottingham Fun Run. **23** people took part, seven were asylum seekers and three were children. Two asylum seekers were able to raise funds through sponsorship.

Come and Sing is an annual event hosted at The Royal Concert Hall (TRCH) in aid of NNRF. This is the second year running NNRF volunteers have worked with TRCH to host this incredibly well attended and joyful event.

Come and Sing is led by the celebrated composer and conductor John Rutter and is an afternoon of choral singing designed to lift the spirits. The music is a mixture of old and new, including some of John Rutter's own well-loved choral works. John Rutter is a household name as one of the world's best-loved composers of choral music.

This year we had **61 volunteers** making Come and Sing run smoothly on the day of the event which raised an incredible **£18,816**, almost 50% more than the previous year.

We want to thank all those who worked so hard on this fantastic event in aid of NNRF.

'Come & Sing' 2020 at the Royal Concert Hall was another extraordinary sell-out success. Thanks in no small part to the huge generosity of the Conductor/Composer John Rutter and the magnificent soloist Melanie Marshall who gave us their time and talents for free. And also the Royal Concert Hall staff who were so accommodating and supportive, helping the day to run even better than before!

We were very proud of our team of 61 volunteers, covering 102 separate jobs across the day, and of course the 800+ singers who raised their voices, raised our spirits and together we raised almost £19,000. It was magnificent!!

*(Margaret Levin, Hilary Hare Duke, Jane Henson & Dave Hewitt
– Come & Sing Organisers)*





GENERAL ADVICE

The General Advice service provides advice, information and assistance on a wide range of issues including destitution, housing, debt, welfare benefits, health, legal and asylum support. It is a volunteer-led service offered on a drop in basis four times a week. The objective is to provide basic support and assistance to service users, resolve queries, signpost to external services and refer to specialist in-house projects and partner agencies where appropriate. It is the main point of contact for new and existing service users.

- An average of **40** volunteers helped in General Advice every month, each coming in an average of **3** times a month, and nearly **50%** of our volunteers now have over two years' experience in General Advice.
- **1561** clients have come to General Advice for help during the year, many returning on several occasions, and an average of **30** clients have been seen every day.
- In addition to this, our clients have also been helped by volunteers within two off-shoot projects from General Advice: **247** clients have been helped in the New Arrivals Clinic, which focuses on supporting asylum seekers who have been newly dispersed to Nottingham; and **227** have been helped within the New Refugee Clinic, which supports with benefit applications such as Universal Credit.

CASE STUDY

“Faizal first came to General Advice in July 2019 as a newly dispersed asylum seeker and it was clear straight away that he had serious health issues, particularly in relation to his mobility. At this stage we helped him to access a solicitor, made an urgent referral to Into the Mainstream (ItM) to help him with registering with a GP, and highlighted to Migrant Help the fact that his ASPEN card was not working. In September he returned to General Advice, having received details of his substantive interview with the Home Office. We arranged an appointment with his solicitor in order to discuss his case before the interview, and obtained travel tickets from the Home Office. Unfortunately, due to ill-health and his mobility issues, he was unable to attend the interview. So when he came to us in November with details of his rearranged interview, we liaised with our partner organisation Refugee Roots, who were successfully able to accompany him there.”

“It is a great opportunity to be useful to further the commendable objectives of providing necessary support to service users often in very challenging circumstances. And also a rare opportunity for personal development in terms of acquiring skills; providing practical solutions in dire situations where solutions seems unavailable, and expectation management.”

-General Advice Volunteer

INTO THE MAINSTREAM

ItM aims to provide the necessary support and advocacy to ensure access to health services for all of NNRF's clients. The project's main activity is to ensure GP registration of new arrivals but we also ensure clients are linked to dentists, opticians, mental health services, maternity care and any other health services needed.

In addition to ensuring that clients are able to exercise their right to NHS services, we document the health needs of asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants, identify and address barriers to health services and use data collected to improve the health situation of the community.

356
GP registrations and
262
dentist registrations
carried out.

56
referrals to psychological
services or for other
mental health support.

100%
initial health assessments
of new arrivals carried out
within 3 weeks of referral
(urgent) or 6 weeks of
referral (normal).

100%
of clients completing
anonymous feedback
cards said they
received the help or
advice needed

CASE STUDY

Hashem is a male refugee from Iran who arrived in Nottingham four years ago. He was imprisoned and tortured in his home country for 7 years before escaping to the UK. His family joined him via family reunion after 2 years.

When he arrived in Nottingham, he was assisted by ItM to access GP services and, subsequently, mental health support and physiotherapy. As a result of his traumatic experiences he found it extremely difficult to engage with services. He was referred to and discharged by mental health services several times. His difficulties were compounded by unfamiliarity with the NHS and his poor English skills.



