



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2018-19**

Our volunteers come from **53** different countries
and speak **62** different languages



REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1121560

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WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

Welcome to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum's Annual Report for April 2018-March 2019! I trust you will be as inspired as I am by the achievements of our wonderful staff and volunteers who continued to provide an unparalleled range of high quality services and activities to more than 2000 asylum seekers and refugees and their families, dealing with nearly 11,000 different issues. In a feedback survey held between October 2018 & July 2019, 100% stated that they received the help they needed, 97% were happy with their experience at the Forum and 100% said that they felt welcome. This is an amazing record and is all due to the skills, dedication and compassion evinced by our staff and volunteers.

These achievements were all the more remarkable in light of the fact that this last year was a particularly challenging time for the Forum with the departure of a number of key staff, some sadly through redundancy, also experienced volunteers and trustees. Several funding streams came to an end and despite strenuous efforts, alternative sources were not forthcoming. This led to the closure of our Welfare Rights service in April 2018, of our unique Legal Project in December 2018, followed by reductions to our Youth Project and our Community Café provision in March 2019. Efforts are continuing to seek fresh funding for these important services but competition is fierce and the voluntary sector nationally is suffering cutbacks.

Sadly we said farewell to a number of long-serving colleagues whom we wish to thank for their contribution to our work. We have welcomed several new members of staff, most notably our new Director, Matt Atkins, who arrived in February, moving from ASSIST in Sheffield and bringing a fresh, energetic approach to the organisation.

Volunteers continue to be indispensable, with over 300 including asylum seekers and refugees, volunteering across the organisation in a wide range of roles. Recognising the importance of a good volunteering programme, we embarked on a year-long journey towards achieving the national "Investing in Volunteers" quality standard. Following a rigorous improvement plan and external assessment, we are proud to have achieved the award in spring 2019.

There are 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 (increasingly important in these hard times); our partners across the City and beyond, and my fellow trustees, especially Councillor David Mellen who co-Chaired the Board with me until his election as Council Leader in May 2019.

NNRF was founded in summer 2000 in response to the Home Office's decision to disperse asylum seekers to Nottingham. So, **2020 is our 20th Anniversary!** and we hope you will join us in celebrating our achievements in supporting tens of thousands through their asylum journeys and in rebuilding their lives.

On a personal note: I am honoured to have been a member and trustee of NNRF ever since 2000, including the Chair for ten of those years. I have been privileged to work alongside so many wonderful, committed staff and volunteers, and to have met so many brave and resilient refugees. I am standing down as Chair at the AGM but hope to continue my involvement in other ways with this organisation.

Patsy Brand

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to my first Annual Report as the new Director of the NNRF. I only began this role in February 2019 and, to date, I have found the role both exciting and challenging.

Some of you may be interested to know where I have come from; prior to NNRF I was the Co-Leader of ASSIST Sheffield which supports destitute asylum seekers throughout South Yorkshire. Before that I worked for The Children's Society on a variety of programmes across the country but with a particular focus on Refugee, Missing, Child Sexual Exploitation and Participation work.

Since joining NNRF I have been immensely impressed at the breadth of work that goes on here. We have served over 2000 people in the past year which is a great achievement especially considering many of these clients need to be supported for significant periods of time to help navigate the complicated asylum and benefit systems. The successes of NNRF only happen because of our amazing staff, volunteers and partner agencies. As the Director it is a real privilege to be able to lead such dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate people.

As many of you will know it is a difficult time for charities. Organisations throughout the sector are being squeezed financially due to significant reductions in funding sources, the impact of austerity and the subsequent increase in funding competition between partner agencies. At the same time charities are being asked to support ever increasing numbers of clients as important services, traditionally provided by local government, have closed or seen significant reductions.

To help alleviate this we have recently created a new Fundraising Manager post. The money for this has been provided by an anonymous donor and will allow NNRF to explore alternative ways of generating unrestricted income.

We have also implemented a new organisation structure alongside the internal recruitment of a brand new management team. We hope this new team and structure will allow NNRF to be more efficient with its resources, more timely with its decision making and more responsive to the needs of clients, volunteers and staff.

Future Plans

In 2020 NNRF will:

- Ensure our advice and practice base continue to evolve to meet the rising needs of clients
- Champion the cause of refugees and asylum seekers by challenging negative images and inform and educate local communities
- Increase staff, volunteer and client participation in the decision making structures of the organisation
- Evaluate and demonstrate the impact of our services
- Becoming a centre that values and encourages research and learning both internally and through external partners
- Become actively involved in campaigning and advocacy work
- Work more collaboratively and effectively with key partners both at a local and national level
- Ensure staff, managers and volunteers receive adequate training, wellbeing and support
- Look to increase our unrestricted funding
- Celebrate our 20th anniversary with activities throughout the year

Matt Atkins, Director

ABOUT US

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

more than
9300
new cases

£12 685.97
raised in just one event
"Come and Sing with John Rutter"

100%
Increase in the number
of ESOL learners

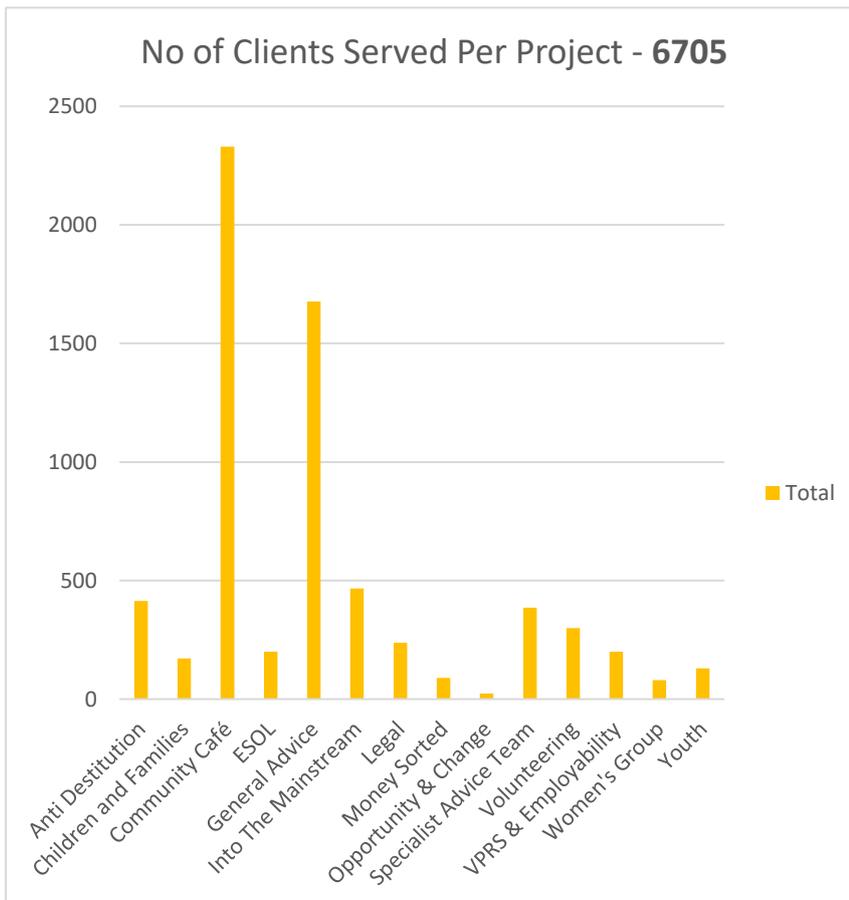
more than
2,000
Individual clients
plus dependants

