

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire **REFUGEE FORUM**

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

April 2016 – March 2017





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WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR



Welcome to the NNRF 2017 Annual Report.

Just before writing this I have spent a couple of hours reading the draft and I must say how proud and humbled I am to be involved in an organisation consisting of so many committed and hardworking staff and volunteers. It's, to me, remarkable that virtually all of those reporting on their project's past activities, which are so physically and mentally demanding, have laid down ways in which they intend, in the coming year, to introduce new activities or ways of working.

Readers of this report will see the progress we have made with our Interpreting Project and I am excited at the prospect of this project and aspects of our Legal Project work generating much needed unrestricted funds. We continue to receive great financial and practical support from Nottingham City Council and we have developed good relations with the other Local Authorities who are working with us on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme.

This programme is a bit like the curate's egg. It has provided useful funding but the lack of certainty as to how many families we can expect causes logistical and financial uncertainty. Managing the expectations of the families is, in some cases, a big problem for our support team

We are also developing research and other projects with the two universities.

Since our last AGM we have had a General Election and the movement towards achieving Brexit has increased but there is much confusion. Historically Britain has opted out of many European measures regarding asylum so it is unclear, to me at least, how Brexit would affect our work. What is clear is that it is possible that some migrants to the UK from the EEC could, following Brexit, find themselves in similar positions to some of our service users. How we would respond to this is something we will have to consider sometime in the future.

You will see, from the enclosed reports, the large number of partners we have and I want to thank all of them for their contributions to our work, welcome all of the staff recently recruited to our still growing organisation, thank all Trustees, old and new, for their support and a special thanks to all staff and volunteers.

- Leo Keely, Chair of Trustees

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Welcome to our new annual report and - incredibly - the end of another year at NNRF.

2016/2017 has been another year of change and growth for the organisation, and at the end of this financial year we had doubled our income and our staff numbers. We are fortunate to be able to offer a wide range of services. At the end of 2016, numbers of asylum seekers dispersed to Nottingham started to plateau and since the beginning of this year, we have been able to draw breath and start to consolidate and learn from all the work we have put in since the recognition of the refugee crisis at the end of 2015.

Much of the detail of the 2016 immigration bill has become clearer now, and we are beginning to see its effects with people having their driving licences cancelled, being wrongly refused private rental accommodation on account of their immigration status, and, looking into the future, having their bank accounts closed down and any assets frozen.

All of this together with the much-vaunted hostile environment and the prevailing anti-immigration rhetoric in a large section of the popular press, is leading to very difficult times for many of our clients.

As the casework delivery partners for the City Council on the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, we have been determined to incorporate that learning into all our work, and are gradually moving towards a more proactive, preventative model in the future. Whilst recognising that this will never replace the much-needed crisis service that we provide, we hope that this will lead to a better experience for our clients throughout their asylum journey, a more participative approach to the system, and ultimately fairer decision making.

This forms a major part of our strategic plan for the next three years; a commitment to become a centre of excellence and developing our relationships with the university around formal research. In addition, we continue to develop fee-paying and chargeable services, working towards a model whereby we can generate income to support the work that we do. In this way we hope to ensure the sustainability of NNRF into the future.

Thank you all for your support, be that as a donor, a supporter, a staff or board members or a volunteer. As the need for our work becomes more acute, that support becomes more vital and more appreciated.

- Fiona Cameron, 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

NNRF is a forward-thinking organisation that is passionate about empowering refugees and asylum seekers, aiding their integration into the local community and UK society as a whole.

We do this by:

- Providing a safe and welcoming space where everyone is treated with respect, compassion and dignity
- Offering free and impartial advice
- 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

Board of Trustees

Clive Lamb – Treasurer	John Henson	Shahid Sharif
Maggie Jones – Secretary	Richard Chamberlain	Lesley Phair
Patsy Brand	Amdani Juma	Steff Webber
Cherry Underwood	David Mellen	Rebecca Wilson
Leo Keely – Chair	Dave Hewitt – Deputy Chair (resigned June 2017)	

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

2,500 meals served at our community café

Over 12,000 cases dealt with for **over 2,000** clients across **15** various services

£27,500 worth of small grants and 250 bus tickets issued to support our clients

48 staff members and **300** volunteers



We have worked hard to ensure the figures in this report are accurate. However, there is likely to be some overlap between activities as some individuals are supported by more than one service. Given the breadth of our work, we acknowledge the difficulty in monitoring our statistical information but continue to improve our reporting systems.

IMPACT REPORT

ANTI-DESTITUTION

The Anti-destitution project provides support service for refused, destitute asylum seekers. The activities that this project offers include:



“For me the Saturday Group is an oasis in the middle of a desert. I have found love and companionship and provision that have been a nourishment to my heart, body and mind” - Mirriam

Saturday Food Group: The food bank operated on Saturdays offers a selection of groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables, and toiletries. A hot lunch prepared by our volunteers is also provided for all the clients. The clients are given access to the clothes bank, and participate in ESOL classes as well as the garden project.

Cash Group: Every Thursday we offer small grants of £20 to each destitute client per month. The project coordinator meets with the clients to discuss ongoing cases and deals with referrals made.

Support Applications: Applications are made and submitted for section 95, section 98 and section 4 support. Migrant Help assist with the work of support applications each week. All follow-up work is done which includes handling further information requests, preparing appeals, allocation of accommodation and post-dispersal.

Referrals: Clients are referred to some of the NNRF project such as the Legal Project, Into the Mainstream, and the Children’s Project for activities. External referrals are also made to organisations who may be able to support the clients, such as Nottingham Arimathea Trust, Host Nottingham, Social Services, and British Red Cross.

Other activities include library trips.

With **one project coordinator** and **23 volunteers** through the year, we:

Have had **successful targeted requests for donations** and made good savings on the food that we buy in. Thanks to the generosity of Clifton Food Bank, Pat Coleman, St Mary's Church – Radcliffe on Trent, Janet, Insight Nottingham, Irena Paxton, Tom Bray, Peter Wright, St Nicolas Church, East Bridgford Mother's Union, Aliya Vaughan, Zaynab Asghar, Tor Drew, and countless other individuals and groups who have given us food donations over the year.

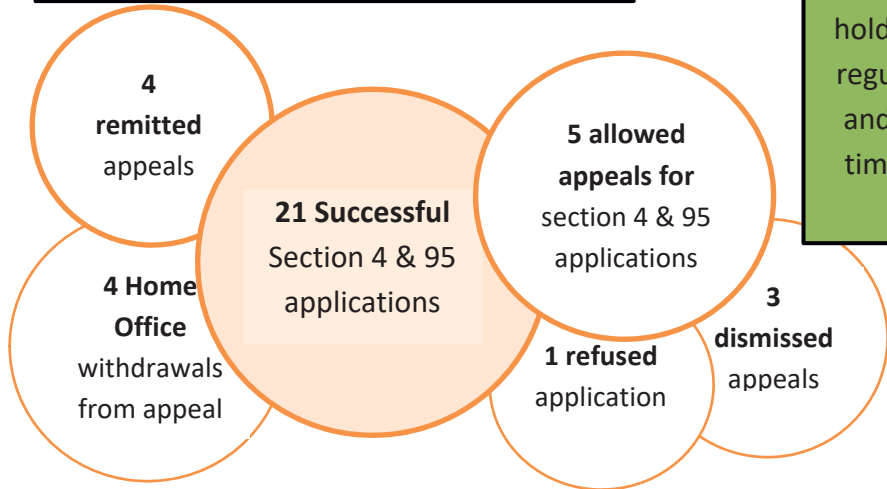
Served **113 clients** through the activities of the Saturday Food Group

Had **134 cases** from clients that we offered support services to

Gave **talks to raise awareness** about destitution to Nottingham Free School, Hillocks Primary School and Labour Party in West Bridgford. Some of these talks also included how people can get involved in the hosting project.

Have made significant progress on our target of **overhaul of the stock management**. The stockroom has been re-painted and new shelving installed. There is also better control of stock and identification of donations vs bought goods.

Expanded the team and 3 new volunteers have started who are holding one-one meetings with regular clients, handling admin and have reduced the waiting time for clients and improved monitoring.



*Section 95 support is aimed at asylum seekers whose claims are ongoing, who are destitute or about to become destitute, and their dependents.
Section 4 support is aimed at refused asylum-seekers who are destitute.*

CASE STUDY

AB, a young lady from Eritrea came into General Advice, following her case refusal. She was referred to me and a call to her solicitor established that he would be preparing a fresh claim for the client. Unfortunately, his work would not be completed before her discontinuation date and her eligibility for her then current support (Section 95) would not exist because she had become an appeal rights exhausted refused asylum seeker and so eligible for Section 4 support.

I contacted Host Nottingham in order to ask that my client be hosted for a short period while her solicitor prepared submissions and we applied for Section 4 support. This was accepted as a referral and AB moved in to live with a couple in West Bridgford who were more than happy to have her stay.

AB was referred to the Saturday Food Group and four-weekly cash support and casework meetings.

Following AB's fresh claim submission and during the application for Section 4 support, her fresh claim was turned down. This administratively closed the application for Section 4 support.

Conversations with the solicitor and Host Nottingham established that work was underway to apply for permission to judicially review this second refusal. Host Nottingham worked with the hosts in West Bridgford to request that she stay on with them beyond the initially agreed time period. The hosts were again happy to have her stay with them.

AB continued to attend the Saturday Group and casework meetings and we spoke about applying for Section 4 again when the JR application was made.

I referred AB to Migrant Help to start an application for Section 4 support. Following the ASF1 submission, the Home Office wrote to ask for further information to support the application. I worked with AB to obtain the necessary information and made a response to their request.

Section 4 was granted and we formally accepted the offer of support as is required. I sent a request that she be housed in Nottingham but this was not successful. I communicated with the Home Office and G4S to establish a collection date and managed to extract from them that she would be dispersed to Walsall. This news was quite a shock to my client, she had never heard of Walsall and was very connected to her church and network of friends here in Nottingham.

AB was collected by G4S and taken to her Section 4 house in Walsall.

I called her in the evening to see that she had arrived safely and to see what her first impressions of the house were. She was ok, said she was sharing the house with 5 other women, had been given an ASPEN card and that she found the house a bit dirty but alright.

I researched information of organisations in Walsall and messaged her with details of where she could get a hot meal at a local church which she said she might attend.

AB's case demonstrates almost all of the work involved the Anti-Destitution project.

Although we've had successes in different areas of this project, we have also had some challenges. There is ongoing scarcity of places in Nottingham for destitute clients to go to. We've also had an increase in referrals to the project and there are lack of resources to meet immediate requirements such as accommodation.