In February of 2020, ItM partnered with psychologists with specialisations in working with refugees and asylum seekers. As a rapport had been developed over a period of time between Hashem and NNRF workers (particularly at the Money Sorted project) and NNRF was a place he felt comfortable at, he was referred for sessions of trauma-focussed psychotherapy at NNRF with a familiar interpreter. Up until the Covid-19 lockdown, Hashem attended weekly sessions and these sessions have continued via WhatsApp. Hashem is now getting some relief from the psychological effects of his trauma through learning grounding techniques. He told an NNRF worker that "Refugee Forum [NNRF] have helped me so much with my life problems and they have interpreters. It was easier for me to get mental health support there, as I knew and trusted them".

"The staff who attended to me was very polite, professional and detailed" - Client feedback

"The staff is really amazing and patient with us, God bless you guys always." - Client feedback

"You are the best. Thank you so much for helping people" - Client feedback

*"I am encouraged to take necessary steps to ensure obstacles to easy access to health care [...] are removed."
- Abdurashed, ItM volunteer, reflects on his experience of delivering training to NHS workers*



MONEY SORTED

This project is funded by The European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

Money Sorted in D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham & Nottinghamshire) is a financial inclusion project that provides support and personally tailored interventions for people experiencing the greatest financial difficulty. It enables individuals to take control, build their confidence and skills and help them tackle barriers and problems in order to improve their financial well-being.

CASE STUDY

Michel is a refugee from West Africa. He is a victim of torture. Due to his severe mental and physical health issues resulting from his torture, he found it difficult to manage his finances. He was in significant debt and borrowing money to pay for his family reunion application to bring his family over. With the intervention of the Personal Navigator from Money Sorted in D2N2, Michel was able to apply for and obtain the disability benefits Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work payment. This maximised his income and he received a substantial backdate, which meant he was able to consolidate his debts. The Personal Navigator assisted the client to create a savings and budget plan which allowed him to pay for the on-going costs associated with the family reunion application (solicitors, DNA tests, translations, etc.) and which we estimated to be approximately £5000. Michel's family arrived in the UK in September of 2019 and are thriving. The client has also been able to manage his finances since they arrived and they are slowly rebuilding their lives in the UK.

"[NNRF] Forum is like an uncle or father to me and my family. Any trouble come here and you help us! I come for English, benefit advice, my wife for [Womens] group and kids for help school or anything else like bills or housing. Very good!"

"It saved my life, with my mental health issues including PTSD [due to torture], I was lost and I had no money to bring my family to safety. I cried every night and thought about suicide until I went to NNRF and they give me a caseworker. He knew about how to help me with my mental problems and how to solve my finance problem with family reunion, as it was going to cost thousands of pounds. We worked on a plan and did all the actions, it was long but my family are very close to being in the UK. I also learned many skills on money management in the UK. In Central Africa we use cash money mostly and bargain a lot, we only really have one type of bank account if at all, so UK it's really confusing and you get into lots of problems because you don't understand it, it's a new country. I now feel good about my finance knowledge in the UK and feel calmer. I also know where I need to go if I have any issues."



20
clients into work



29
clients into
education/training





OPPORTUNITY & CHANGE

This project is part of the Building Better Opportunities programme and is funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

Opportunity and Change is a support programme for people with multiple and complex needs. Participants on this programme engage with an individually tailored and holistic package of support, training and therapeutic interventions. People learn new skills and increase their self-confidence. The ultimate aim is to help these clients become socially and economically included, through access to education, training and employment.

CASE STUDY

One of our Opportunity and Change participants was referred onto the programme just as he got his refugee status. He had a serious untreated mental health issue, and the removal of his asylum support had left him homeless the week before Christmas. When he came onto the programme he had recently been refused support by the winter homeless shelter due to his erratic behaviour, and he was left in an extremely vulnerable position.

The Opportunity and Change Navigator was immediately able to advocate on his behalf, and arranged accommodation for him with Nottingham Arimathea Trust. She also helped him register with a GP for the first time, so that he could start accessing the mental health system and receive the care he needed. She was able to help him navigate the benefits systems, open a bank account and ensure he was receiving what he was entitled to.

Once settled in new, safe and stable housing, the participant was in a position to start thinking of the future. He has started accessing ESOL classes for the first time and has been referred to a mental health specialist.

“I’m so grateful to my Navigator, she has helped me sort out all kinds of issues”

“I’ve really enjoyed the chance to be creative with the Loudspeaker project (at Nottingham Contemporary)”

“I love the Skills Plus for Change programme, and look forward to it every week”

3 participants gained employment or started job searching

5 people began formal education courses

6 people moved into permanent accommodation

15 engaged with ESOL classes



SPECIALIST ADVICE TEAM (SAT)

The Specialist Advice Team provides advice and assistance in accessing mainstream services, including: housing and accommodation, social care support, racial harassment support, domestic abuse support, asylum accommodation issues, further submission requests, appealing penalty charge notices, escalating asylum support issues via Migrant Help and SERCO, new refugee resettlement, escalating safeguarding issues for both asylum seekers and refugees, support for families with no recourse to public funds, welfare rights and benefits, new refugee support, signposting trafficked survivors, appealing housing and benefit decisions, LGBTQI+, challenging hate crime, supporting clients who wish to pursue higher education/retrain.