8,000
hot meals served in
our Cafe

233
Clients assisted to
register with GP

34
successful asylum
support applications

Achieved
"INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS"
Quality Standard



97
Different nationalities recorded

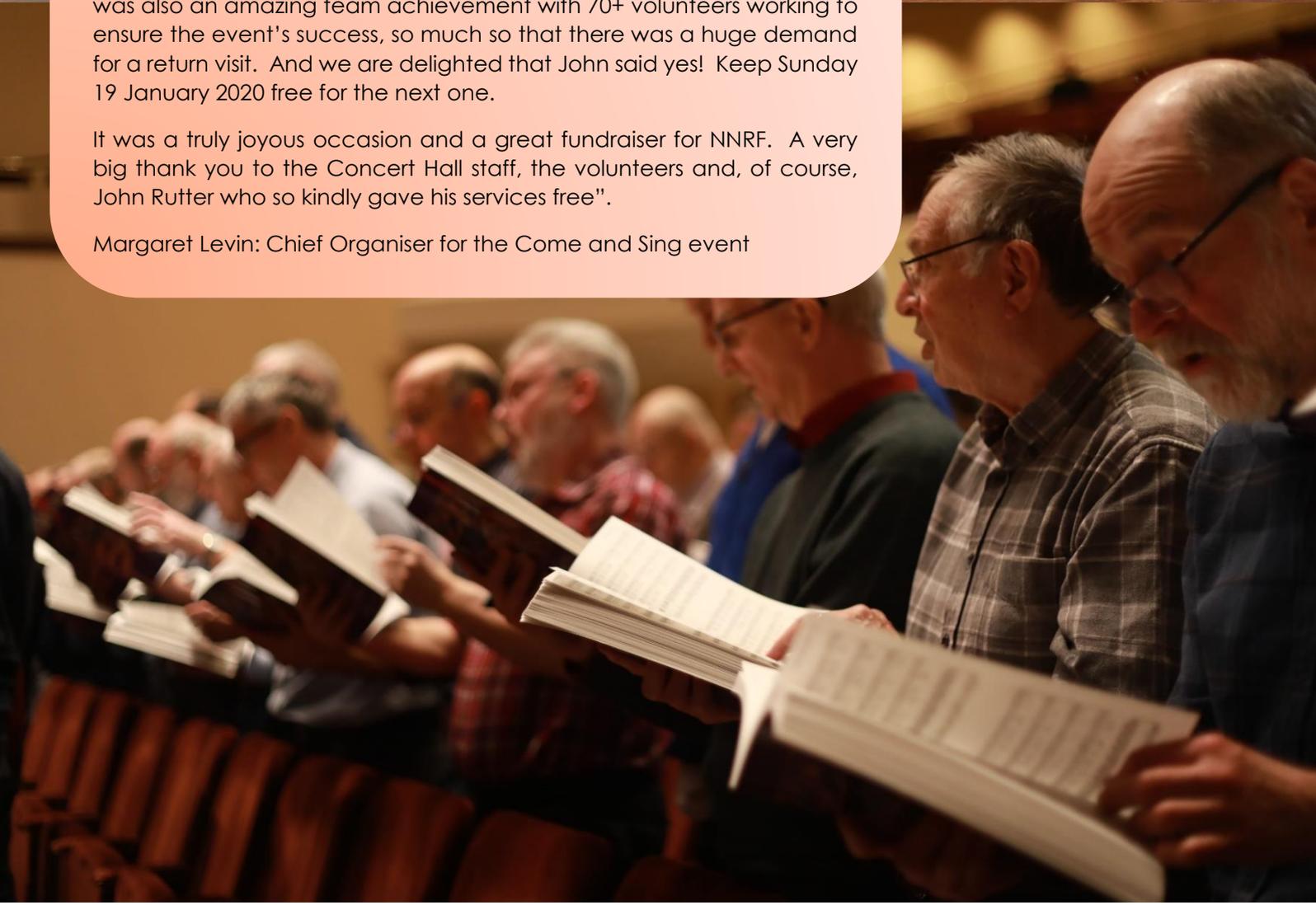


"An exciting partnership was forged when the Royal Concert Hall hosted a Come and Sing with John Rutter, the celebrated composer and conductor. The event sold out with 863 participants and 112 observers raising over £12,500.

It was the most extraordinary day, full of excitement and anticipation, as so many singers got together raising the rafters of the Concert Hall. It was also an amazing team achievement with 70+ volunteers working to ensure the event's success, so much so that there was a huge demand for a return visit. And we are delighted that John said yes! Keep Sunday 19 January 2020 free for the next one.

It was a truly joyous occasion and a great fundraiser for NNRF. A very big thank you to the Concert Hall staff, the volunteers and, of course, John Rutter who so kindly gave his services free".

Margaret Levin: Chief Organiser for the Come and Sing event





816

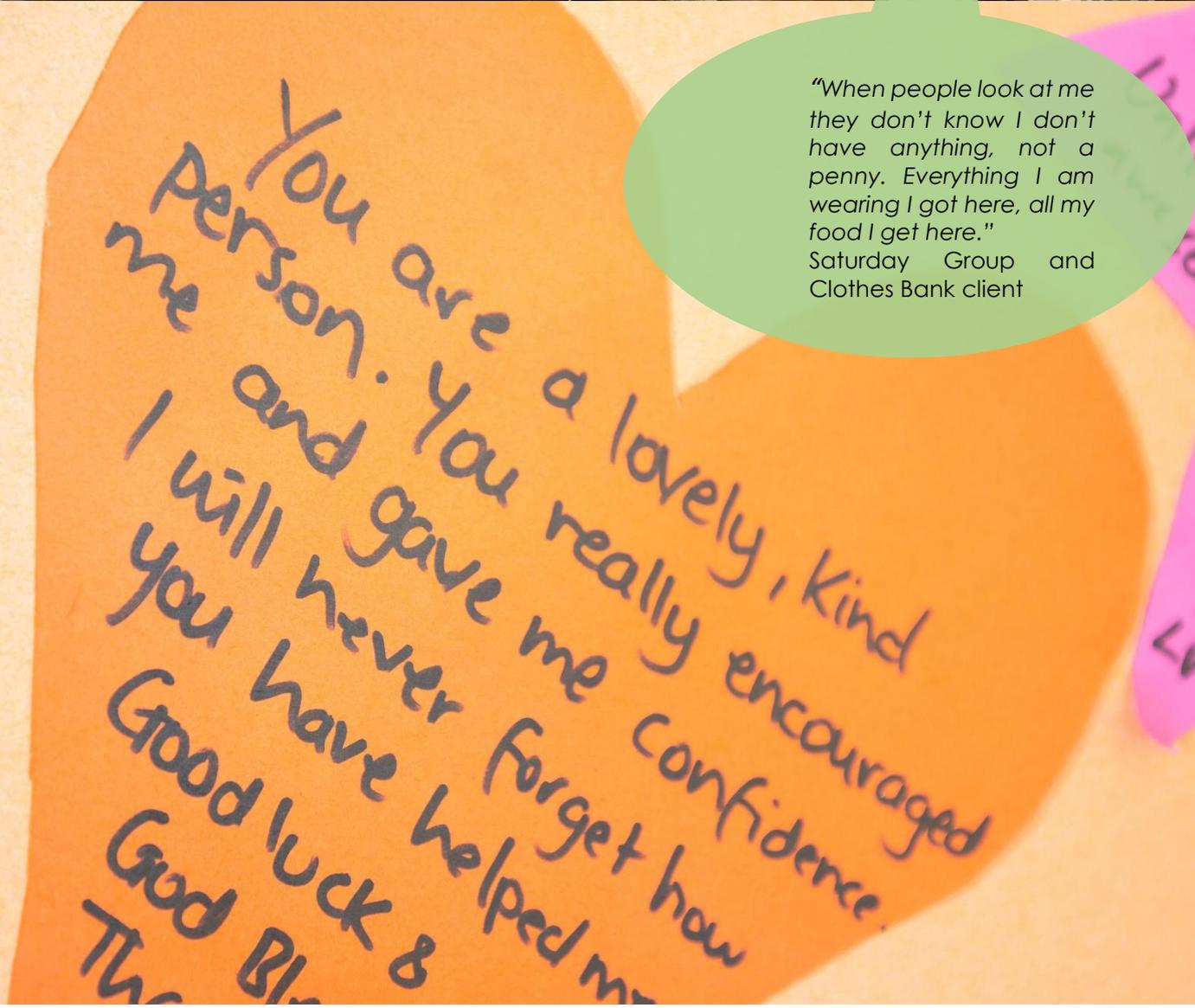
Meals and food parcels
Given out at Saturday Group