We have **developed partnerships with:**

Asylum Support Appeals Project, Host Nottingham, Nottingham Arimathea Trust, Detention Action, Himmah, British Red Cross, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Libraries, Stuart Luke - Bhatia Best Solicitors, The Street Outreach Team, Emmanuel House, St Ann's Advice Centre, Asylum Support Advice Network, The Bakehouse, Sherwood.

Next year we will be developing a Steering Committee. I have spoken to clients about the importance of their experiences and voices forming the work of the Refugee Forum. I have some members who are willing to join. I will be following this up with an initial meeting about what this role will entail.

I would like to show my appreciation to...

Asylum Support Appeals Project

Host Nottingham

Nottingham Arimathea Trust

Detention Action

Himmah

British Red Cross

Nottingham City Council

Nottingham Libraries

Stuart Luke, Bhatia Best Solicitors

The Street Outreach Team

Emmanuel House

St Ann's Advice Centre

Asylum Support Advice Network

The Bakehouse, Sherwood

Hillocks Primary School

Nottingham Free School

The Labour Party, West Bridgford
branch

Right to Remain

Movement for Justice

Gemma Pillay - Anti-Destitution Coordinator

COMMUNITY CAFÉ

The Community Café provides lunch and tea and coffee to service users, volunteers and staff members. This is done on Mondays - Thursdays every week thanks to the support of our hardworking volunteers. The diverse range of meals are prepared using food donations received from the public.



With **1 Coordinator** and **13 volunteers**, we have served **2,500 meals** in the year.

Food Hygiene: We were able to provide food hygiene training and certification for our volunteers who support with the running of the café. With this certificate most of them can progress in their interest for food preparation and secure employment in the food industry.

Workshop for Youth: We had four young people over a period of six weeks participating in this workshop. The workshop was focused on teaching them how to shop for food on a small budget and cook it in a healthy way. Yemeneh, Delvar, Rezeneh, and Armhed found the workshop experience enjoyable and educational and would love to get involved more with the kitchen in the near future.

Next Year: We plan to train more café volunteers and deliver more workshops.

I would like to thank...

all the volunteers: Rose, Bethlehem, Georgina, Joan, Philomena, Kabirou, Christian Rizik, Sein, Agnes, and Joyce for their time and dedication without whom this work we do would not be possible. I also want to show my appreciation to the NNRF staff for their donations which help to cover the costs of the café.

Ivan Mvuyekure – Café Coordinator

COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY (COI)

NNRF is the lead organisation for the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Communities of Identity funding received from Nottingham City Council. There are 14 organisations within the Consortium, seven of which form a Steering Group (*):

1. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum*
2. African Institute for Social Development*
3. Begin
4. Belong*
5. Cameroon Support Group
6. East African Education Centre
7. Emmanuel House
8. HOST Nottingham
9. Mojatu Foundation
10. NCVS*
11. Nottingham Arimathea Trust*
12. Rainbow Project*
13. Senior Support Group
14. Women's Cultural Exchange*

The Consortium works together to provide services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in terms of :

- Information, Advice and Guidance
- ESOL and Conversational English
- Building Skills and Confidence
- Support for Basic Needs
- Support for specialist VCS organisations
- Volunteering projects

Research Projects: Members of the consortium have worked on 3 research projects looking at ESOL provision, faith integration and volunteering opportunities for refugees & asylum seekers.

Pilot Projects: The consortium is supporting the development of two pilot projects being undertaken by two current partners, Mojatu Foundation are working on a Media Training Project and the Senior Support Group are developing a project to support elderly refugees which will include research into the scale of the need and whether it warrants a specialised service.

Smalls Grants Fund: This year we developed the Small Grants Fund for groups outside of the Consortium and funded 20 projects for a total of £12,971.

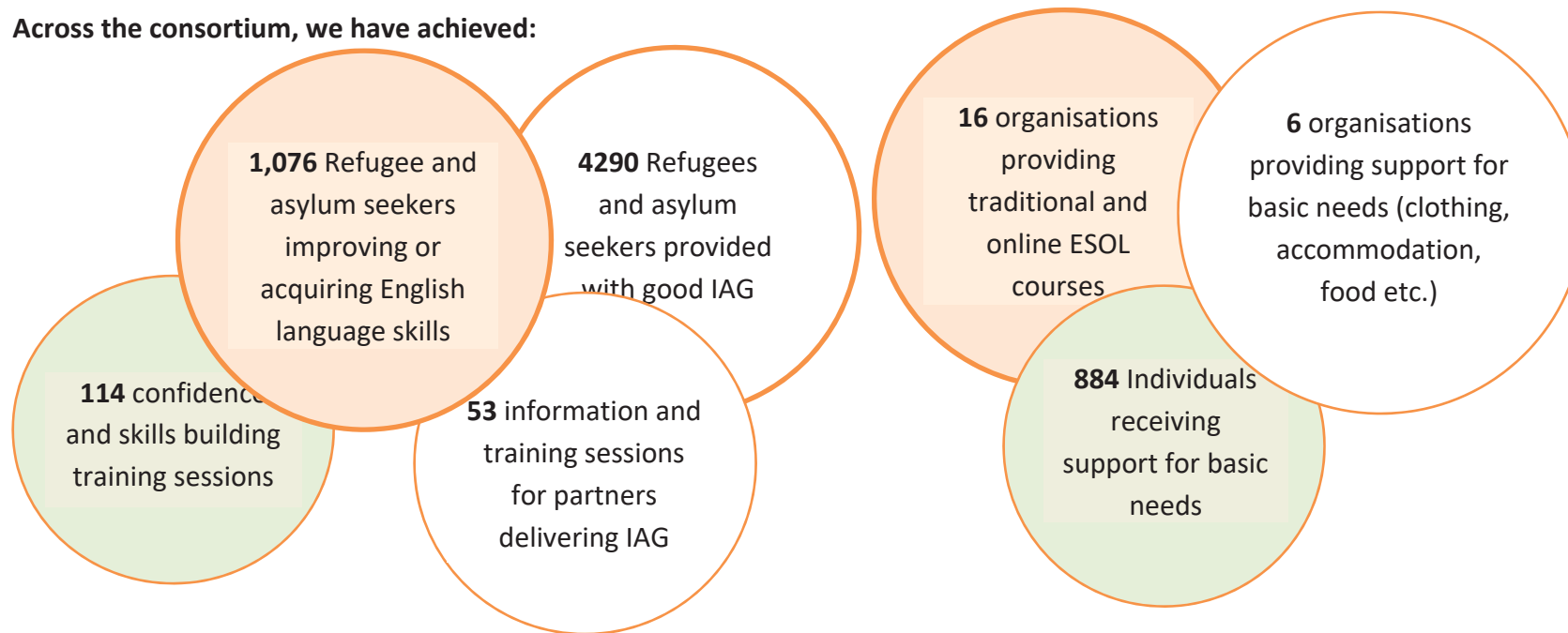
We have developed partnerships with:

African Institute for Social Development, BEGIN, Belong, Cameroon Support Group, East African Education Centre, Emmanuel House, HOST Nottingham, Mojatu Foundation, NCVS, Nottingham Arimathea Trust, Rainbow Project, Senior Support Group, Women's Culture Exchange, Nottingham City Council

Group	Small Grant Funded Activity
Nottingham Beyond Borders	Refugee Week 2016 activities
Nottingham & Notts Iranian Members Assoc (NIMA)	4 X 2 hour English classes + arts taster sessions
Hyson Green Cultural Festival	volunteer expenses + general admin for the festival
East Midlands Congolese Centre	Open Day to raise awareness of Centre
Sudanese Organisation in Notts	4 English classes, 2 socials to reduce isolation and develop the group
Nottingham Sports Group	Pitch hire, DJ, 4 Referees
Word Jam	Event during Nottingham Literary Festival in November
Malawi Nottingham Community Group	Event to research the needs of the group.
Kairos	Running costs for the group and an event to bring people together
Funding for Insurance briefing	A briefing to help community groups understand what insurance is needed
Insite Radio	Training 5 people to develop media skills.
Nottingham African Consortium	Launch of NAC
Nottingham Mongolian Community Association	Development of the group
GAIN Diaspora	Event to do research
Pat Samba	Fitness classes to bring people together and reduce isolation and support each other.
NCBI	Production of 2 ESOL Friend pamphlets
Darfur Association Nottingham	Event and group development
NIMA	Music Workshops
Word Jam	Event to bring different people together
Nottingham Beyond Borders	Refugee Week – 2017

Although challenges were faced with activities keeping to the scheduled timetable, the project has been successful so far and exceeded targets. One of the areas that we would like to look into is to have a Training Skills Directory which some organisations are in the process of developing.

Across the consortium, we have achieved:



Next Year:

Pilot Projects: (Senior Support Group and Mojatu) Both pilot projects continue to develop in 2017/18. Mojatu is on its third intake of students and is reviewing and improving how it works each time.

The Senior Support Group have had some issues in 2016/17, but with support from the Partnership Development Coordinator and Nottingham African Consortium, will hopefully consolidate what they have planned to do.

Nottingham Arimathea Trust: It was agreed to increase Nottingham Arimathea Trust's funding as they have expanded their offer and increased what they are doing. Their outputs will reflect this.

Small Grants Fund: The Small Grants Process has been reviewed and we will incorporate a support package for the groups which will include training. One of the focus areas will be to assist the groups with core costs but will be able to apply for other things.

Training: NNRF and NCVS are working on developing training opportunities for groups and organisations outside of the Consortium and NNRF's Volunteer Project.

Run a Club: The Steering Group are in discussions with an organisation to commission 'Run a Club' packages to help groups with the monitoring, policies etc. This would then be available to some of the smaller community groups within the consortium and groups who get small grants.

Homework Clubs: The Steering Group have agreed that the Partnership Development Coordinator will work with the Families and Children's Worker to investigate the need for Homework Clubs and develop a package that can be used by community groups to run the clubs.

Research & Development Projects: It was agreed to allocate some money to actions resulting from the Research Project findings.

Event: It was agreed to hold a networking and information event for refugee & asylum seeker groups in September.

New Consortium members: It was agreed to ask the Women's Cultural Exchange to join the Steering Group and to identify groups, and develop an application form, to join the wider consortium. It was agreed to focus on Middle Eastern community groups and an application process will be developed.

All of these developments will impact on the outcomes and outputs that this project achieves.

I would like to show my appreciation to...