214

clients received positive decisions regarding leave to remain.

178

clients have been resettled into temporary accommodation/own private rented

300

male and

141

female

clients assisted. More women are now empowered to approach us for help directly

27

clients wished to pursue higher education and have been supported to do this

53

clients moved back to Nottingham to be with their community and friends

CASE STUDY

When working at NNRF there were numerous stories of helping out those whose voices were not being heard by society, but one in particular stood out. A disabled client who had been evicted from his accommodation required assistance with his personal care, being paralysed down one side. With speech problems as a result of his stroke, he could not get himself the help he needed. NNRF rallied around him, treating him with the respect and dignity that he deserved. By our advisor co-ordinating a human rights assessment with social care and communicating with Migrant Help, this client was given the accommodation and support he required. Months later at a social event he now appeared a happier and healthier gentleman.

SAT is a vibrant, diverse and hardworking team. The Refugee Settlement work helps individuals integrate into our society so we can feel the real benefit of refugees in our communities. One example is a family of five that I worked with trying to navigate our benefit and housing system. This is hard enough without English being your second language, I can only imagine how difficult it was for them. But it doesn't stop at this: we were able to help get milk vouchers for the new-born baby, help with changes in schooling and mental health difficulties. The children started to come out of themselves and were able to guide the parents into other services. We were there to support them as human beings and I will not forget the father saying to me, 'We pray for the Refugee Forum every day', because of the kindness and respect that was shown to them. They really believed that the Forum had a special kind of people working there and hoped to give back in the future.

Beth - Social Work Student



“I left my family back home and lost everything, but with your support, I feel I belong again; you’re not only an organisation of support; you are home”

“Thank you SAT for supporting and believing in me from day one. You made me feel like human being again”

“I feel equipped with the skills to have a fresh start at life, now that I have my status”

“I would like to say thank you, I was depressed and with your support, you signposted me to get the right help I needed. Thank you for your kindness and what you are doing for people”



VOICES IN REFUGE

INTERPRETING

We offer a high quality interpreting service in 17 languages. We provide in-depth training for refugees and others to enable them to use their language skills to become interpreters. Our list of languages is constantly being updated as we train new interpreters.

Our primary aim is to improve the experience of community interpreting, not only for the facilitator and the client, but also the interpreter.

-Interpreters are used by **90%** of NNRF clients

- **36** individuals trained as interpreters during the period April 2019 – March 20

-A positive response was received from external clients.

88% of respondents said that they were 'extremely confident' that when using an interpreter provided by Voices in Refuge, their service would be provided with an interpreter who has been trained to a high standard.

The remaining **11%** said they were 'mostly confident'.



CASE STUDY

"I have been living in the United Kingdom for 14 years. I was living in Nottingham until I divorced my husband. I was forced to move away for my safety and was relocated to a different city. In my current town, my daughter and I experience a lot of racial abuse. I commute by train twice a week to come to the interpreter training provided by Voices in Refuge. The training is a safe space for me. I feel as though I can truly be myself in an environment where diversity is embraced and celebrated. Here, I feel confident when speaking in my own language. I particularly like the multicultural aspect of the training. Whilst everyone has a language partner, there's a diverse range of languages and cultures and everyone can enjoy their time together. I would volunteer as an interpreter at the Forum with pride and pleasure. It would be important for being a better interpreter and carrying out good work. The training has been the most amazing experience I have ever had."

"When I come to the Refugee Forum, I am told the rules of the interpreter. I know what to expect and this makes me feel very comfortable." - Client

"The interpreters take their time and make sure that they understand everything that's being said. If something cannot be translated, they don't just make it up, they explain what is going on to everyone. I am really confident that what I am saying is being interpreted". - Adviser

"Without Voices in Refuge, we wouldn't be able to run the class for the number of people we do." -Training Provider

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering at NNRF has many benefits and challenges – something for everyone who gives it a try – opportunities for asylum seekers, who are not allowed to work, and refugees, who often struggle to find employment, to gain valuable experience, skills and confidence. Similarly, local residents find volunteering fulfilling and rewarding. We would be unable to offer such a variety of services to so many clients without our brilliant volunteers. Building on last year's success in gaining the Investing in Volunteers quality standard, we continue to nurture volunteers, develop the ways in which we support them, and celebrate their contributions to NNRF.