8

Asylum seekers
Hosted by HOST

8

People housed by
Nottingham Arimathea Trust



You are a lovely, kind
person. You really encouraged
me and gave me confidence.
I will never forget how
you have helped me.
Good luck &
God Bless
The

"When people look at me they don't know I don't have anything, not a penny. Everything I am wearing I got here, all my food I get here."
Saturday Group and Clothes Bank client

ANTI-DESTITUTION

"I am homeless but I am not hopeless"
Anti-Destitution client

The Anti-destitution project focuses on helping refused asylum seekers with their immediate needs such as food and disposable cash, but also provides help and support around their immigration cases via referrals. As well as this, it also works with the 'Into the Mainstream' project in helping with any health issues that they may have. The idea is to take a holistic approach as there is very rarely only one area of concern when dealing with this vulnerable group.

'A' was referred to the Anti-Destitution Project in February 2017. He was rough sleeping and sometimes staying with people he didn't know.

Case Study

"When I first got the letter that they refused my case they stopped everything, they kicked me out of my house, stopped the money, everything. They closed all my file. At that time it was very difficult. I had no close friends or family, it was very difficult. I slept in the street or the sofa of my friends. I struggled at least 6 months like that.

After that, when life it hurts you, if you don't accept that then you can fail. Because I cannot do anything for that. So I accepted that. I went to the Refugee Forum and they encouraged me and supported me.

Imagine that. What can you do? You cannot go to college or anything. Me I managed because I went to the library I read books I went to the Refugee Forum and met friends. I felt happy.

It's very very difficult. No one can support you for a long time.

I go from place to place. In the morning I get up I come to Refugee Forum I wash , adjust my hair and then I become something normal.

If they refuse you, they refuse you but you have a right to challenge that decision. But you need somewhere to stay. If you have a home and a little bit of food you can challenge your case".

'A' is going to make a fresh claim later on this year.



CHILDREN AND 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 community. This project also promotes better access and integration to wider mainstream services and provisions. Through our work we have successfully helped destitute families into social care, and improved their orientation and engagement within Nottingham. We also support vulnerable families regarding children's health, education and safety.

Case Study

The child this case study is attached to is a young boy who is part of an asylum seeking family.

The boy had expressed his love of football to the staff member, and so she extensively researched football clubs he could join. However, all these clubs require a fee.

The worker could see the talent the boy has for football and the turmoil he was going through, and did not give up.

The 11 year old boy's mental health was a particular concern to the worker, as the stresses at home spiralled just at the point of the boy entering into year 7, a milestone which fills many children with apprehension. The worker wanted to ensure the boy was supported and given a way to process his feelings. After initiating a meeting with Nottingham Forest Community Trust, the staff member spoke to the trust about the child and his circumstance. She reinforced the benefits of having time outdoors, away from the household and the benefits of having a positive male influence to help to elevate this young person out of a difficult time.

After this meeting, the Trust offered to take the child on a football-training course, where he would spend a half-term holiday training with football coaches.

The difference in the boy was outstanding, with aspirations raised across his life, in sport and in school. The mother got in touch to say her son was settling into school and excelling in class. He told the worker that he "had great fun yesterday, I even met some professionals."

The boy has been invited back to the programme in holidays throughout the year, providing consistency and progress to the life of a child living in a chaotic circumstance.

"This has been the best trip ever!"

Our service users showed significant progress in:

Improved Communication

Improved Integration

Kids were more able to act as children

COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY

The COI grant is administered by NNRF on behalf of Nottingham City Council. It is a consortium of 13 community organisations that deliver a range of activities and services that help refugees and asylum seekers get the right support & advice, provide appropriate skills and confidence building activities, and 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 it supported 16 groups through this scheme.



4374	Refugees and Asylum seekers provided with good Information, Advice and Guidance
2007	Individuals receiving support for basic needs
731	Refugees and Asylum seekers improving / acquiring English language skills
282	Individuals supported to volunteer
60	Groups supported to develop

Case Study

'A' is a Refugee from Nigeria who has been living in Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT) accommodation since October 2017. 'A' was ready to move on to independent living after having been supported to understand how to manage a tenancy by NAT support staff and getting his benefits in payment. He had also been able to find full time work and so it was important that he moved to cheaper accommodation that would be more sustainable for him. He was offered a tenancy with Broxtowe Borough Council and NAT staff supported him with viewing the property and setting up the new tenancy. We helped him with budgeting so that he would be able to manage his rent payments and utility bills and also applied for a grant to help him with start-up costs in his new property. Finally, we signposted him to community groups and social activities in his new local area so that he would not feel isolated when moving from shared supported accommodation to independent living. Although 'A' still feels anxious about leaving friends and the security he had whilst housed by Nottingham Arimathea Trust, he is now more confident about the move and feeling positive about the future.

COMMUNITY CAFE

The Community Café provides lunch and tea and coffee to service users, volunteers and staff members. This is done on Mondays – Thursdays every week of the year thanks to the support of our hardworking volunteers. The diverse ranges of meals are prepared using food donations received from the public. Some of our Café volunteers have been cooking their regional foods, feeding dozens of clients, staff and volunteers each week. It was their way of coping with a difficult situation, living as an asylum seeker, by sharing their talent for cooking and making people happy.

25 000

Cups of hot tea served

8 000

Hot meals served

2 000

Packets of biscuits devoured

"I can forget about my immigration difficulties and just feel happy amongst my friends"

NNRF Café is like a second home for a lot of people at the Forum. Volunteers leave their worries at the doorstep and immerse themselves in the wonderful world of flavours and spices. Service users find a welcoming space with an abundance of biscuits, unlimited tea & coffee, and enjoy a hot lunch that is sometimes their only hot meal in a day. For staff, it's an area where they take a break from the everyday stress and sit down for a small talk.

A place of comfort and safety, the NNRF Café is the heart of the Forum, and we have been lucky to have received support from the local community, partner organisations and from within NNRF.

THANK YOU, supporters, for donating eggs, vegetables, meat, mugs, cutlery and money!

THANK YOU, volunteers, for creating a wonderful atmosphere and feeding us amazing food!

Last but not least, THANK YOU, Ivan, for coordinating the Café until October 2018 – your presence in the Café is sorely missed!

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The ESOL Project aims to provide a structured approach towards providing English classes, particularly during our clients' first 6 months in the UK. To date we have provided over 3000 hours of ESOL at NNRF, which includes 600 hours of 1 to 1 language support. We have developed a unique assessment system, which identifies a learner's language level. Assessment appointments are offered daily as part of our General Advice system. There is a new intake of students every 12 weeks.