African Institute for Social Development, BEGIN, Belong, Cameroon Support Group, East African Education Centre, Emmanuel House, HOST Nottingham, Mojatu Foundation, NCVS, Nottingham Arimathea Trust, Nottingham City Council, Rainbow Project, Senior Support Group, Women's Culture Exchange

Debbie Royle – COI Partnership Development Coordinator

ESOL

In February 2016 the Forum welcomed the new post of ESOL Coordinator. Having someone in post has meant that ESOL can now be organised within the Forum to best meet the needs of our clients. Time was spent in the first half of the year managing backlogs of referrals and working closely with our Volunteer Coordinator to recruit and train a pool of ESOL Tutors and Classroom Support Assistants. Training for tutors has included an Introduction to ESOL, Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Language Errors for Arabic learners and Assessing ESOL Learners.



Language level assessments are provided 4 days per week, with all students being offered at least a 12 week block of lessons. The Forum is excited to now have a structured and timetabled approach towards providing free English lessons to all, regardless of refugee status, and especially for those clients in their first 6 months of being in the UK.

The project has been successful with:

- Providing additional **1 to 1** and assessment sessions
- Registered English My Way centre thus have a specific pre-entry level course
- In-house **language level assessments** written and successfully implemented
- Providing ESOL classes for clients on the resettlement project
- Providing ESOL classes for clients on the youth project whilst they await school or college places
- Nottingham orientation ESOL
- 2 anti-destitution weekly ESOL classes throughout the year
- **10 tutors** have accessed 2 NATECLA ESOL conferences
- Developing **ESOL in the community** within homes, Heart church and Nottingham Trent University



2136 hours of free ESOL provided for **100+ clients**

50% of this year's tutors are **qualified ESOL tutors**

23% of our non-qualified tutors have since started an **ESOL qualification**

35% of our **volunteer tutors** have now moved on to **teach English**

10 tutors have accessed 2 **NATECLA ESOL** conferences



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

“Hello My Name is Adam. I am 26. I am from Sudan. I have been in the UK for just 5 months and I live in Nottinghamshire. I like to cycle everywhere. I travel from Mansfield on my bike to the Refugee Forum for English classes. I am interested in playing football, watching TV and learning English. At NNRF I won a prize from the volunteer awards. The Mayor of Nottingham rang me at home to tell me about the prize. It was a shock talking in front of everybody. The prize was shopping vouchers. I bought a mobile phone with the voucher so I can contact my friends and family. Thank you NNRF”.

Next Year

The hard work of the ESOL Team will continue into 2017/18. Focus will be on continuing to support the Syrian Resettlement Project, ESOL for Employability, ESOL for clients with multiple and complex needs, family learning opportunities, women's language workshops and developing a literacy course for learners with no previous experience of education. We would also like to update the classroom.

Feedback from our volunteer tutors:

“Teressa introduced me to her ESOL programme in 2016 and I and other volunteers attended a number of her introductory sessions which outlined how she envisaged the programme developing. There was much enthusiasm for the programme and a mixture of qualified and non-qualified ESOL/TEFL volunteers. Since then it seems that the resource pool of the ESOL project volunteers has substantially increased (just an observation) which is a reflection of Teressa's programme linking closely with the volunteer recruitment project and the fact that a number of already 'established' forum volunteers expressed interest in joining her programme. Having been so enthused, a few volunteers have since qualified or enrolled on a course to qualify for ESOL and or TEFL.

The project was very responsive by clients on the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme, and the commitment from these refugees, whatever their level of English, was outstanding. Encouragement and professional direction, from Teressa, in learning English clearly contributed to this. It wasn't an easy process for the programme since at that stage the students were not assigned to classes according to their English skills; I mention this because it shows how Teressa's programme accommodated the needs and demands of both students and the requirements of political and funding agencies. It also suggests that Teressa is able to balance potentially conflicting demands whilst continuing to provide a professional language service.

Teressa is sensitive to the needs of students and her volunteers' needs. She finds very appropriate resources for their classes, prints out everything, and takes you through the detail. She is very encouraging.

She likes to hear people's experiences and views, considers them, and then adapts her programme accordingly. Then she consults. No wonder ESOL is a success. The other thing is that Teressa reorganised is the ESOL room, acquired very good language course books, organised everything on shelves and into filing cabinets.

The programme (of classes, one to one tuition and the triage assessment clinics in general advice) is huge. It has expanded very rapidly, in 2017, and all these language opportunities are fully used. Teressa, and how she has developed the English project, account for much of this success. The Forum is in a very good position to encourage the initiative and empathy of its staff, both of which are demonstrated in ESOL. At this point in time there are classes backing each other, since the demand for English is high. I think that demand demonstrates, very well, Teressa's and the Forum's successes.

I think the refugee forum is one of the most enterprising and imaginative organisation that I've been privileged to work for. I think it's working for the best of everyone.” - Jean

*“Excellent organisation and support for all” - **Paddy***

*“Cheerful. Supportive. Organised. Positive”
- **Kathleen***

*“I love my Friday ESOL class with the young people. We have so much fun together and are building good relationships. They even get to improve their English!” - **Pat***

*“It's great to be part of a team that is really making a difference. Every learner really wants to be here and NNRF are so enthusiastic about the provision, that it makes it worthwhile. It's a lovely challenge to try to make English language learning accessible and a pleasure to see it go so successfully.” - **Martin***

*“Efficiency & thoroughness that is open to contribution and expansion” - **Steve***

*“Keen students, full of smiles and gratitude ...teaching... flying by the seat of my pants!... Being flexible, responsive. Experience overall... Rewarding” – **Gwynneth***

*“I'd say my experience of the ESOL department has been positive all round... The team are friendly and approachable, and there is a real sense that we are working towards the same goal” - **Lekeisha***

I would like to thank...

Each individual project volunteer for their commitment to the clients of NNRF, and the learners themselves for always striving to do their best in the ESOL lessons. Thank you!

Teressa O'Hagan-Bull – ESOL Coordinator

GARDEN

The Garden Project is a project where users of the centre, refugees, asylum seekers and volunteers work together on turning what was previously a piece of waste ground behind the Sycamore Centre into a garden.

It is a wonderful wild space with hidden treasures and amazing wildlife, part of St Ann's Allotments. The garden provides:

- A place where anyone can come and work together
- A tranquil space for relaxing
- Produce for our Saturday group and the community café

This project commenced in autumn and the allotment is progressing well, tended by regular gardening sessions every week. A keen team of volunteers are working on it alternate Wednesdays and Saturdays.

A big **THANK YOU** to our dedicated volunteers beautifying this space. Next year, we will have a Coordinator to oversee the project.



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. This is a volunteer-led service offered on a drop in basis four times a week.

The objective of the advice sessions 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. The flexibility in providing advice and support serves to identify and assist vulnerable users accessing our services.



2,154 clients
supported
through general
advice

An average of **32**
clients were seen
in **each session**
between January –
March

“Most people are as ignorant about the asylum seeking process and the lives of refugees in this country as I was a year or so ago. As an adviser, I feel that I can really understand what the issues are for the client and that I can therefore be as effective as possible in helping them.”

Some of the challenges we've faced include the advice that we should give clients and in the way that we should make referrals both internally and externally. With a large pool of volunteer advisers and with a fairly high turnover of both volunteers and staff involved in supervising, ensuring that volunteers and supervisors are always providing up-to-date advice, conducting referrals in the correct way, is a constant challenge. Finding ways to cope with this challenge will remain a key focus of the project in the coming year.

Nonetheless, with **one project coordinator** and **45 volunteers** through the year we have achieved:

Improvements to Triage:

The General Advice sessions continue to respond to a very high level of demand from clients. Between January 1st and 31st March 2017 an average of 32 clients were seen every day, and various systems have been introduced to help things run more smoothly. In particular, a new system for attending to clients has been developed; more information about this is included in the case study below.

Improvements to links with other projects:

A more efficient system was introduced for making referrals to the One Stop Shop and Welfare Benefits advisers. Appointments are now given to clients before they leave General Advice whenever possible, rather than in a follow-up call several days later. This is greatly appreciated by the clients and significantly reduces the amount of follow up work to be done within the Advice Team.

Interpreters trained by NNRF are now being used routinely during General Advice sessions, thus reducing the cost of using phone interpreters and improving the clients' experience.

Working alongside General Advice, the New Refugee Clinic volunteers have had appointments with up to 18 new refugees each week in order to help with a range of issues, including claiming benefits, providing information about opening bank accounts, applying for integration loans and helping clients' access emergency hardship support. Improvements were made to the way that appointments are given to new refugees so that they are helped by the New Refugee Clinic, One Stop Shop and Welfare Benefits advisers in a way that is coordinated and ensures that the clients' various needs in relation to benefits and housing are addressed.

Improvements to the quality and consistency of advice given:

Regular updates have been provided to staff and volunteers on any changes that have taken place affecting General Advice. A Handbook has been produced to help support advisers in responding to the very wide range of issues that they are asked for help with, and this has been updated on a regular basis. A Handbook has also been produced to help support the New Refugee Clinic volunteers.

Guidelines for General Advice supervisors have been introduced in order to improve consistency in the supervision of General Advice sessions. These guidelines form part of a new Handbook for General Advice Supervisors; this Handbook also contains additional information and resources from other NNRF projects and elsewhere, and will be added to in future.

A laminated Client Record Sheet has been introduced for volunteers to complete during each General Advice session; this helps to ensure that in addition to dealing with the issues that a client has come about, volunteers also remember to complete routine tasks such as ensuring that clients' contact details and client authorisation forms are up-to-date. Crucially the Client Record Sheet also provides an opportunity for the supervisor to sign off on the work done by an adviser before the client leaves, and so identify any mistakes or omissions; this is now a key tool for improving the quality of the advice given.

Next Year

Over the next year, we are aiming...

- To continue to improve the quality and consistency of the advice given by General Advice volunteers.
- To continue to work with other NNRF projects to ensure that our referral systems are as effective as possible and tailored to the needs of each project.
- To work with the NNRF Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that all existing General Advice volunteers are regularly undertaking training to keep their knowledge up-to-date, and to introduce a system for recognising the different levels of experience that volunteers have achieved.

“A significant success for the project has been the introduction of a new system for triaging clients when they arrive for a General Advice session. Previously clients would have to queue outside in all weathers waiting for the reception to open at 9am; once reception opened, they would continue to queue until registered by the reception staff. Under the new system, the NNRF café is opened up at 8.15am. Clients are now welcomed into the café and given a ticket as they arrive. Staff members then work to triage all the clients, completing a simple record sheet that is passed through to General Advice.