- **300** volunteers, of which **72 (24%)** had asylum or refugee background
- **48** nationalities
- Speaking **60** languages
- On average, volunteers give NNRF **760** hours each week – the equivalent of **21** full-time staff!
- Offered **40** training sessions & courses, attended by **302** volunteers & members of partner organisations



The best part of volunteering with NNRF was “meeting new people and making great friends, in a time that was really difficult, and I knew absolutely no one because I was new in the UK. It was a great way to be introduced into the life and the culture of the UK, and how things work in everyday life. I was given a chance to give back, even though it's just a little, to the community that has accepted me and has given me a lot of support. I was also given a great training course to become an interpreter, thanks to which I have a part-time job as an interpreter in the city where I live now.”
(Taha, General Advice & Interpreting Volunteer, May 2019 -October 2019)



“I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the positive influence NNRF had on my life. You cannot imagine how much strength your support has given me during this difficult time. Thank you for your concern and useful advice. I'll be forever grateful.”

(Ahsan, General Advice Volunteer and Trainee Interpreter
August 2019 - December 2019)

“I would like to sincerely thank you for the excellent training and support that I received whilst attending the Forum. I have met so many great, kind, generous people in the staff, interpreters and other volunteers.”

(Craig, General Advice Volunteer
August 2016 - March 2020)

VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (VPRS)

The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme is a Home Office project that enables individuals and families identified by the United Nations as having particular needs (e.g. people with serious medical conditions, survivors of torture, women and children at risk of exploitation or violence) to enter the UK with humanitarian leave to remain.

Within NNRF, the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme supports newly arrived refugee families towards the key goals of empowerment and integration. We want to ensure that our families can rebuild independent and self-sufficient lives in the UK. We support families from their arrival in the UK for a period of five years. When families first arrive, we focus on ensuring that they have access to benefits, education and healthcare. As they settle into the community, we support their integration with a focus on learning English and developing their skills to support employability.



CASE STUDY

Mohamed arrived in the UK on the VRPS scheme in March 2019 with his siblings and his mother. He is making really good progress learning English, is keen to attend training opportunities and has started volunteering supporting young people with special educational needs. His long-term career plan is to go into teaching, so this experience of working with young people supports his long term aims.

He says “I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the employees of the Refugee Forum for their strenuous and continuous efforts. They are really good, cooperative and generous people, and I appreciate them for their patience with the refugee families, especially with the difficulty of communicating with people who are not fluent in English. I wish you the best of luck and continue forward and I hope to be able to help you with something soon.”

15 of our families have entered their last year on the VPRS scheme.

We welcomed **13** new families to Newark and Nottingham.

Of the adults we support **17** are in paid employment. A high proportion of our clients are over 55 or are unable to work due to health issues or because they are carers. Others are on a path to build their employability.

We logged over **950** client cases during the year, of which 31% related to housing, 23% related to benefits, and 11% related to health and 11% related to employment or education.

Of the benefits cases, more than a quarter related to Universal Credit, which represents a significant increase from just four cases last year to almost **60** this year.

*“Sessions have been delivered in an amazing calm, clear way.
Thank you, Jane”*

-Hassan (client / volunteer)

“Thank you for always being professional and caring about us”

-Ahmad (client)

“I’m so glad I made the transition from volunteer to staff”

-Caitlin (staff)



PAMOJA

WOMEN'S GROUP

Pamoja means 'Together' in Swahili, which is reflective of the group's purpose and aims. We empower women through weekly sessions which encourage creativity, English language practice, confidence building and friendship.

On average between

20-25 women attended the group each Friday

PAMOJA Women's Group brings women from different backgrounds together. The strength of the group is evident in its diversity, driven by unity of purpose, to achieving outstanding goals.

"I have had the opportunity of being both a beneficiary of this wonderful group and a contributor by serving the needs of the women through the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum Grants Team. This is the journey of growth, self-development and achievement that PAMOJA provides to women PAMOJA works with charities, charitable organisations, local community businesses and institutions in providing its members opportunities for integration and learning. Over the last 3 years, since I became a member, women in the group have learned new skills, set up and expanded their businesses while others have pursued professional qualifications at Higher Education level. The group continues to grow and service the needs of not just women but their children."

- NNRF volunteer and Women's Group Member

PAMOJA provides women with opportunities to enjoy recreational activities with their children during term time and holidays, providing stability and growing the confidence of the group.