100% increase in service user numbers

3 clients have passed International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exams after having 1-to-1 tuition at NNRF and are now studying at UK Universities

"It has been a privilege to be able to experience the rewards of teaching. I will never forget my time at the Forum and the amazing and brave people I've met along the way" – ESOL Tutor of 3 years

"I'm really interested in my classes at NNRF and I'm grateful for you (ESOL Coordinator) and the teachers who help me" – Client who attends Entry 3 classes

Case Study

One client came to us with a fairly good level of English language knowledge. Having previously been a medic in Libya, he wanted to improve his English and start studying in the UK in order to be able to practise medicine in the UK. The client was allocated an ESOL tutor, alongside another individual in a similar position. The tutor had significant experience in the field of Medical English so the client's sessions were individually tailored to meet his needs. The client received 6 months of tutoring for free, which would have cost over £1000 had it been sought elsewhere. He has since passed his Occupational English Test and is able to register with the UK's General Medical Council to restart his career. The client will be a guest speaker at a RefuAid Conference later this year.

GENERAL ADVICE

We offer advice, practical assistance and friendship to all refugees and asylum seekers regardless of race, religion or political opinion. The drop-in advice sessions take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tickets are given out from 8.30 in the morning, and clients are seen from 9.30 onwards. This occurs on a first come, first served basis. The General Advice service provides advice, information and assistance on a wide range of issues. These include; destitution, housing, debt, welfare benefits, health, legal and asylum support. The objective is to provide basic support and assistance to service users, resolve queries, signpost to external services, refer to specialist in-house projects and partner agencies, as well as liaise with various agencies and organisations on behalf of the service users. The advice sessions act as the main point of contact for new and existing service users, and also offer a way of screening those who are eligible to access the Forum's services.



1677 clients served during the year, with an average of 30 clients being attended to every working day.

32 new General

Advice volunteers have successfully completed their training during the year

Case Study

During the course of a year, we typically see a client multiple times and do our best to help with a wide variety of issues. Ahmed is one such example. He first came to us in March 2018, as an asylum seeker, when he was first dispersed to Nottingham, and we helped with enabling him to access legal advice, referred him to ITM for help with registering with a GP and dentist, and provided help with obtaining an HC2 certificate. He returned to general advice in July, when his support was incorrectly discontinued by the Home Office. Over the following 10 days, we repeatedly contacted Migrant Help on his behalf in order to challenge his support discontinuation; this was eventually successful so that he was able to remain in his asylum support accommodation. During the next five months we helped him with a variety of other issues including helping to cancel an NHS penalty charge which had been incorrectly given to him, helping to apply for tickets to travel to a Home office interview, and then helping to apply for tickets again when the original hearing was adjourned. In January 2019 he was granted refugee status so we were then able to refer him to a caseworker within the Specialist Advice Team for help with accessing housing and benefits, and to our Employability Team for help with writing a CV, as he is now very keen to find work. Specialist Advice Team for help with accessing housing and benefits, and to our Employability Team for help with writing a CV, as he is now very keen to find work.

Early Action

This year NNRF has had the opportunity to work in partnership with Refugee Action and a consortium of other organisations as part of the Early Action Partnership. We have been given funding administered by Refugee Action to trial early intervention methods of working with service users in order to prevent and de-escalate crises. Our aim through this work is to enable service users to understand their journey's through the asylum system, and to understand crisis points and how to recognise these. As an organisation over the years we have seen many different ways that our service users experience crisis, and this funding has given us an opportunity to act in a preventative, rather than reactionary way, by identifying the parts of the system that usually lead to crisis. In our first year of the programme we have created a New Arrivals Clinic to register newly dispersed asylum seekers to ensure that they are able to access healthcare services, legal advice and other important immediate needs. We have also decided to join the Asylum Guides programme by Refugee Action, where we will be providing information groups on the asylum system to our service users to help them understand what happens next. We are continually looking for new ways to work with service users and look forward to developing these ways of working in the future to allow for long term change.



INTO THE MAINSTREAM (ITM)

Asylum seekers can face a number of difficulties in accessing mainstream healthcare services. Our project 'Into the Mainstream' supports refugees and asylum seekers to access NHS health services. We also refer people to other services offered by both us and other relevant organisations including advice on housing, benefits, legal assistance and anti-destitution. We ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are able to exercise their rights to NHS services, and are shown respect for their privacy, dignity, and religious and cultural beliefs. We document the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. We identify and address barriers to health services. We use data collected to find solutions and improve the health situation of asylum seekers and refugees.

222 clients were assisted to register with NHS dentists

Case Study

'D' was an asylum seeker from Kuwait, dispersed to Nottingham in April 2018 along with her 4 children aged 4-10. Her husband had refugee status but was living and working in London and only saw the family at weekends. She spoke virtually no English and was illiterate in Arabic which made it very difficult for her to communicate in public and to remember dates. A project worker assessed the client's health needs and completed forms with her before booking a separate appointment to accompany her to the GP surgery to register. The worker also ensured that her housing provider updated the Home Office with her current address so that an HC2 certificate could be sent to D to enable her to access free primary care. He liaised with the ESOL coordinator to ensure that D had access to English lessons at a local library. Not long after arriving, D became pregnant and needed extra support from the project to access GP, midwife and antenatal appointments. When it became clear that the client would need a lot of extra support, the project liaised with the Children and Families Worker who was able to accompany D to her appointments. D gave birth to a son in December 2018. The family has since received refugee status and have reunited in London.

100% of urgent referrals seen within 3 weeks.

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



LEGAL

In May 2018 the 3-year funding from The Big Lottery for our Legal Project ended. However we received an anonymous donation of £50,000 which together with a contribution from NNRF reserves enabled the work to continue until 31 December.

It was hoped that in those 7 months, further funding could be obtained. In addition, we set up a cost recovery fee paying service. The aim was twofold. One, to work towards being self-sufficient. Two, it would enable us to use the funds/donations granted to assist our most vulnerable clients who could not otherwise afford to pay for the services. Unfortunately, despite strenuous efforts no further funding became available.