This change in system has created a much calmer atmosphere in the reception area, and is appreciated by the clients. It has also enabled significant improvements to be made in the way General Advice operates. The triage record sheet includes details of the main reason why the client has come and whether they need an interpreter. General Advice supervisors are now able to assess the client’s needs in advance, organise for some clients to be seen more urgently if appropriate, turn away clients early on who have come about an issue that we cannot help with, and pass on important information to advisers before they see the client. Other projects have also benefitted from this change; for example, interpreters can be organised more effectively in response to demand, and staff can see when clients of theirs have come to General Advice.”

Trish

General Advice continues to work with a wide variety of partners, including **Migrant Help**, the **British Red Cross**, **Begin**, the **Arches**, **Hope Foodbanks**, **HOST** and **Sharewear**. Communication regularly occurs with our partners to ensure that our referral systems operate smoothly, and improvements have been made when needed.

I would like to...

Extend a huge thank you to the wonderful volunteers who have given so much time during the year to General Advice and the New Refugee Clinic, in order to help so many clients with such a wide range of issues. They are a great team and their hard work is hugely appreciated.

Hermione Berthels – General Advice Coordinator

INTERPRETING

The Interpreting project aims to support NNRF clients and advisers to communicate as if using their own voice. It aims to be an ethical service for clients, interpreters and advisers by cutting the need for costly and untrained telephone interpreting services who pay their staff on zero hour contracts.

We also aim to promote interpreting as a specialised skill and career rather than something anyone with language ability can do. We will offer a better service of interpreting to outside organizations while helping to fund NNRF, and have achieved the following in the year:



Provided
**interpreting
service to external
organisations**

**94% reduction in
the telephone
interpreting
costs**

**25 volunteer
interpreters trained
over 3 training
courses**

**Increased capacity
and now have 7
interpreters
speaking 12
languages**



CASE STUDY

Nawzad Mouloud came to England as an Asylum seeker in 2000. When he arrived he didn't speak a word of English but a love for learning led to him quickly becoming fluent. Even now he is always seen with a book noting down new expressions for use at a later date.

After hearing about our first interpreter training course, Nawzad had to wait 3 months for another opportunity but took part and immediately showed great ability and a wonderful attitude and desire to help.

After volunteering for 3 months, Nawzad was employed at the Forum. He is now found going back and forth across the Forum interpreting for all our Kurdish clients.

Nawzad said "I feel like I have achieved something really special at NNRF. I love to work here as whatever problems anyone comes in with, everyone always tries to help. I've been able to meet some wonderful people at the Forum and hope to continue here for many years."

"I did want to put in writing how much I appreciate the developing team of in-house interpreters at NNRF. It's incomparably better (in many ways) than using BigWord to have a real person there who is able to do so much more than just translate the words, including interpreting during phone calls. I've found each of the interpreters in the team to be a delight to work with. They are all professional but also human and friendly.

A hugely beneficial development is the training, and increased use, of our own interpreters. It is better, in every conceivable way, to have a real live person present when working with clients, compared to using a telephone interpretation service. The interpreter can read the clients' body language as well as translate their words; can read documents and can check a client's understanding.

What I like best about working at the Forum is the feeling of working together with other people to do a job I think is important and wouldn't otherwise be done." – Trish

We have **developed partnerships with:**

Insight Healthcare, Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Futures, Bhatia Best Solicitors, French and Co Solicitors, Carers Federation, Derbyshire Social Care, Bedford Borough Council, and The Guardian

The project has had some challenges; for example, ethical employment means it is difficult to supply minority languages. Providing interpreting service to external organisations has created a steep adaptability curve in dealing with their payment terms and procedures which is sometimes delayed and inconsistent.

Next Year

We hope in 2018 to stop using telephone interpreters altogether by recruiting and training more volunteers. We aim to increase capacity in line with the anticipated increase in outside appointments. To do this we plan to employ another 4 interpreters.

I would like to show appreciation to...

The Postcode Lottery for their generous financial support.

Matt Bedford – Interpreting Coordinator

INTO THE MAINSTREAM (ItM)

The ItM project is concerned with making health services accessible to refugees and asylum seekers in Nottingham and surrounding wards where NNRF have clients including those resettled under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Project (SVPRP). The project receives dispersal notifications from UKBA via the housing provider and from other agencies. We then invite the newly dispersed families and singles for assessment. During this consultation, their healthcare needs are identified and appropriate referrals are made to healthcare providers.

Key targets include assisting all new arrivals to register with a local GP, provide links to dentist and opticians, refer to mental health services and to health visiting teams along with midwives and specialist clinics as necessary. Another target of the project is to ensure that all new dispersals are seen within 2 to 4 weeks from referral, depending on whether they have any known health needs. A significant proportion of the staff's time goes into advocacy and partnership work including training for relevant agencies.

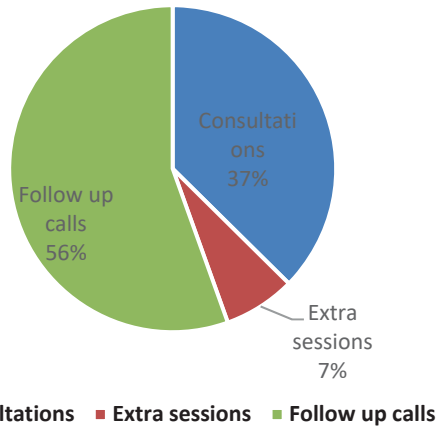


NNRF in Parliament to join countless organisations and institutions showcasing what Nottingham has to offer at Westminster while raising service gaps and concerns with partners and politicians.

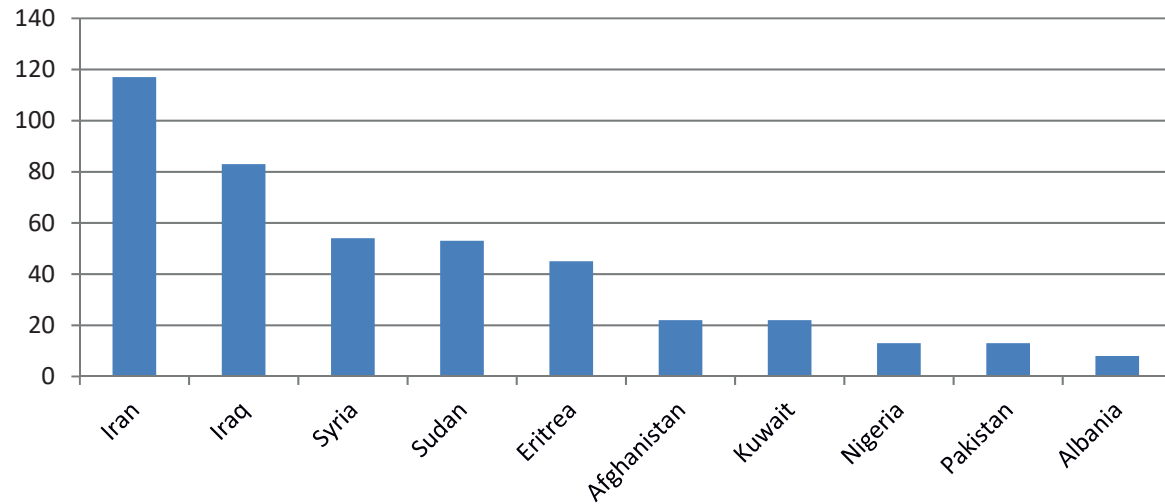
With a team of 3 staff and 2 volunteers, this year we have:

- Achieved 100% of seeing all our clients within the target period.
- Delivered **14 separate training sessions** attended by **419 individuals**, mainly from the health services.
- Our volunteer driving scheme continued to be a huge success with **152 assisted transportations** including **108 trips** made by our volunteer drivers in its first year.
- Contributed to three (one international and two regional) conferences around access to healthcare.
- Launched a **pilot project** with one of the mental health providers, which meant a practitioner coming to see clients at the Forum once a week. This has proved to be very successful and has given us ideas to take forward to relevant partners.

**Advice Sessions/Interactions
(Total = 1,222)**

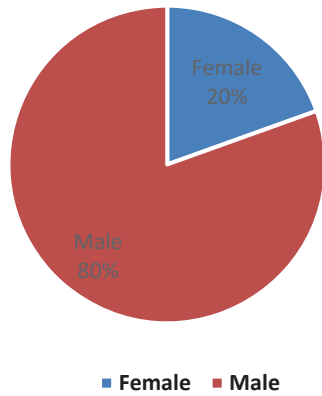


Top countries of origin

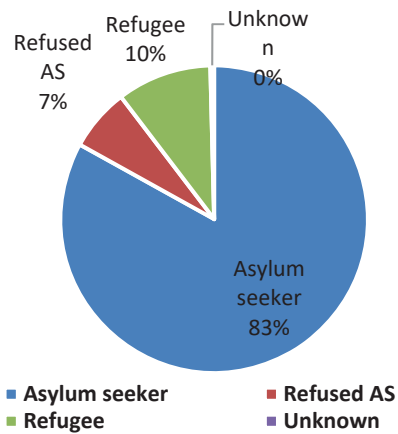


Of the 502 clients the project has worked with:

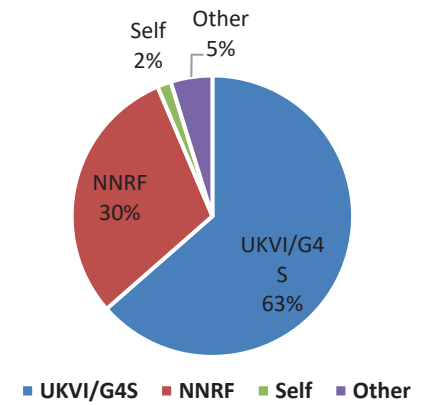
Gender of main applicant



Immigration Status



Referral source



Earlier this year, the success of the ItM was highlighted by an **independent report** whereby 280 individual asylum seekers surveyed, 95% were found to have had local GPs, having been assisted by the ItM.

Read the report here: <http://bit.ly/2fmGgIP>

We've had a high rate of GP registration each quarter due to good recording systems and having onsite interpreters.

We advocated, with partial success, for the **provision of interpreting service** for NHS dentists and opticians and had reassurance from the commissioning body that such a service is available and should be offered at the point of need.

Our no-show-up rate has reduced to under 5%.

The **Local Enhance Service for asylum seekers** was finally launched on 20th May 2016 in partnership with Nottingham City CCG and participating GP practices and it has made a massive difference to the GP registration process for newly arrived asylum seekers.