- Modupe, NNRF volunteer and Women's Group Member

For me, the group has been very helpful, because you make me feel that I am not alone, that I found a big family. You make everyone feel like there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

- Maria, Group Member





'The effect of this project is beyond words in the lives of many women of this group and their families. Hannah regularly organises or signposts to meetings and different sort of trips that bring people together to learn English language, knitting, cooking etc. These projects provide social interaction, wellbeing and community engagement for women and their individual families.'
Adelola, NNRF Volunteer and Group Member

'For me Pamoja group is the place where you can find friendship, compassion, understanding and support. I know when I want help with something that there is always someone there to help. The kids also enjoyed all the activities and the trips they attended with the group. I am very proud to be part of Pamoja women group and big thank you Hannah for your hard work, dedication and support for all of us.'
Alya, Group Member





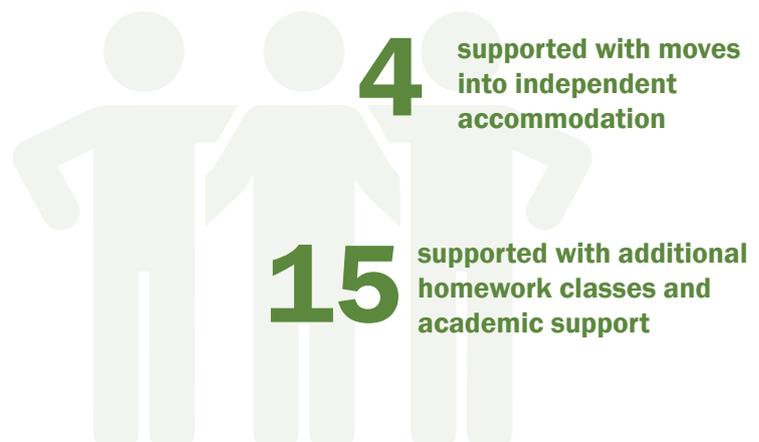
YOUTH PROJECT

Our work with young people includes: those living with families seeking asylum, separated young people in the care of the local authority (UASCs), and refugee young people.

Navigating a complex asylum system and adapting to life in the UK creates specific challenges for young people seeking refuge. Much research has documented the anxiety felt by children and young people during the asylum process. In particular the feelings of being in limbo and unable to plan for their future. Whilst children and young people are often remarkably courageous and resilient in the face of adversity, the treatment they receive once in the UK often has a negative effect on their emotional well-being. Our aim, by running a weekly youth club and other activities, is to help young people grow friendships and support networks, gain confidence with English and develop a fulfilled life in the U.K.

95 young people have attended the youth club or other youth project activities. This means they will have had access to:

- English conversation
- Homework support
- Team/confidence building activities
- Meeting and making new friends
- Clothes bank
- Table tennis, pool and table football.
- Art workshops
- Poetry workshops
- Health and Wellbeing workshops



“I came to the UK a year ago. My first trip was to the beach with the Youth Project. It was amazing... we had chips... I would love to go back. Since that day the Youth Project has helped me in so many ways. They have been family to me. They have given me clothes from the clothes bank, bought me a maths book, helped me with my college work and given me a free bike. When I first came to the UK I thought I would die, I was so afraid. The Youth Project has helped me grow confidence, I love speaking English and the freedom of the UK. People in the UK have been very good to me.

The volunteers have been my family”.

-Erasti, 19

“(The Youth Project) has helped me meet people and make new friends, I am so glad of it”.

- Awet, 18

“It is a hugely enriching and enjoyable part of my week, a great blessing to my life”

- Hannah, volunteer

“It’s a fun place for young people to meet, socialise and get the support they need”

- Laura, volunteer

PARTNERS

NNRF works very closely with a range of partner organisations locally and nationally, these relationships strengthen our work. Below is a selection of those organisations that we have close partnerships with.

EMMANUEL HOUSE

Emmanuel House provides a range of services for people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. The services we provide contribute to preventing homelessness, intervening in homelessness or helping people recover from homelessness. Emmanuel House works with people who are rough sleeping, people in supported accommodation or who, for various reasons, might be at risk of losing their home accommodation.



In response to the Covid-19 pandemic Emmanuel House has adapted how it delivers its services. Much of our mental health support is provided remotely by phone, although as Government guidance changes face to face support is increasing. Provision for people who are rough sleeping provides continuous support into accommodation and beyond. Our open access provision has translated into an appointment-based system that provides people with support for any matter relating to the wellbeing of the person. This is a service available to anyone who needs it, regardless of their circumstances.

Before Covid-19, Emmanuel House provided shelter-accommodation for people who would otherwise rough sleep, but during the pandemic we moved everyone into a hotel in response to Government instruction. During this time we continued to support people into accommodation and hope to be able to develop this provision in partnership with the City Council. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic Emmanuel House also provided a range of services that included open access drop-in provision.

For further information about Emmanuel House please visit www.emmanuelhouse.org.uk

Denis Tully, Chief Executive Officer, Emmanuel House.