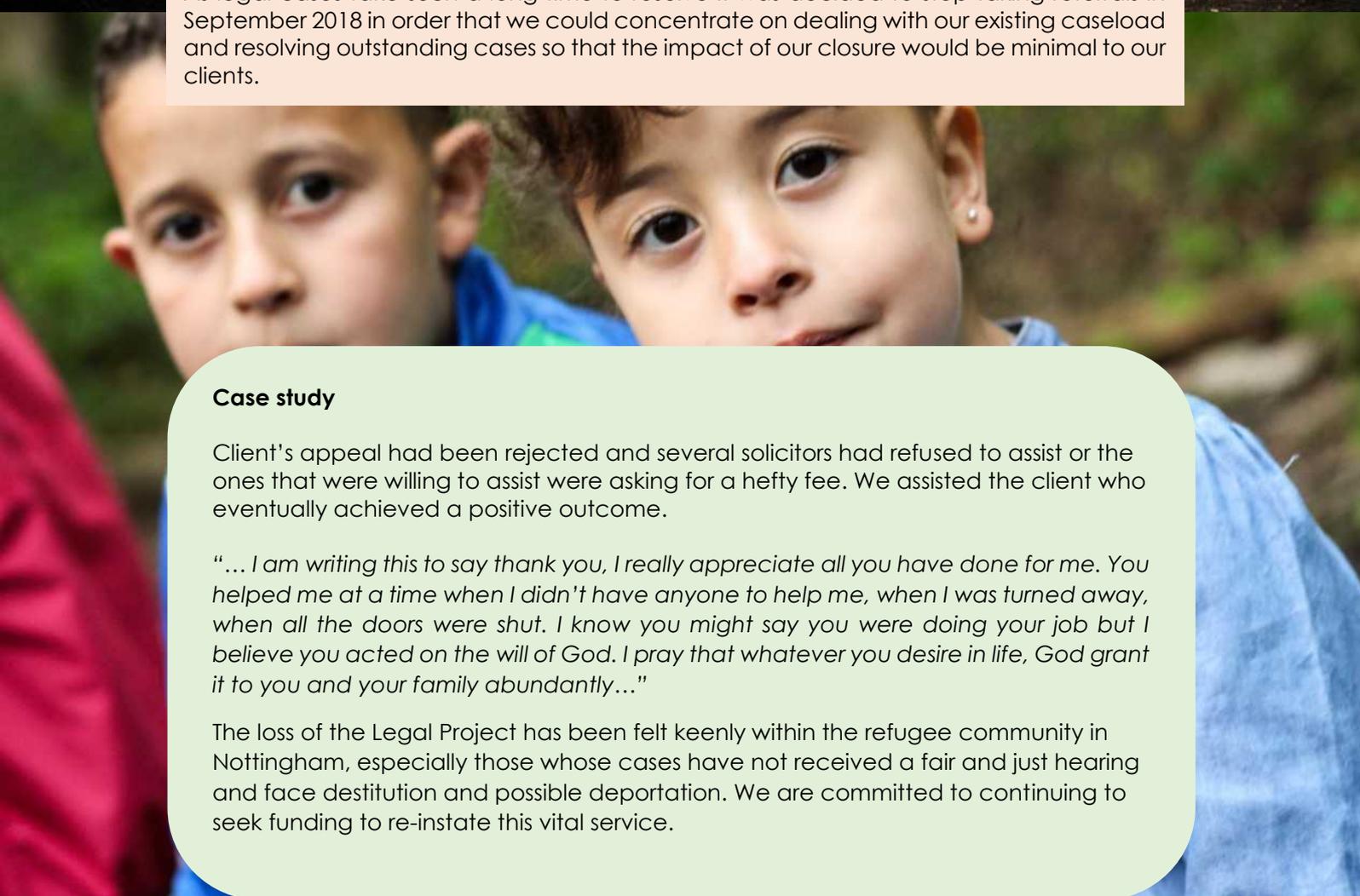
During the respite period, the project continued to provide a free service supporting vulnerable clients in the following ways:

- Applications for family re-union
- Submitting fresh claims
- Making appeals
- Advising about Voluntary Return
- Applications for leave to remain
- Referrals to Legal Representatives

We also continued to offer a cost recovery service to assist with applications from refugees for Travel Documents, Citizenship and other Home Office documents.

Between May 2018 and November 2018, we undertook 168 cases.

As legal cases take such a long time to resolve it was decided to stop taking referrals in September 2018 in order that we could concentrate on dealing with our existing caseload and resolving outstanding cases so that the impact of our closure would be minimal to our clients.



Case study

Client's appeal had been rejected and several solicitors had refused to assist or the ones that were willing to assist were asking for a hefty fee. We assisted the client who eventually achieved a positive outcome.

"... I am writing this to say thank you, I really appreciate all you have done for me. You helped me at a time when I didn't have anyone to help me, when I was turned away, when all the doors were shut. I know you might say you were doing your job but I believe you acted on the will of God. I pray that whatever you desire in life, God grant it to you and your family abundantly..."

The loss of the Legal Project has been felt keenly within the refugee community in Nottingham, especially those whose cases have not received a fair and just hearing and face destitution and possible deportation. We are committed to continuing to seek funding to re-instate this vital service.

MONEY SORTED

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.

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

Case Study

A client who was an accountant in his home country, rebuilt his life in the UK. Even with these financial skills, he still needed assistance understanding the complex UK financial systems. He attended WEA (Workers Educational Association) sessions, qualified as a Money Mentor with WEA, obtained an SIA license and felt more confident in his financial capability. WEA Topics included: Savings, Universal Credit, Banking, understanding debt, Credit score, etc. He also attended the employability sessions at NNRF where he covered such topics as: Professional Image, UK Recruiting Processes, Job Search and Exploring Careers. He is currently volunteering in the NNRF Finance Department to build up his experience. He also obtained his ACCA Qualification (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) in the UK and has had several job interviews for Finance Officer.

The School of Artisan Food

This year saw the solidifying of NNRF's relationship with The School of Artisan Food, where funding was secured for an Open Day on September 10th 2019 for 50 refugee and asylum seekers to try their hand at baking. The grant also provides the chance for refugees and asylum seekers to take 1 to 3 day short courses in baking /charcuterie/ patisserie etc.

This year has also seen the successful completion of a Certificate in Artisan Baking for Samia Adam (NNRF Client), whose graduation will be October. Samia is currently in London and at the time of writing has several job trials at Artisan Bakeries lined up. We also congratulate Ghidey Sereke (NNRF Client) in graduating with a Certificate in Artisan Baking.

Directorial level meetings have also taken place this year in regards to how The School of Artisan Food and NNRF can collaborate on the NNRF Community Cafe. Several meetings have also taken place between TERN (The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network), the School of Artisan Food, and NNRF to discuss collaborations. The collaboration saw TERN put forward Baneta Yelda as a candidate for The Diploma in Artisan Baking.

We would like to thank The School of Artisan Food for their continued and innovative support. We look forward to a very exciting year ahead.



OPPORTUNITY AND CHANGE

Opportunity and Change is a support programme for people with multiple and complex needs. It aims to help individuals to address their needs and become socially and economically included through access to education, training and employment. It is part of the Building Better Opportunities programme and is funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

3 people
moved into
employment

13 people
access ESOL
classes

7 people move
into permanent
accommodation

15 people
signed onto
project since
March 2018

Case Study

One of our clients has a long history of mental health issues, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. With the support of his Opportunity and Change Navigator he was finally able to access mental health services, and he is currently volunteering twice a week as well as attending ESOL and computer classes. He has also completed a programme of wellbeing and employability.



SPECIALIST ADVICE TEAM (SAT)

The Specialist Advice Team provides advice and assistance in accessing mainstream services. These include housing and accommodation, social care support, racial harassment support and domestic violence support. They also include asylum accommodation, new refugee resettlement, support for families with no recourse to public funds and welfare rights and benefits and many more.

166

New Refugee cases opened for casework

"...There is no greater feeling than having prevented homelessness for a client despite the hostile environment in which we live..." Charlie
-SAT Volunteer

137

Housing related cases

Case Study

Intensive resettlement support provided for a vulnerable family granted Exceptional Leave to Remain. A couple cared for their 4 grandchildren after their parents passed away. After 6 years waiting for a decision on their asylum claim, leave had been granted and asylum support was discontinued. Support included registering with local homelessness services, help with settlement into the temporary accommodation, applying for pension credit and child benefit, applying for older person's bus passes and liaison with schools and colleges. The grandchildren, recognised as young carers, were under immense pressure and a lot of support involved managing expectations.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering at NNRF is a challenging and exciting opportunity. We are only able to deliver such a wide range and scope of services because of the invaluable contribution of our volunteers. Around a quarter of our volunteers come from a refugee or asylum seeking background themselves. Volunteering at NNRF enables them to maintain their existing skills and develop new ones. It increases their confidence, improves their communication skills and motivates them to keep active and engaged.

Our volunteers embody diversity, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, professionalism and compassion.