"I started volunteering with ItM a year or so after retiring from my work as a GP in Wirksworth, Derbyshire. My previous (and first) GP practice had been in St Ann's and it was great to return to the city. I loved the two elements of the work I became involved with. When meeting asylum seekers in order to help them connect with mainstream health services, many of the young men reminded me of my three sons of a similar age. It could be them seeking help in a strange country. When assisting at training sessions to inform health workers of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees to access healthcare, it particularly felt worthwhile to inspire GPs-in-training to act as advocates for this special group of patients. Although after 5 years I have just stopped my regular commitment, I hope to keep in touch by helping at the occasional training session."

- **Jill R**

Issues around interpreting provision for NHS dental and optical care have been challenging and are still on going to some extent due to, among other factors, recent changes to the county provision. The new NHS regulations will present further concerns for some of our clients and will make the work of the ItM even more challenging.

We also lost our longest serving volunteer (Jill Rapoport) who, after amazing 5.5 years of working with the ItM, has taken up her 2nd retirement!

Partnerships

ItM works with numerous partners and teams, both internally and externally including all our GP practices that we direct clients to on a daily basis. We work with key leads in health and social, specialist health visitors and midwives being notable examples. We have important links with mental health providers and various organisations in the voluntary sector and local authorities.

Another key partnership that we built is with universities through the Social Work student placement programme.

Next Year

- We aim to strengthen our partnership work especially with universities and extend our training to new audiences.
- We hope to be able to carry on with our volunteer driving scheme which had a big impact on those assisted through the scheme
- We want to carry on meeting all our project targets in terms of appointments and access rate to primary care.
- We would like to further our calls to improve mental health referral pathways for our clients and to that effect discussions have already started.

We would like to thank...

All our partners and colleagues for their support and cooperation for the past 12 months, especially volunteers who call us every day to tell us when a client has arrived for their appointment. Equal thanks go to the interpreting project which had a positive impact on the work of the ItM.

On behalf of the ItM team and NNRF, I personally would like to thank Dr Jill Rapoport who has been volunteering with us since 2011 and just left us (to enjoy her retirement a bit more!). Her contribution to the project has been immense in regards to both client care and external training. We would like to note our thanks and appreciation, and wish her all the best for the future.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff in my teams for their hard work and support along with our social work students, past and present, for embracing NNRF and making a difference.

Kinsi Clarke – Services Manager: Health (ItM); UASC; Children & Families

LEGAL

The Legal Project provides immigration legal advice and representation to refugees, asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers. All our staff are accredited by OISC (Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner). We focus on applications that no longer attract legal aid and where there is therefore a gap in provision. This includes applications for British citizenship, refugee family re-union and applications based on family or private life established in the UK.



“Mr Barrie Ward's work on our further submissions provided necessary psychological oxygen. He turned our despair into hope. We achieved our leave because of his comprehensive study of the case and a course of action he helped us develop.”

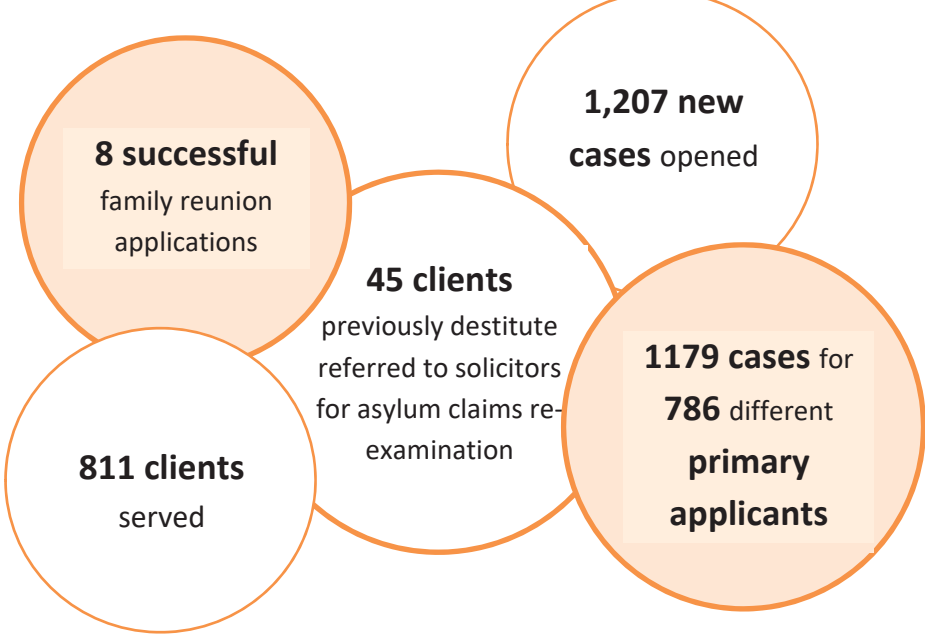
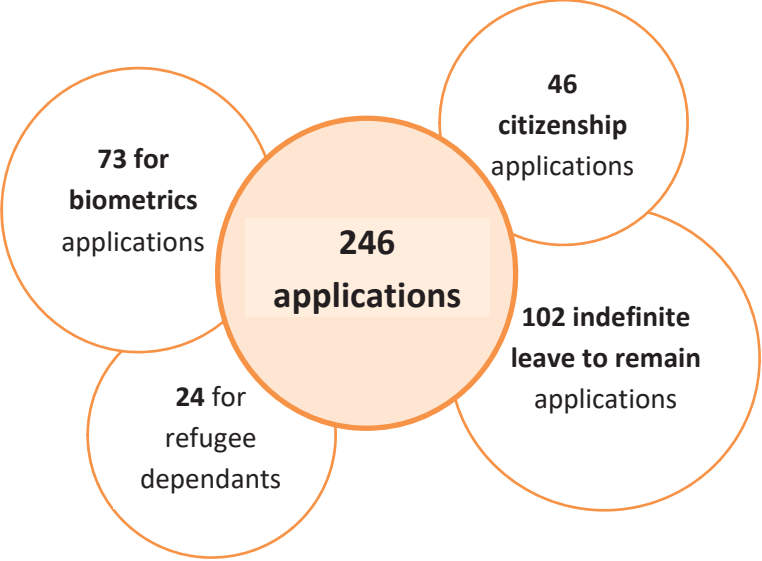
With a team of 5 staff and 12 volunteers, this year we have:

- Raised the skills and experience of our staff and volunteers through training and supervision. Two of our staff are now accredited at OISC Level 2 or above. This has increased the Project's capacity to take on more complex work.
- Started to give advice and assist clients with applications for the Home Office's Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) scheme. We are now working with Refugee Action's Good Practice and Partnerships Team to ensure holistic advice in this area.
- Delivered internal training to the staff and volunteers who run our organisation's daily General Advice drop-in service to help identify appropriate referrals. We have also improved our referral system by allowing many of our project's appointments to be booked directly by General Advice.

“In this difficult time, your organisation is enormously contributing to welfare of those who are in difficulties, and giving them hope and help.”

In February 2017 we set up a Family Reunion Project in partnership with both Nottingham Universities. We recruited 7 law students to whom we have provided in-house training as well as OISC training provided by Refugee Action. This enables us to assist more refugees in applying for family members to join them in the UK.

Through specialist training we have had successful results in higher level appeal work. Following the training in identifying errors of law, we have applied for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal on two occasions – one application has been granted and the other is pending.



“Now I have status I can go back to my work and use my experience I had before in my own country”



CASE STUDY

The newly formed Family Reunion Project has so far successfully assisted 3 refugees to be re-united with their family members in the UK. The process requires applicants to produce onerous evidence of the relationship with their sponsor as well as evidence of ongoing contact.

Law student volunteers from Nottingham and Nottingham Trent universities conduct initial appointments with clients, explaining the process and what documents clients need to gather. This helps us assist more people!

We represented Mr C, who had been separated from his son for several years due to a lengthy asylum appeal process. The first entry clearance application was refused because the birth certificate had not been issued at the time of birth. We assisted the client to obtain a DNA test and renew his application which was successful. In another case, the Entry Clearance Officer did not accept that the marriage between the applicant and her husband was genuine. We obtained an expert report to verify the marriage certificate and won the case in the First-Tier Immigration Tribunal.

Partnerships

We have worked in partnership with Refugee Action's Frontline Immigration Project who deliver a free 5-day OISC Level 1 webinar (online) training. One of our administrators and a volunteer have passed the Level 1 exam. This will increase our capacity to meet the demand for applications such as citizenship and allow more experienced workers to undertake less straightforward applications.

The Legal Project manager met with local solicitors in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester to improve referrals to and from immigration law firms. As a result of this French and Company have established a weekly legal surgery at the Forum.

Following the establishment of our family reunion project we have worked in partnership with the Red Cross in Nottingham, Derby and Leicester who refer clients directly to us. We have received 14 referrals in this way.

Next Year

We plan to create new opportunities for volunteers and increase capacity further through a fresh claim clinic; law student volunteers, supervised by accredited lead volunteers and staff, will assist refused asylum seekers to obtain new evidence and find renewed legal representation.

We are currently investigating various funding options for our project. We are conducting a feasibility study of our project becoming a Community Interest Company in which we charge for certain services and use the profits to fund other categories of immigration advice (for example, advice to refused asylum seekers). We have surveyed other commercial providers in the sector, finding that they charge high fees for straightforward applications. We believe we could offer a better service at a reduced cost.

We would like to thank...

Legal Advice Centre at Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham University Law Department.

Lisa Bradley – Legal Project Manager (Maternity Cover)

MONEY SORTED in D2N2

Money sorted in D2N2- a financial inclusion project helping people with money management and improving people's financial well-being. It is delivered by several partner organisations funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF) across the D2N2 area (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire).

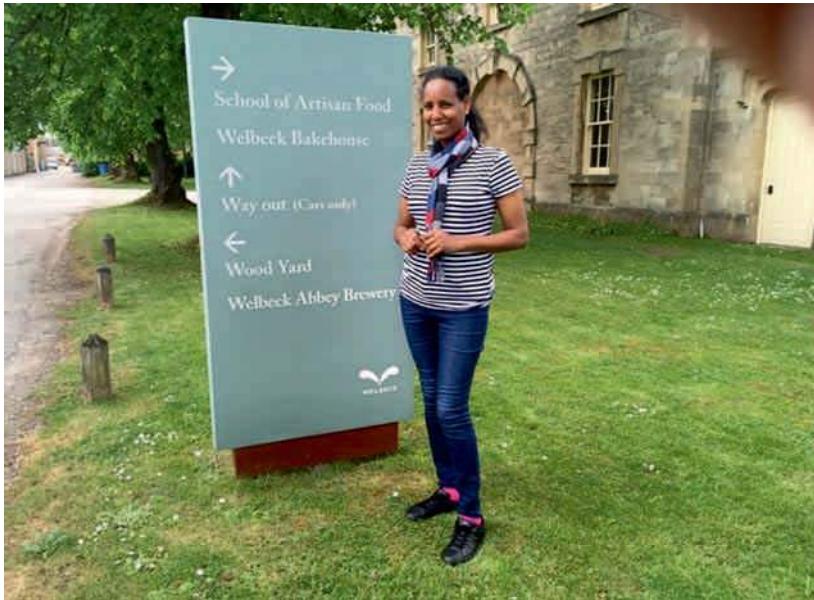
The project consists of one caseworker. It aims to support people to improve their financial literacy skills and for a proportion of these people to find employment. This project started in January 2017.