NOTTINGHAM REFUGEE WEEK (NRW)

NRW has continued to enjoy a close and supportive working relationship with NNRF this year. As an annual cultural festival that engages over 30 partner organisations from across the city (refugee support, community, arts, culture and sport-related) during its week-long programme, NRW provides an important opportunity to celebrate the presence and contributions of refugees across Nottingham and to create opportunities for community interaction between refugee and host communities.



NNRF again played a key role in this task by organising one of the most successful events, the RefuTalent Show, which it held at the Forum. This event gained positive press coverage in LeftLion. Members of NNRF's PAMOJA Women's Group were also involved in a number of events and a key member, Salani Mutseyami, acted as Chair for NRW in the year 2019.

Longstanding NNRF volunteer Dave Hewitt also completed his final year on the NRW committee after some 10 years of service. NRW benefitted from the expertise of Voices in Refuge to provide translated material for the NRW website, and is grateful for the ongoing financial contribution that NNRF is able to make towards the festival. In September 2019, the newly elected NRW committee was delighted to welcome NNRF Finance Officer John Gordon on board as its Treasurer. NRW looks forward to continuing its fruitful collaboration with NNRF in the forthcoming year.

Anna Ball, Chair, Nottingham Refugee Week 2020.

A PLACE TO BELONG - REFUGEE ROOTS

Refugee Roots provides a place to belong through support and befriending initiatives that empower asylum seekers and refugees to navigate the complexities of building a new life in the UK.

“It has helped me to spend my time in a good and safe place, because I don’t have a job. For me it’s very important to go out and meet friends as I get depressed if I’m home alone. It helped my English, confidence and being sociable with other people.” Shiraz

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers have helped more than 297 individuals in 2019. Support has included:

- One to one befriending
- Accompanying participants to appointments
- Weekly support groups, English classes, art sessions and confidence building opportunities
- Signposting, information, advice and guidance
- Meeting basic needs

Covid-19 changed the way we supported participants. As a result we provided telephone befriending, telephone English classes, online English classes, and a telephone helpline for advice, guidance and referrals to other service providers. Moving to phased face to face support, befrienders have met in small groups in a community garden. Much of their work continues to be conducted remotely. As restrictions lift our accompanying support is expected to increase.

The past year Refugee Roots has valued the support and collaboration of NNRF, with the majority of referrals for our accompanying and befriending support. We have appreciated good referral paths and clear communication lines with highly skilled and committed staff members. This has meant clients have received the support they needed at a critical time.



THE ASYLUM EARLY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum and Refugee Action formed a partnership of eight organisations in July 2018, with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.



The partnership seeks to develop excellent services for asylum seekers and refugees informed by early action principles, user-led service design, peer-peer learning and collaboration. We have developed an engaged network and built strong relationships across the partner organisations between leaders and practitioners. The Early Action Expert Panel are Experts by Experience from partner organisations who together influence early action practice and inform the priorities of the partnership. As part of the Practitioner Network, Barbara (NNRF Volunteer Coordinator), led a well-attended session on developing an effective volunteer programme to increase organisational capacity. This year, NNRF’s early action work focused on further developing the New Arrivals Clinic, designed to streamline and make support for new arrivals consistent, while reducing pressure on the work of the advice drop in. The ambition is that people arriving in Nottingham have the information, support and guidance needed to navigate the asylum/support systems and the services available to them, and that initial needs around documentation, accommodation, health or finances are met promptly.

External crises; such as the asylum advice and accommodation contract transition in September 2019 and of course, the Covid-19 pandemic; threaten the ground gained towards preventative service models. However, by embedding early action principles within and across the organisation’s ways of working, NNRF have been able to adapt quickly while continuing to meet the needs of the people who need them most.

Lora Evans - Early Action Programme Manager, Refugee Action

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

EMMANUEL HOUSE
 NOTTINGHAM ARIMATHEA TRUST
 REFUGEE ROOTS
 BEGIN
 BRITISH RED CROSS
 NOTTINGHAM Y M C A
 HOPE INTO ACTION
 HOST NOTTINGHAM
 ST. ANN'S ADVICE CENTRE
 BIKEWORKS
 AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
 AL HURRAYA
 MOJATU FOUNDATION
 EAST AFRICAN EDUCATION CENTRE
 SENIOR SUPPORT GROUP
 NOTTINGHAM COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES
 BELONG
 CAMEROON SUPPORT GROUP
 HALLAM
 HIMMAH
 NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY
 SCHOOL OF ARTISAN FOOD
 NOTTINGHAM CITY OF SANCTUARY
 NOTTINGHAM REFUGEE WEEK
 O I S C
 T T K CONFECTIONERY



FUNDERS

Henry Smith Charity
Lloyds Bank Foundation
Nottingham City Council
Refugee Action



BBC Children in Need
The National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund (ESF)

The A B Charitable Trust
29th May 1861 Charitable Trust
The Lady Hind Trust
People's Post Code Trust



The Jones 1986 Charitable Trust
The Buckland Charitable Trust
The Whitaker Trust



The Thomas Farr Charitable Trust
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Foundation
JN Derbyshire Trust
Tampon Community Fund



Southall Trust
GSK Awards 2020
Nottingham Women's Centre





STAFF MEMBERS

The Board of Trustees would like to express their gratitude to all staff who worked at NNRF during April 2019 – March 2020 (and all those who have joined us since) for their incredible commitment and hard work, without whose contributions and support the Refugee Forum would be unable to provide vital services to those in need of them.