The volunteering story of the year is undoubtedly linked with our journey towards achieving Investing in Volunteers (IiV) – the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. Taking a collaborative approach which involved contributions and feedback from volunteers, staff and trustees, we have revamped policies and procedures, improved recruitment and induction procedures, and proved our commitment to providing an excellent volunteering experience for our volunteers. More than 30 volunteers participated in detailed interviews with our assessor, who left the Forum impressed with the collective spirit, positive attitude and resilience of our volunteers. After a year-long process and a lot of hard work, Refugee Forum has joined the IiV Achievers' Club in April 2019, becoming one of only four organisations in Nottingham who are currently IiV-accredited.



300 Volunteers

26% of whom are/were NNRF service users



"I came here for help,
now I help others"



"Volunteering here has improved my
skills and confidence in ways I
couldn't imagine."

Katy, volunteered in General Advice

VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (VPRS) & EMPLOYABILITY

This year, in partnership with the local councils, whilst continuing to support those who have arrived since 2016, we supported 23 newly arrived vulnerable families resettled by the government from refugee camps, into accommodation in Nottingham & Notts. To help them integrate effectively into the community, we provided in-house ESOL classes conducted by a qualified tutor. We also ensured that all service users were registered with a GP within the first two weeks of arriving in Nottingham. We applied for all the benefits they required during the first week of arriving and made an appointments with Jobcentre Plus to help them secure a job. In addition to that, we also arranged bank account appointments and gave a wide range of social support.

VPRS – Case Study

This family (parents and three children) arrived in the UK in June 2018, after having had a



traumatic period living in the camps in Lebanon. The oldest son has chronic kidney failure and was only able to receive dialysis once or twice a week. Some days he had no strength to do anything, and others when he was feeling a little better he had to find work to help buy food for the family by selling food by the roadside.

Since coming to the UK he has had the most amazing treatment from NHS where he now receives dialysis three times a week. After treatment he has severe headaches and high blood pressure and has to stay in hospital. This is his existence for the time being. He is going for tests with his father to see if they will be compatible for a kidney

transplant, for which they are waiting results. His life has improved so much, and he even finds the energy to attend ESOL classes at college.

Employability

We collaborated with an accredited organisation and merged all the workshops which are: Identity and Belonging; Decision Making and Goal Setting; Labour Market Information; UK Education System; Employment Rights; Professional Image and Recruitment Process; CV and Job Search; and Interview Skills. These were combined into one accredited course, and all clients received their certificates on completion of the programme. Most of the families won prizes which included short-break holidays and tool kits.

FUEL workshops, Construction, Mechanics, Plumbing, Engineering, Painting & Decorating, Food & Hygiene, Health & Safety, Woodwork.

Workshops were delivered around culture and life in Nottingham and UK. The inclusion of Nottingham Trent University (NTU) as a partner made the attendance of families higher, and all participants contributed in the workshops.

There are ongoing programmes of careers education workshops, as well as tailored 1:1 advice and guidance to support transition of skills and experiences in to a new environment and build confidence.

WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group is for female asylum seekers, refugees and those with a migration background. We meet every Friday during term-time from 10am till 12 midday, where we learn new skills, make new friends, build on our own personal development and share skills with women from diverse cultural backgrounds. We welcome women from different backgrounds to join us in exchanging skills and ideas, and there are opportunities to learn from each other.



'[the group] is very important, so I do not feel lonely, I feel like everybody are my sisters'

"when I don't come I feel I am missing something"

By welcoming asylum seeking and refugee women and listening to their specific wants and needs for the future, we see women's aspirations raise and their confidence blossom. An example of this is a member of Pamoja who when first joining the group was shy and had low self-esteem, revealing that she wanted to find her voice but her past experiences meant she did not feel able to. With encouragement, care and support from the group not only did this member join a campaign to end FGM and protested outside the British Prime Minister's official residence, but also has gone on to set up the Nottingham chapter of Survivor Alliance. The member credits the support of Pamoja in raising her own self-belief, when she was at her lowest.

YOUTH PROJECT

Our work with young people includes those living with families seeking asylum, separated young people in the care of the local authority (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - UASC), and young people from a refugee background. 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. While 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.



Case Study

I came to England from Vietnam in November 2017. I didn't know what to expect that's why I was feeling scared and isolated. It was very difficult for me in the first few months because I couldn't speak any English and I didn't know how to communicate.

I go to the Refugee Youth Group every Tuesday night and I have made lots of friends from different countries and we share similar experiences. I have learnt a lot of things at the Refugee Youth Group. I learnt how to communicate with others, and I have improved my English by talking to the people who work and volunteer there. This also includes conversations with other refugees. More than that, I felt the love, kindness and care from everybody which made me feel comfortable and want to be there. The Refugee Youth Group gave me opportunities to find out what is my passion. They organised all sorts of

projects such as art, drama and music. They encouraged me to join in these projects where I gained self-confidence and found out my skills. Moreover, we have been on the trips to Edale and to the beach. We did so many activities and we had a lot of fun. I not only learn English; it also gives me ideas what I want to do in the future and further education. I feel so lucky that I get support from everyone at the Refugee Youth Group. I love the times we've been playing games, chatting and laughing together. I want to say thank you to all the people who have given their time to help us.



The project provided individual casework and advocacy plus group activities. Sadly, funding from Comic Relief ran out in December 2018 and only the Youth Club has been able to continue.

Up to 40 attended the Youth Group each week

182 young persons supported

Advocacy in 11 age disputed cases

Film made of their experiences here

Developed team of Youth Ambassadors

VOICES IN REFUGE (INTERPRETING)

We are a community interest company. All our profits go towards training and employing interpreters or funding the vital work of our partner: Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum. We offer a high quality interpreting service in a range of languages. We provide in-depth training for refugees and others to enable them to use their language skills to become interpreters.

www.voicesinrefuge.com

Case Study

"I have been coming to the Refugee Forum for eight months now and use an interpreter every time that I'm here... It's very important to me that I feel as though the interpreter is impartial because otherwise, I feel like I cannot properly communicate with the advisor... I have had some bad experiences elsewhere, at my Home Office interview, the interpreter's English was not very good. The person conducting the interview had to keep correcting their English and I don't think what I was saying was being understood. At doctors' appointments, they use phone interpreters but it's not the same as being at the Forum... Here at the Refugee Forum, the interpreters are always here, and it makes the experience much better... I like the opening statement because it protects my rights and tells me what to expect from the interpreter."

Hamid (not his real name) – NNRF client



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Our membership comprises our staff, our volunteers and people who make financial donations to NNRF. These supporters of our charity contribute significantly either financially or through the tireless work they do for us in challenging circumstances.

A member of NNRF is entitled to vote for board members, attend the AGM and receives a free monthly newsletter.

The contribution of our volunteers is highlighted elsewhere in this report. Over 300 individuals volunteered for us at some point during the year and we have a pool of around 200 regular volunteers. Many of these volunteers have been refugees themselves so are able to give first hand practical advice to our clients.

Our staff worked through a very uncertain year in 2018-19. Loss of some funding streams and cutbacks in others meant that a number of roles were put at risk. Circa 40% of staff employed at the start of 2018-19 left the Forum but around half of these were replaced as funding prospects started to improve in the first quarter of 2019. The average number of staff employed in 2018-19 was 41 (47 in 2017-18).

We are grateful to over 150 individual donors who made financial contributions to the Forum during the year. Most contributions are used to support our most destitute clients, supplying them with food, clothing and a modest monthly subsistence. We also raised funding from a number of events including the Nottingham Big Fun Run and the Come and Sing event detailed elsewhere in this report. Other groups ran local events in aid of NNRF. The total sum raised from fundraising and donations was £67,000 which was similar to the levels raised in 2017-18.