Networking between departments in order to establish referral routes. For example: Meeting with Legal Project team led to establishing a clear correlation between clients with family reunion cases paying for legal costs (translations, certificates, DNA tests etc) and debt issues (rent arrears, council tax arrears etc.), as well as future planning for family arrival.

Referral form: A new referral form was incorporated into the General Advice referral system ensuring that clients were quickly identified as well as any potential and ongoing financial crisis they might be dealing with.

Financial Inclusion: Having a financial inclusion officer at NNRF has lent credibility to already existing welfare rights and debt advice services. The financial inclusion service at NNRF has a wider scope and due to the reputation of already established services, it has been successful in increasing capacity and success in communication with creditors in debt cases, for better financial outcomes for the client.





CASE STUDY

Ghidey arrived in the UK via family reunion, tragically her husband passed away shortly after. This led to a very difficult situation in many areas (immigration, debt, probate, etc) in which, in a new country, she found it difficult to manage. With the initial help of several NNRF teams she was able to resolve some of the issues. When she was referred to Money Sorted in D2N2 she was able to get specialist financial inclusion support and increase her employability options.

Working with Ghidey we were able to get her debts into repayment plans, secure her tenancy and nominate her for the School of Artisan Food Scholarship to do a Diploma in Artisan Baking.

She was accepted and will start in September 2017 and finish in September 2018. The School of Artisan Food have been very supportive also offered Ghidey work 4 days a week and free ESOL lessons to improve her English. Ghidey now has stability and is looking forward to the future.

Partnerships

Money sorted in D2N2 is headed by St Ann's Advice centre and consists of partners across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. We have a good working relationship with National Zakat Foundation who have supported NNRF clients, and School of Artisan Food Scholarship.

Initially the project rules had been interpreted to say that it could only work with refugees with Indefinite Leave to Remain which significantly limited referrals and the need for the service, but this has now been changed. However, it is a challenging project with regards to the bureaucracy and systems that have been imposed by the European Union.

Next Year

Creation of a volunteer grants team: There have been some individual successes of grants applied for individuals through Money Sorted in D2N2. The idea is to extend the numbers of clients supported at NNRF through the development of a volunteer grants team who will apply for grants for individuals. By creating a grants team, the work can be overseen for quality and planned to ensure that NNRF do not fatigue one specific funder.

Delivery of money management workshops: to complement the employability team we have piloted workshops on Employability and Benefits. 2 sessions of 2 hours long attended by 20 people in total with Arabic interpreter. Sessions were well received. There is scope for future sessions on Money Management with regards to Housing.

We would like to thank...

- St Anns Advice Centre for their support in setting up this project.
- Zanele for overcoming the financial challenges.
- Organisations who have supported Ghidey - The Fifty Fund for their grant, The School of Artisan Food, and Welbeck Bakehouse
- National Zakat Foundation for assisting up to 10 of 25 of Money Sorted in D2N2 clients with individual grants.

Josh Aspden – Personal Navigator, Financial Inclusion

ONE STOP SHOP

The One Stop Shop (OSS) project really is an apt title for what we do; the OSS project deals with a multitude of different issues. The most common support need for OSS clients is housing, with homelessness being the most frequent reason for a referral. Other common housing issues are overcrowding, property disrepair, and Homelink applications, with other reasons for referrals being issues regarding domestic abuse, referrals into Social Care, accessing education and mental health. We are glad to be able to work very closely with General Advice, and this is how we receive most of the referrals into our project. We do however also take referrals from external agencies, and have been able to have many successful meetings with agencies this year in order to establish a good working relationship with them, and outline the services that we offer to our clients.

New Refugees: The OSS team has now taken over the contract for the resettlement of new refugees in Nottingham. The transition period from asylum seeker to refugee can be difficult and the OSS team is there to support refugees granted their status in Nottingham. Each client/family is given a dedicated caseworker who works with them to enable them to access housing, tenancy support and benefits. We work very closely with the Welfare Benefits Adviser, the New Refugee Clinic, and General Advice.

Destitute Families: The OSS also provides casework support to destitute families who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). This includes families who at the time they made their claim for asylum claim did not require support but have since found themselves destitute due to a change in their circumstances. Asylum Support claims are dealt with by Migrant Help and NNRF is fortunate to have one of its three outreach workers offering face to face appointments each week.



Assisted **510**
clients with **835**
individual
cases

We are **consistently seeing a large number of clients** and **working to a high standard**. We are able to ensure that new refugees are on the right path to a new life in the UK, as well as advising on many other issues including housing, finances and asylum support issues.

With **4 advisers** and **1 volunteer**:

As a project we have been able to work on and **develop our working processes** in order to ensure the best outcomes for clients. By changing the way we receive referrals for New Refugee Resettlement we are able to effectively **ensure that no one falls through the cracks**, and that all our clients on this programme are allocated with a caseworker.

We have developed a good working relationship with Nottingham YMCA, where we are able to mutually help one another to ensure effective assistance to our clients.

Many of our clients go on to maintain independent tenancies and are resettled in the Nottingham area.

A problem often faced by our clients is the issue of obtaining a bank account. After discussion with banks on the issue, the OSS has been able to issue clients with letters of introduction in order to open a bank account, which have largely been successful.

Earlier in the year the Advice Team was joined by an **administrator** and further restructure has seen the **creation of Team Leader** positions including one for the OSS team. These positions have greatly **improved the efficiency of the OSS Advice Project** and allows advisers more time to focus on the needs of the client. Well done to everyone in the team for their continued hard work in the face of increasing demands for support, tighter deadlines, higher thresholds for accessing external services and a rise in expectations from both clients and other organisations.

CASE STUDY

After claiming asylum in November 2014 Hussein and his family have had a long wait, finally all being granted status in July of 2017. Hussein received his status a bit earlier than his family and threw himself into volunteering here at the Forum with the One Stop Shop Project. When the opportunity of a job within the Employability Team occurred, Hussein applied and due to his diligent preparation, research and excellent interview skills, he was offered a paid position here at the Forum within the Employability Team.

Shortly after Hussein was offered a position here at the Forum, the rest of his family were granted leave to remain and thanks to intervention by the OSS team, the City Council have recognised a housing duty to all of them including the young adult children. This is a brilliant outcome for Hussein and his family, as it means they will be able to continue to live together in the future. Furthermore, gaining employment so quickly after being granted refugee status means that Hussein will gain many vital skills, and his resettlement and integration will be smoother for him and his family.

We face many challenges due to the shortage of available housing in Nottingham. Many of our clients have to wait a very long time in temporary accommodation whilst waiting for council/social housing. For our single clients it is becoming increasingly difficult to find private landlords who will rent to refugees, or who will accept housing benefit, with more and more landlords not accepting DSS. Unfortunately, the lack of housing means many of our clients are living in poor/unsettled conditions.

We are seeing increasing issues regarding clients not receiving their Biometric Residence Permits, which causes many problems regarding housing and benefits. Without these BRP cards, clients cannot apply for housing or benefits, which can lead to clients, becoming destitute. We are actively trying to combat this destitution by requesting support extensions from the Home Office, however this is often decided at the very last minute, leading to periods of great anxiety and uncertainty for our clients.

Next Year

We are hoping to create a series of workshops for new refugees, in order to help them to understand the systems they will have to navigate now that they have been granted leave to remain. We hope that by helping them to understand their rights and responsibilities, we are able to prevent many of the problems that come to us, and to empower our clients to lead independent lives after their resettlement.

In a similar vein, we would also like to develop workshops for newly dispersed asylum seekers, to give them as much information as possible when they first arrive in Nottingham, to enable them to understand the asylum process from beginning to end.

We hope that we will be able to deliver our resettlement programme to new refugees, and successfully move clients on into permanent accommodation, and independent lives.

We also hope to continue to provide support to clients who are struggling with housing, and help them to achieve their desired outcomes.

We hope to provide the support to enable asylum seekers to live as good a life as possible under the circumstances, and we hope to continue to treat everyone with respect and dignity.

Lastly, we hope that we will be able to continue to support the large numbers of clients we see to the best of our ability, and to ensure they are receiving all of the support they are entitled to.

I would like to show my appreciation to...

<p>Nottingham YMCA</p> <p>TunTum Housing Association – especially the Karibu and Imaani hostels</p> <p>Nottingham City Council</p> <p>Housing Aid</p> <p>Nottingham City Council Emergency Hardship Team – for helping our clients financially in the interim of their resettlement</p> <p>Women’s Aid and Integrated Services</p> <p>The National Zakat Foundation – for its generous donations to our clients</p> <p>Nikhil from Migrant Help</p>	<p>Bhatia Best – for intervening where client’s rights to support have been denied</p> <p>Stone and Long Lettings</p> <p>Nottingham Law Centre</p> <p>Framework</p> <p>The Arches</p> <p>All the staff and volunteers who work within the Advice Team, for creating an excellent work environment and for all their hard work this year and in the future.</p> <p>All of the members of staff and volunteers here at the Forum for all that you do.</p>
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A thank you to Marcia Henry for her work within the OSS, as she moves on to a new role as Resettlement Caseworker here at the Forum.

A special thank you to Advice Team member Karolina Pearl who will be leaving us in October. Thank you for all the dedication you have shown to the Forum, we wish you the best of luck.

Hannah Boyce – Advice Services Team Leader

OPPORTUNITY & CHANGE

Opportunity and Change is a support programme for people with multiple and complex needs. It is delivered by several partner organisations funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF) across the D2N2 area (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire). The project consists of one caseworker, one administrator and some ESOL provision. It aims to support people to overcome their complex needs and for a proportion of these people to find employment.

The project started in January 2017 and met its targets for clients starting on the programme, despite a delay, by the end of the first quarter. Opportunity and Change partnership is headed by Framework Housing Association and consists of partners across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

Originally the project rules had been interpreted to state that it could only work with refugees with Indefinite Leave to Remain which significantly limited referrals and the need for the service but the project is now a bit more open for other people to access. Due to the systems and bureaucracy imposed by European Union, we have found the project to be challenging. However, we have already reduced the in-house interpreting costs for the project.