**Adel Hamad
Aiza Javed
Alex Rainbow
Allan Njanji
Barbara Spreiz
Bernie O'Rourke
Caitlin Sorrell
Dan Robertson
Daniela Loffreda
Debbie Royle
Fairouz Shermado
Fawad Mousawi
Fiona Broome
Gemma Pillay
Gita Salimi
Hannah Caithness
Hannah Ziolek
Hermione Berthels
Iqra Mehdi
Jane Oakley
Jill Jefferies**

**John Gordon
Josh Aspden
Julie Whitehead
Kadria Fahmy
Mai Ahmed
Matt Atkins
Matt Bedford
Mohammed Shammari
Nawzad Mouloud
Nicole Shametiova
Nosheen Ahmed
Olivia Wood
Richard Martin
Sally White
Sarah Norris
Sherene Bingham
Sonia Bilkhu
Teresa O'Hagan
Thomas Tilahun
Valeria Aquino
Zanele Ndhlovu**



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2019-2020

NAME	ROLES	DATES
Chris Galvin	Trustee with responsibility for Information Security and Risk register	(Resigned November 2019)
David Mellen	Co-Chair of Trustees	(Resigned November 2019)
Jan Callaway		(Resigned August 2019)
Jean-Didier Mualaba		(Resigned March 2020)
John Henson	Chair of Policy Working Group	(Resigned November 2019)
Katie Brownlow		(Resigned November 2019)
Lucy Judd	Secretary	(Resigned November 2019)
Maggie Jones	Secretary	(Resigned November 2019)
Allan Njanji		Elected at AGM 27 November 2019
Amdani Juma		Elected at AGM 15 November 2017
Ankunda Joel Matsiko		Co-opted March 2020
David Hewitt	Chair of Fundraising Committee	Elected at AGM 29 November 2018
David Sadler	Treasurer, Finance Committee member	Elected at AGM 27 November 2019
Helen O'Nions	Grants Committee Member	Elected at AGM 27 November 2019
Jane Daffé	Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility; Chair of Policy Working Group; Trustee representative of GDPR working group.	Elected at AGM 29 November 2018
Jennie Fleming	Chair of Trustees; Member of HR and Finance Committees and of Policy Working Group	Elected as chair at AGM 27 November 2019
Liz Pritchett	Grants Committee member	Elected at AGM 27 November 2019
Patsy Brand	Grants Committee member	Elected at AGM 27 November 2019 (Co-chair of Trustees until Nov 2019)
Pete Strauss	Policy Working Group member	Elected at AGM 27 November 2019
Richard Chamberlain	Chair of Health & Safety Committee	Elected at AGM 15 November 2017
Roger Tanner	Chair of HR Committee	Elected at AGM 29 November 2018
Stella Nickolay	Vice-Chair of Trustees; Chair of Grants Committee; HR Committee member	Elected at AGM 29 November 2018

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership of the Refugee Forum is automatic for: all volunteers active within the last 12 months; current staff; those that make regular financial contributions; Honorary Life Members. There are a variety of ways our members contribute to our work, all of which is very much appreciated by the board of trustees.

All members are entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote for trustees and, with the exception of staff, are eligible to stand for election to the board. Members and supporters also receive a monthly newsletter.

The end of the 2019 – 2020 financial year didn't see us completely out of the difficulties of the previous year but the signs were promising, and due to some successful funding bids we have been able to retain all staff, with a slight increase to 42 (41 last year).

As ever, the very foundations of the Forum are our volunteers, with a similar number to last year – 300, around a quarter of whom are from within our client group.

Special mention must be made of over 100 individuals who make monthly financial contributions to the Forum – many of whom have been with us from the beginning.

There were also a number of events organised by individuals or groups, both from within and without the Forum – see below, that raised a considerable amount of money for various projects and the general pot, including the Anti-Destitution Fund, the Women's Group, and the Café refurbishment:

Rosa's Lovely Daughters and Friends

Harlequins Choir

Mistakes parties

The Nottingham Fun Run

Come and Sing with John Rutter

The Hockley Hustle

Accord Chamber Choir

THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

OUR FINANCIAL YEAR RUNS FROM 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020.