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

We wish to extend our thanks to the wide range of partner organisations, professional & individual supporters who have contributed so much to the success of our work. Here are some of them:



NNRF and the British Red Cross (BRC) have a long history of successfully working together to provide support and advocacy for vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham. We share a common approach in recognising the multiple skills and talents our clients bring, and empowering them to achieve their goals and access the services they are entitled to. Both NNRF and the BRC have developed specialist knowledge in different areas, which means we are able to work with a more diverse group of people that need our help in Nottingham. This year we have worked together to help many people access the support they need to move forward with their lives.

NNRF and the BRC are reliant on the generosity, dedication and compassion of our volunteers and staff. In the current climate, these things are so important when we are reaching out to some of the most vulnerable people in society. As we continue to take the time to listen to our clients' stories and experiences, it is important not to underestimate the significance of kindness and solidarity. I personally appreciate the ways in which we have worked together this year and I look forward to our continued partnership.

Meg Wills, Service Manager



Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT) have been working in partnership with NNRF since we opened our first house in 2007. Since then, we have received many referrals into our housing from the Anti-Destitution Project (which provides our residents with food and cash support). Additionally we have had referrals from the Specialist Advice Team at NNRF, which helps many thousands of refugees obtain suitable housing that helps them in the transition from asylum seeker to refugee. We are very dependent on the referrals to us, as we do not have the capacity ourselves to have any direct referrals.

Caron Boulghassoul, CEO



NOTTINGHAM BIKEWORKS

Nottingham Bikeworks have continued to work in partnership with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum this year to help Nottingham's refugee community gain access to bike related activities. Earlier in the year we did a project with NNRF's youth group. A group of 8 young people came to Nottingham Bikeworks for six weekly sessions to do a Build-a-Bike project. Under the tuition of our mechanics, the group stripped and refurbished a bicycle per individual, acquiring the practical skills to keep the bikes maintained.

For 2019, we've secured some funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and we are now able to expand these services to give 100 bikes to 100 refugees between July 2019 and July 2020. This exciting new project is called '**Cycle for All**', and is offered to everyone who uses NNRF's General Advice service. The day includes a bike-fitting, a bike maintenance class, lunch and a led-bike ride to develop confidence, cycling skills and orientation around Nottingham. So far it's been very well received with courses booked up until December. We have also established a regular free Dr Bike service at NNRF. This takes place on the third Wednesday of each month and mechanics help keep NNRF's clients bikes in working order. Furthermore we've done several kids bike giveaways at NNRF and have been working with Hannah Ziolek to get refugee families access to children's bikes with our new 'free kids bike' cards.

Lily



Host Nottingham provides both Hosts and Guests a framework of support and a clear structure within which to host. Our Project Coordinator works in an office at NNRF at least one day a week and is available to answer queries, take referrals and provide support for Hosts at other times. We work very closely with the Forum's Anti-Destitution Coordinator and General Advisers. Nearly all of our referrals come through NNRF where there is a Case Worker who knows the client and who will be continuing to provide support during the placement.

This year we have been able to accommodate 23 guests (8 refused asylum seekers and 15 refugees), for roughly 900 nights. Almost all of these guests were referred to HOST by NNRF.

There is an increasing need for accommodation for both asylum seekers and newly recognised refugees. We are deeply grateful to have hosts who offer a welcome, friendship, support and so much more to their guests. In addition, we have a Clothes Bank which enables our guests as well as any asylum seekers or refugees attending advice sessions at the Refugee Forum and also on Saturdays, to access clothing, shoes and some bedding. We are very grateful to our volunteers who staff this and provide a welcome for all clients.

We would welcome anyone who would be interested in being a Host or volunteering with the Clothes Bank or supporting our guests in different ways. Please contact: hostnottingham@gmail.com or phone 07963 740 175. We are grateful to NNRF, for allowing us to have office space in the Sycamore Centre.

Jane Henson, Chair

PARTNERS



Nottingham
City Council

African Institute for Social Development
Al Hurrayya
BBC Children in Need
Belong
Big Lottery Fund
Cameroon Support Group
Derby University
East African Education Centre
Emmanuel House
Himmah
Host Nottingham
Lloyds Bank Foundation
Money Sorted in D2N2
Nottingham Arimathea Trust
Nottingham City Council
Nottingham Trent University
Nottingham Women's Centre
OISC
Refugee Week
School of Artisan Food
Senior Support Group
St Anns Advice Centre
The Henry Smith Charity
The Tudor Trust



LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION

England & Wales



the **Tudor**trust

Nottingham
Community
and Voluntary
Service



refugee
roots

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628

begin
basic educational guidance in Nottinghamshire



European Union
European
Social Fund

STAFF MEMBERS

The Board of Trustees would like to express their gratitude to all staff who worked at NNRF during April 2018 – March 2019 (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	Hanna Radwanska	Mai Ahmed
Aiza Javed	Hannah Caithness	Marcia Henry
Alex Rainbow	Hannah Ziolk	Matt Atkins
Allan Njanji	Hermione Berthels	Matt Bedford
Anna Scrivener	Housna Zakari	Mohammed Shammari
Bahman Mohammed	Iqra Mehdi	Naomi Rizk
Barbara Spreiz	Ivan Mvuyekure	Nawzad Mouloud
Bernie O'Rourke	Jasim Ghafur	Nicole Shametiova
Caroline Kioi	Jemima Rees	Sally White
Dan Robertson	Jessica Wallis	Sarah Norris
Debbie Royle	Jill Jefferies	Sonia Bilkhu
Ellie Ward	John Gordon	Temi Yusuf
Evelina Bondareva	Jonathan Scott	Teresa O'Hagan
Fairouz Shermado	Josh Aspden	Thomas Tilahun
Fawad Mousawi	Julie Whitehead	Valeria Aquino
Fiona Broome	Kinsi Clarke	Viviane Bizimana
Fiona Cameron	Kirsty Cussens	Zanele Ndhlovu
Gemma Pillay	Lama El Homssi	
Gita Salimi	Lisa Bradley	

BOARD OF TRUSTEES (2018-19)

Name	
Leo Keely - Chair	Resigned Aug. 18
Lesley Phair - Vice Chair	Resigned July 18
Patsy Brand - Co Chair	Appointed Aug. 18
David Mellen - Co-Chair	Appointed Aug. 18
Lucy Judd - Secretary	Appointed Sept. 18
Richard Chamberlain	
Christopher Galvin	
John Henson	
Amdani Juma	
Rebecca Langton	
Stephanie Webber	
Jean-Didier Mualaba	Appointed Oct. 18
Cherry Underwood	Resigned Nov. 18
Jane Daffe	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Jennifer Fleming - Co Vice Chair	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Stella Nickolay - Co Vice Chair	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
David Hewitt	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Katherine Brownlow	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Jan Calloway	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Roger Tanner	Appointed at AGM 29th Nov. 18
Management Team:	
Fiona Cameron, Jill Jefferies, Kinsi Clarke, Temi Yusuf, Caroline Koi, Lisa Bradley	

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2018-19

Our financial year runs from the 1st April to 31st March and our consolidated results represent a consolidation of NNRF's financial results with Voices in Refuge CIC which was set up in 2017-18 to provide interpreting services to external organisations beyond the scope of the NNRF constitution. Profits from Voices in Refuge which have doubled in 2018-19 to £15,459 are either used to help grow the Voices in Refuge entity or are passed back to NNRF to help fund our activities. In 2018-19 the Voices in Refuge Board approved a payment of £10k to NNRF which we'll use to help close some of the funding gaps identified in this report.