Next year, we aim to make more efficient use of the ESOL provision and have the caseload at full capacity.

I would like to thank Framework who have been very clear in the support that they can offer, and Zanele for sorting out the financial returns.



Jill Jefferies – Deputy Director

VOLUNTEERING

NNRF is proud to offer exciting, challenging and rewarding volunteering opportunities to individuals and small groups from Nottingham and beyond. In fact, the Forum would not be able to function without an army of dedicated volunteers who support and deliver our services across over a dozen projects in a variety of volunteering roles.

Our volunteers receive an induction, role-specific training as well as training that cuts across roles and equips them with valuable transferable skills. We entrust our volunteers with the lives of our service users, and most of them relish the high level of responsibility and observe the direct impact of the services they provide on the clients' lives.



Fully trained volunteer interpreters: with help from Alice Johnson of Cairo Community Interpreter Project, NNRF tapped into our most valued resource: our rich, diverse and talented pool of volunteers, and over the course of this one year became equipped with over **40 professional community interpreters** covering over a dozen languages of the refugee communities.

'VolunTea': Volunteers popping in for a cuppa and a sweet meet & greet.

New Year Volunteer Party: Welcoming 2017 with a get together of existing and new volunteers.

NNRF choir: A short-term but very successful project bringing together staff and volunteers with a passion for singing, culminating in a highly entertaining performance at the launch of Refugee Week 2017.

In my role as the volunteer coordinator, I promote volunteering in the local community, at the local universities, as well as amongst our service users. I work every day to provide a positive, rewarding experience for all volunteers, make them feel engaged, supported and an active part of the organisation. My operational framework is outlined in the 3-year Volunteer strategy. After the first year, we have already boosted our training provision which received an enthusiastic response from volunteers and staff alike. The most fun part of my work is organising social events for volunteers, where they can network and get to know each other. I am especially proud of the VOcars - the annual volunteer awards, which involves volunteers, staff, trustees, partner organisations and VIP guests celebrating together the achievements of our amazing volunteers.

“My name is Yasmin. I have been doing Reception on the busiest day for over a year now, and I love it! I love helping refugees with all their needs – connecting them to all departments of NNRF but mainly with General Advice. During the last year I have done all of the training available and found it thoroughly professional and brilliant in content. For the last two months I have been shadowing Advice, and helping the refugees in a more specific way. I have a good understanding of most of the issues involved having been destitute myself two years ago, but I am fully recovered now thanks to a very few good friends and my volunteering at NNRF.” - Yasmin

Partnerships

- University of Nottingham School of Politics & International Relations. NNRF offered placements for 3 students.
- Nottingham Trent University (Departments of International Relations, International Development, Education, Law School and others) supplying us with excellent volunteers
- NCVS - leading the Volunteer Coordinators Network - invaluable support and great networking opportunity for volunteer coordinators across Nottingham
- British Red Cross - delivering monthly training sessions to NNRF staff and volunteers
- Nottinghamshire County FITC - volunteer-supported football sessions for refugees and asylum seekers
- Mojatu, NCVS, NAT, Emmanuel House, Rainbow Project, Kairos, NCC - attending training delivered by NNRF as part of COI partnership

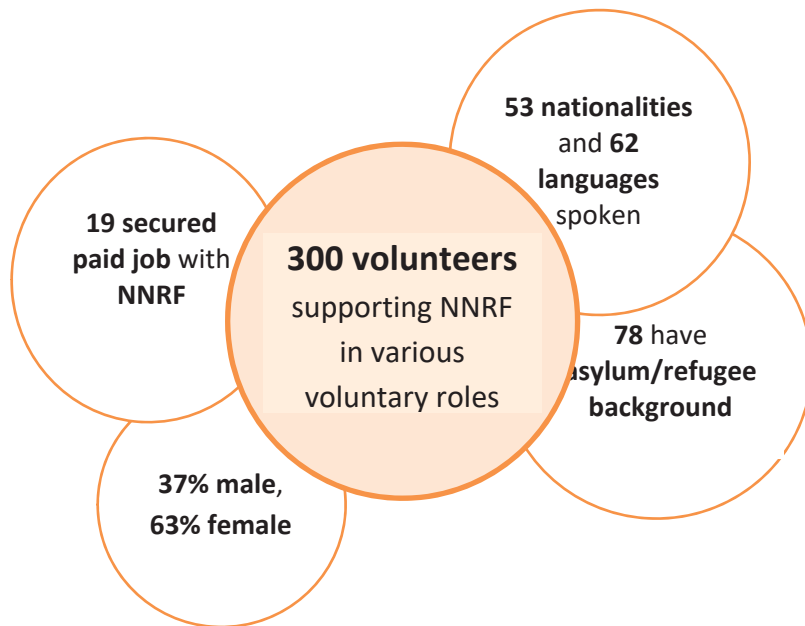
9 learners
completed a 20-
hour **summer**
course of Arabic
language

100 guests
attended **Let's**
Eid Together
festive dinner

66 training
sessions
attended by
545 people

36
inductions
delivered for
new volunteers





CASE STUDY 1

This volunteer has been through the asylum process and is now settled, giving him the time and energy to give back to the community. He started training as an adviser, but recognising his linguistic abilities (he speaks fluent English as well as two key community languages) he has been able to assist staff as an interpreter. He is keen to undergo further training as a community interpreter, that will be organised by NNRF in August.

"...I have always been interested in asylum seekers and refugees, especially as they have had a difficult plight from where they came to their seeking sanctuary and welcome in another country. I have a great admiration for the Refugee Forum, its staff, volunteers, trustees, and its foresight in developing new projects..." - Jean

CASE STUDY 2

This volunteer used to be supported by NNRF for a few years when she was going through the UK Asylum process. Now settled, she was determined to give back to the organisation, so she signed up for and completed the Community Interpreting training, which opened up opportunities for her. She is currently studying business management at university, and we are arranging for her to volunteer in administration to gain necessary experience for future employability. She complained other organisations/companies did not understand her life situation, and she was subsequently denied opportunities for work or volunteering. She believes only NNRF are able to understand her past experiences and give her a chance to develop her skills through volunteering.

VOL 3 used to volunteer with one of the projects between January and July 2015. She then went abroad for several months, then returned to Lincoln, UK to pursue a PhD in social work. Based on her past experience of volunteering with NNRF, and her (personal and academic) interest in refugees & asylum seekers, she decided to resume her volunteering at NNRF in a slightly different capacity. She travels from Lincoln at least once a week to give up her time to provide advice and support to our clients. Apparently it's worth it!

Some of the challenges we've faced include relatively low placement of individuals from refugee & asylum backgrounds in volunteering roles at NNRF. We will be looking at ways to develop new volunteer-led projects that utilise the diverse skillset current and prospective volunteers possess, including those with limited English (which is usually the main barrier to volunteering for our service users).

We also experience delays in responding to prospective volunteers resulted in some of them finding greener pastures - we will be looking at getting some volunteer help as well as finding ways to eliminate unnecessary steps from the pre-recruitment procedure – offering better customer service for prospective volunteers.

Next Year

Further work will be done on the volunteer development programme, with stimulating progression within volunteer roles as well as encouraging experiences across roles.

I will be working on delivering new exciting, engaging and useful training sessions for volunteers, as well as organise relevant sessions via partner organisations and signpost volunteers to free training available online.

Our ultimate goal for 2017/18 is achieving a quality mark in volunteering, and with it the highest possible standards of working with volunteers in the charity sector.

I would like to thank...

Each and every volunteer, current, past and future, for choosing to support NNRF with their time, energy, knowledge and passion. I am immensely proud of our volunteers' achievements and contributions: their unlimited patience and empathy, their enthusiasm to mentor newer generations of volunteers, their dedication and determination to welcome grumpy clients on a rainy Monday morning with a smile, their endless hours of solving problems, feeding empty bellies, providing information, entertaining screaming children, communicating complex messages across language and cultural barriers - all that out of genuine care for other people, whole-big-heartedly, and without asking for anything in return.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Admin office, who are always ready to offer practical and moral support, and my volunteer assistant Dave (The Slave) whose help with volunteer inquiries, forms and expenses is invaluable and deeply appreciated!

Thank you!

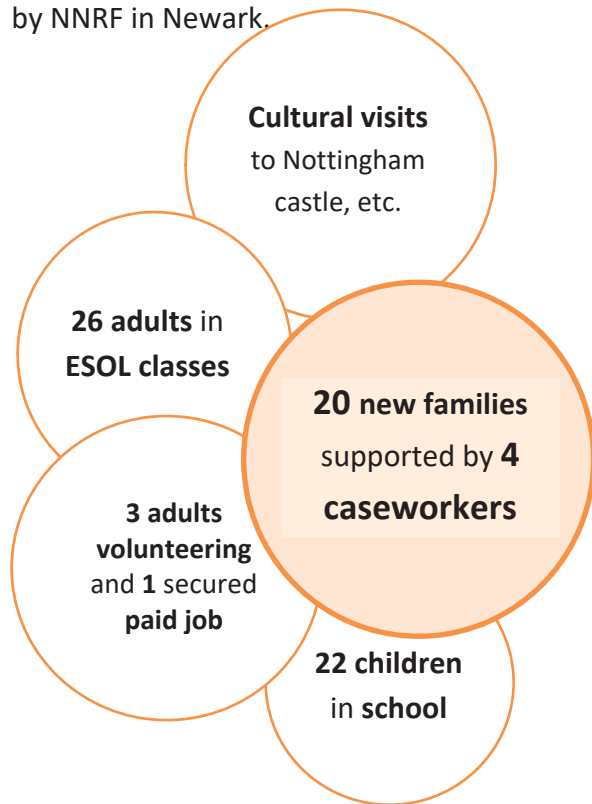
Barbara Spreiz – Volunteer Coordinator

VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

The team was set up in December 2015 to support families brought to the UK to be accommodated in this area under the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (SVPRP). This has now changed and will now be known as VPRP as families from other countries are now registered for the programme.

The scheme is funded through the UK Home Office and administered locally by Nottingham City Council. It is a partnership scheme and each partner has a different role within the scheme.

Since 30th June 2016 we received 3 families in September, 6 families in November and 5 families in March. 4 of these families were supported by NNRF in Newark.