Across all income streams NNRF income in 2019-20 fell by £221,000 to £962,000, caused mainly by the closure of a number of projects, including the Legal Project in 2019-20. Nottingham City Council is the major funding provider and in 2019-20 some 60% of total income was provided by them, in particular to fund four projects: Into the Mainstream, Communities of Identity, Independent Living Support Service and the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (on behalf of the Home Office). Other charitable income fell from £280,000, to £254,000, with a number of new funders helping to maintain this still major income stream.

With strong local support and benefit from a number of online campaigns, income from fundraising and sundry donations increased by 20% to £86,000, providing valuable unrestricted funds. One fundraising event, "Come and Sing", with John Rutter, raised nearly £19,000 and was a fantastic achievement and a memorable day for the many participants.

Reflecting reduced income, overheads for the year were correspondingly lower by £243,000 with staff costs reducing by £180,000 and planned recruitment deferred.

Helped by the tight control of costs there was a surplus after tax for the year of £85,000 which included a net surplus of £21,000 from Voices in Refuge CIC (ViR), a wholly owned subsidiary providing interpreting services. Profits from ViR are used either to help grow the ViR entity or are passed back to NNRF and the ViR Board have approved a dividend payment to NNRF of £15,000 to help with general costs.

The financial surplus for the year has been added to existing reserves and in total these now amount to £288,000, including £207,000 of unrestricted reserves. At this level the Charity Commission guideline of aiming for three months expenditure in unrestricted reserves has almost been met and the aim will be to maintain reserves at a meaningful level.

The cash position of NNRF remains healthy with a bank balance at the period end of £506,000 which included £273,000 of grants received but deferred to later periods.

With the benefit from reserves and current funding agreements a break-even budget was set for 2020-21 and, notwithstanding the adverse impact of COVID-19 on fundraising, the necessary resources for this to be achieved should still be available.

The impact from COVID-19 on the VPRS programme in particular will be felt in 2020-21, where there have been no new arrivals since Spring, and there is no indication at present when there will be any new intake with the resulting extra funding.

Looking further forward to 2021-22 there will be many challenges and a current priority is to secure funding for projects due to finish in the next twelve months in an evermore competitive arena for public sector support.

One piece of very good news to record since the year end is the success with a National Lottery Bid and £96,000 has been received to finance one-off COVID-19 related expenditure including improvements to The Sycamore Centre.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2019-20

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2019-20	Total 2018-19
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Donations & Legacies	64074	7960	72034	115406
Charitable Activities	176924	660725	837649	987087
Other Trading Activities	51997	-	51997	81150
Investments	486	-	486	146
Total Income	293481	668685	962166	1183789
Expenditure on :				
Charitable Activities	247271	615749	863020	1101042
Other Trading Activities	9362	-	9362	14414
Total Expenditure	256633	615749	872382	1115456
Net income/(expenditure)	36848	52936	89784	68333
Gross transfers between funds	(14933)	14933	-	-
Tax on activities	(4311)	-	(4311)	(1280)
Net movement in Funds	17604	67869	85473	67053
Fund balances at 1 April 2019	189217	13706	202923	135870
Fund balances at 31 March 2020	206821	81575	288396	202923

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

		2020		2019
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets		3618		5238
Current Assets				
Debtors	67068		57951	
Cash at bank & in hand	506106		327859	
	<u>573174</u>		<u>385810</u>	
Creditors and deferred income	(288396)		(188125)	
Net current assets		284778		197685
Total assets less current liabilities		288396		202923
Income Funds				
Restricted Funds		81575		13706
Unrestricted Funds		206821		189217
Total Charity Funds		288396		202923

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS 2019-20

		2020		2019
	£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities				
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	182586		133709	
Income taxes paid	(4311)		(1280)	
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		178275		132429
Investing Activities				
Purchase of tangible assets	(514)		-	
Interest Received	486		146	
Net cash generated from/(used) in investing activities		(28)		146
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		178247		132575
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		327859		195284
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		506106		327859



VOLUNTEER

NNRF relies heavily on our volunteers in all areas. There are many ways in which you can support the work of NNRF and build your own skill set while you do so. We appreciate any time you have, whether it's a couple of hours to help at an event, or a regular commitment to volunteering with one of our projects. If this is something that interests you, please send an email to:

volunteer@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



DONATE

Donations are one of our most crucial income sources which allow us to continue delivering the services we offer, specifically our anti-destitution work. If you'd like to make a one-off or regular donation, please visit our website (donation page) for details. We also take food donations for our community café and anti-destitution projects.

www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



STAY IN TOUCH

Thank you for your interest in the work of NNRF. We would love to stay in touch with you by sending you our monthly newsletter. Please visit our website to sign up:

www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



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Company No: 0535262679



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The annual report has been produced with contributions from our staff, volunteers, trustees and partners.