NNRF income in 2018-19 fell by £100k across all income streams. A number of projects including the Legal project had to be discontinued in 2018-19 because of funding streams closing. Other project streams most notably our Anti-destitution project had to cut back the support we were able to give because of the cutbacks. A number of key members of the management team left during the year and the resulting staff cost saving meant we were able to return a healthy surplus of £68k up £46k on 2017-18. This enabled us to increase to reserves to £203k which represents 2 months of trading costs. This is still below the charity guideline of holding 3 months of costs in unrestricted reserves but does mean we do have some cover if we suffer further cuts to funding.

Further threats to our core funding has been identified as a major financial risk to the organisation so we were delighted to receive a donation to fund the recruitment of a fundraising manager who will be tasked with looking at increasing our funding from private & corporate donations as our funding from historic sources particularly Councils declines. We were very pleased to receive new funding from Refugee Action to support our Early Action initiative and to generate £12k of income from the Come & Sing concert with John Rutter. Furthermore, Money Sorted and Opportunities & Change (projects funded by the EU Social Fund) have also had funding extended until 2022. We're also very hopeful that our VPRS project, which has recently been extended to March 2020, will be further extended.

The latest financial projection for 2019-20 is showing a small surplus despite cuts to our COI programme. The surplus is driven by the funding for VPRS now being confirmed to March 2020. Our cash balances at circa £300k remain healthy so we can withstand a temporary hit to our funding but our aim for the rest of 2019-20 is get as many of our projects financially secured for the medium term rather than just 6 – 12 months hence.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2018-19

	Unrestricted	Restricted		
	Funds	Funds	Total	Total
			2018-19	2017-18
Income from :				
Donations & Legacies	65406	50000	115406	122017
Charitable Activities	340909	646178	987087	1128001
Other Trading Activities	81150	0	81150	27235
Investments	146	0	146	283
Total Income	487611	696178	1183789	1277536
Expenditure on :				
Charitable Activities	380961	720081	1101042	1252154
Other Trading Activities	14414	0	14414	3127
Total Expenditure	395375	720081	1115456	1255281
Net income/(expenditure)	92236	(23903)	68333	22255
Gross transfers between funds	(33376)	33376	0	0
Tax on activities	(1280)	0	(1280)	(1801)
Net movement in Funds	57580	9473	67053	20454
Fund balances at 1 April 2018	131637	4233	135870	115416
Fund balances at 31 March 2019	189217	13706	202923	135870

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2019

		2019		2018
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible assets		5238		8871
Current Assets				
Debtors	57951		68826	
Cash at bank & in hand	327859		195284	
	385810		264110	
Creditors : amounts falling due within 1 year	(188125)		(137111)	
Net current assets		197685		126999
Total assets less current liabilities		202923		135870
Income Funds				
Restricted Funds		13706		4233
Unrestricted Funds		189217		131637
Total charity Funds		202923		135870

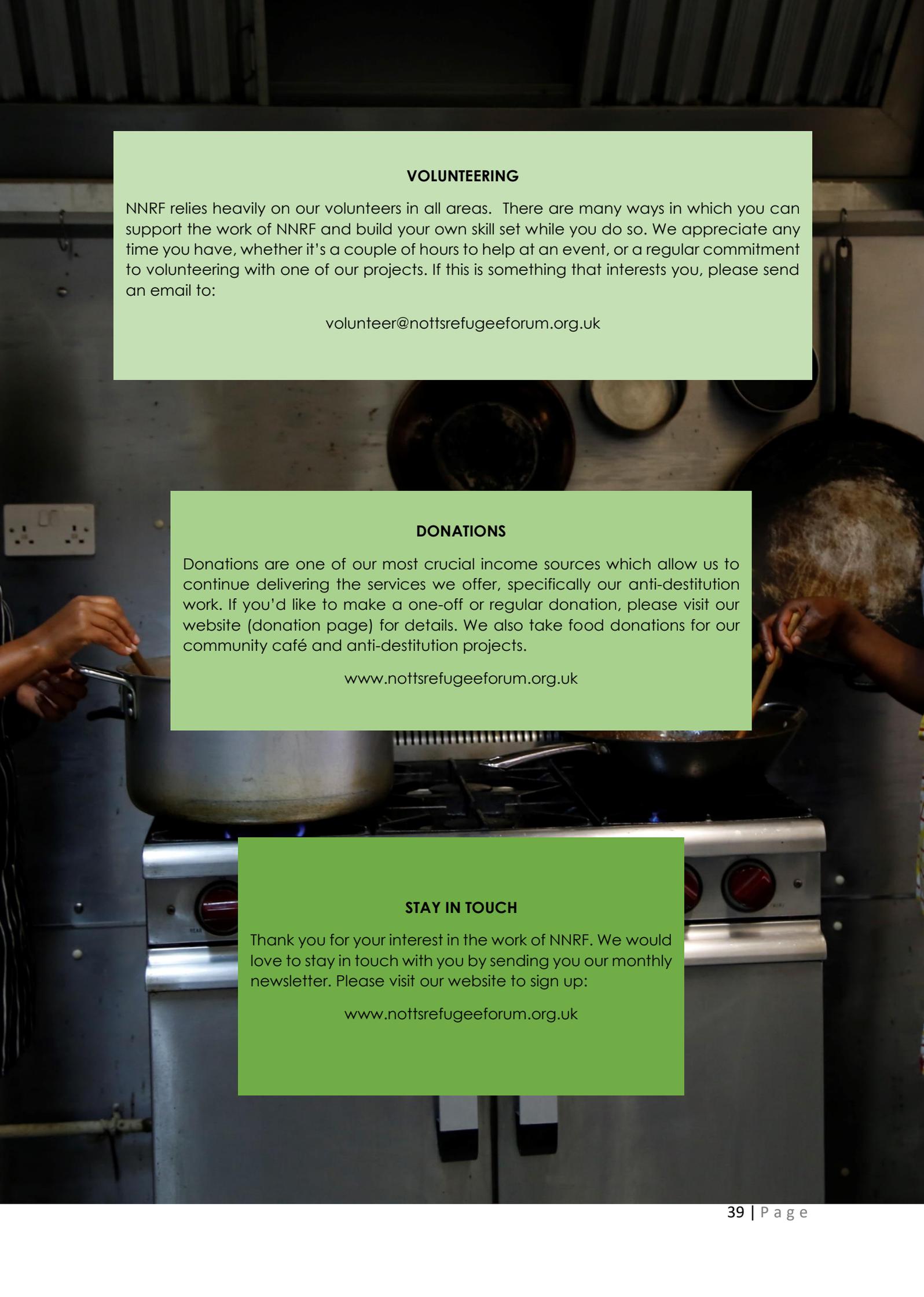
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS 2018-19

		2019		2018
	£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities				
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	133709		(17919)	
Income taxes paid	(1280)		(1801)	
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities		132429		(19720)
Investing Activities				
Purchase of tangible assets	-		(5873)	
Interest Received	146		283	
Net cash generated from/(used in investing activities)		146		(5590)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		132575		(25310)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		195284		220594
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		327859		195284



CELEBRATING TALENT AND COMMITMENT



A background image of a kitchen with people cooking. A person's hands are visible stirring a large pot on a gas stove. Another person is stirring a pan on the stove. The kitchen has a stainless steel countertop and a range hood above the stove.

VOLUNTEERING

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

DONATIONS

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

NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE REFUGEE FORUM

The Sycamore Centre, 33a Hungerhill Road, Nottingham NG3 4NB

Telephone: 0115 960 1230

Email: info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

Website: www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

Twitter: NNRF1

Facebook: nottsrefugeeforum

Registered Charity No: 1121560.

Company No: 05352679

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