To support our new arrivals in integrating effectively into the community, we:

- Provide in-house ESOL classes by qualified tutor Martin Biddle for our Nottingham & Newark clients.
- Ensure all clients are registered with the GP within the first 2 weeks of arriving.
- Apply for all the benefits they require in the first week of arriving, and an appointment with Job Centre is booked to help them secure a job.
- Arrange a bank account appointment in the first week of arrival.

"I think of home and what I have lost"

"My dream is for my children to succeed"

"Sometimes I cry at night because my son is not with me"

"I like working and it helps my English language"

"British people are friendly"

"The weather is hard to get used to"



CASE STUDY

Mr Chahin and his family came to England from Syria in December 2015

I lived in Dahar El Aaoua, Syria, where I owned my own house and ran my own locksmith's business. I owned two shops. My house and shops were both bombed, and I lost everything, everything I had worked 18 years for.

I took my family to Jordan because I wanted my wife and children to have a future. I wanted my family to be safe. We stayed in a refugee camp in Jordan. My eldest son became very depressed; he didn't like life there. He met some other young people who were going to seek asylum in Europe and went with them to Germany. Shortly after he left, the UN said they had the papers ready for us to come to the UK. My wife is very sad that he is not with us, sometimes she cries at night.

I am now at college studying English. I like to study. I am the kind of person who wants to work and want to be independent. Learning the language also helps me to understand the culture. British people keep themselves to themselves, in a way that is good for me. I like it.

It is difficult in the beginning, you are in a new country and you don't know the language or the people, it is like being blind. But I am here and I am making a big effort to learn the language and the culture.

For example, I learned that here everything is by appointment and you have to respect your appointments. It makes the time go by so quickly! What I like in this country is that people are disciplined. I always dreamed of somewhere with discipline and order. I am like British people I like everything organised and straight.

It is hard to get used to the weather though! My other children two boys and two girls are very happy here. I don't think they will go back to Syria. I am from a very big family; I have seven sisters and six brothers. Two of my sisters are in Syria, but the rest are all in Jordan or Germany. I have not seen any of them for six years.

I am very happy to have come here. I miss having a car and driving. Sometimes I think of my life back home; my house, my street, my friends and I get very sad. I am happy to be in England. I want to study and to work. I am a curious person, and I want to learn lots of things. My dream is for my children to succeed and to have a future.

Partnerships		
• Nottingham City Council	• Lloyds Bank	• Derwent Living
• Gedling Council	• BEGIN	• Tuntum Housing Association
• Broxtowe Council	• Nottingham Fire Prevention Service	• D Walker
• Rushcliffe Council	• Waterloo Housing	• St Peters Church, Ruddington
• Newark Council	• Metropolitan Housing Association	• All our private landlords
• Brein Fisher, East Midlands Council	• Nottingham Community Housing Association	• Longhurst & Havelock Homes
• Job Centre Plus	• Guinness Housing	• De Montfort Housing Society

Some of our clients have experienced frustration with finding work and reaching a reasonable standard of English to engage in day-to-day activities. As a team, we have also had challenges with some clients not being respectful to staff and sometimes there is limited engagement from the clients with the service we offer. As the new family intakes are now smaller, the number of team members has decreased and is now made up of the Team Leader and 3 support workers; Hannah, Sonia, and Adel who himself is a Syrian refugee. I take this opportunity to thank them all for the hard work done to support their families, often working late or on occasions very early in the morning meeting families on their arrival at the airport.

Next Year

The VPRP project adds a new focus with the launch of the Employability Programme. Ultimately the aim is to work with clients to gain: appropriate volunteering roles, access to education and training, sustainable employment opportunities.

The programme will bridge the gap between refugees' experiences of employment in their home countries and the expectations of UK employers. It will offer an ongoing programme 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.

Case Workers will develop partnerships with external organisations creating suitable opportunities. Martin Biddle (the ESOL tutor) will be introducing new techniques which will help with ongoing ESOL and prepare students for the IELTS exam.

Sadly, Hannah will be leaving us for her new post – we wish her luck. Marcia who has years of experience will be joining our team. We will be welcoming Anna Scrivener to our team who will be our Employability Team Leader.

I would like to show my appreciation to...

Nottingham City Council team: Amy, Noel and Mandy

Newark Council team: Lianne and Maria for all the help they have given to Adel

Rolleston Group, Newark Furniture Project, Arches, Trent Vineyard, Karimia Institute

Newark Council: Lianne and Maria for all the help they have given to Adel, Rolleston Group, Newark Furniture Project, Arches, Trent Vineyard, Karimia Institute

Brein Fisher East Midlands strategic migration partnership

Ian & Ayaan from Job Centre Plus

Martin Biddle for his amazing ESOL skills - our families think you are great

All of the Partnerships listed above

John Robinson (Gedling Council)

Rod Jones and circle of friends

Janet Kirkpatrick & Janet Broxtowe

Gordon Memorial

Bike Works

All the schools our children attend

Richard Meek (Nottingham Forest Football)

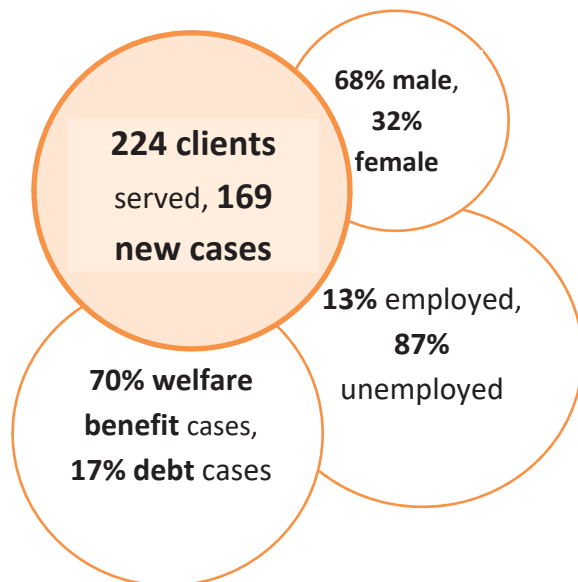
Salim from D&G Taxi company for all their support

Julie Whitehead – Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Team Leader

WELFARE BENEFITS & DEBT

The Welfare Benefits and Debt Advice service focuses on the following:

- Assessing client's eligibility for accessing benefits
- Assisting refugee clients who have been granted leave to remain to apply for mainstream benefits
- Helping clients to backdate their benefit from earlier periods, for example from the dates clients first claimed asylum. There are restrictions and limits as to who can and when to apply for backdates.
- Dealing with appeal benefit refusals, decisions and sanctions
- Helping clients with benefit overpayments and arranging payment plans after obtaining financial assessments
- Help clients with debt issues, contacting creditors and utilities service providers to negotiate deals to clear the debt



Partnerships

Due to this project operating independently, there have not been a lot of partnerships developed. However, I have referred many clients to the Law Centre and they have been great in taking on clients we refer to them.

This project has experienced challenges, some of which include high demand, clients' lack of understanding of the new benefit systems and lack of English language skills. Next year, I plan to develop an effective coordination with the volunteer advisers within the newly created New Refugee Clinic.



CASE STUDY

Backdating Child Benefit from the date of asylum claim

Mrs JK and her family applied for asylum on 1 July 2015. While claiming asylum they were not able to access mainstream benefits including Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit (CHTC) for their 7-year-old child. Their claim for asylum was granted following an immigration appeal on 3 February 2017. Their immigration status documents arrived in March 2017 and they received their National Insurance number in April 2017. The family were referred to me and I assisted them to apply for mainstream benefits.

I applied for child benefit on 12 May 2017 and requested to backdate the claim from the date the family applied for asylum on 1 July 2015. The Child Benefit (CHB) application was rejected on 20 June 2017 as they stated that “the client did not provide proofs of ID”. I requested mandatory reconsideration and gave explanation that the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) cards that were provided are proof of ID and clearly state the applicants’ personal details and their immigration status (Refugee Leave to Remain).

The CHB application was accepted on 21 August 2017 and it was only backdated from 22 February 2017 for three months from original date of the claim. They stated that as the client did not apply within three months from the date they received their Refugee status, the Child Benefit cannot be backdated from the day of the asylum claim. I appealed the decision and gave detailed reasons why the client could not claim within the deadline. The CHB department then sent a letter to me on 18 September 2017 confirming that they have changed their decision and allowed the appeal to backdate the CHB claim from 1 July 2015. They paid £1,780.20 to cover 1 July 2015 – 22 February 2017.

I would like to thank...

All the volunteers especially those in the New Refugee Clinic who are passionate to learn and deliver good benefit advice.

YOUTH

The Youth Project works with young asylum seekers and refugees from ages 13-18 years old, going up to age 21 if the young person is also a care leaver. The various groups of young people we work with come under the following categories:

- Asylum seeking YP (dependents of families seeking asylum)
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs - City and County and other Local Authorities)
- Family Reunion
- Refugees
- Dublin 3 minors- reunited with family members
- 18 year olds under NASS Support (includes age dispute cases)



“Refugee Forum has been with me from the beginning of my life in the UK. They helped me a lot and they have always been next to me facing all the difficulties as a young person who does not have his family here. All the people from the Youth Project have become a member of my new family that I’m glad to have, especially Naomi and Liz”
- S, age 17, from Syria.

We carry out a variety of Interventions with young people which includes:

- Holistic Initial assessment of support needs
- Assistance with accessing college/school
- Advocacy
- Age assessment/dispute case work
- Signposting to other relevant services
- Liaising with other agencies/services
- Support to access solicitors/accompany to meetings/appointments

We also run a wide range of activities throughout the year which includes:

- Orientation group (6-week programme of information and activities for new arrivals)
- Involvement in ongoing bespoke young people’s activities (e.g. youth group, arts workshops, Trent university outreach programme)
- Bike programme
- ESOL class
- Trips during holidays

Overall, there has been good engagement from young people this year and one of the biggest factors in this is the consistency of workers who support young people. The young people have responded well to this and build strong rapport and trusting relationships with the project workers and volunteers. We are also part of the East Midlands councils UASC task group, which meets quarterly.

We have delivered the following training this year:

- Children's Social Care duty team - Dublin reunification children
- Calais kids' info sessions - for the young people and their relatives
- Children's Services duty and assessment team
- Children's Services residential staff
- City Council IDEAL educational conference
- Briefings to CAMHS and children's homes

We have delivered 4 separate orientation groups over the last 12 months. Each group has lasted for 6 weeks and has been delivered for 3 hours a week. The sessions have covered: Life in the UK, rules and customs, using public transport, understanding the law in the UK, healthy relationships, understanding the education system, and leisure activities.

Case work has been provided to 67 young people. Casework has been intense and ongoing and ranged from advising and supporting young people with immigration, age disputes, support, accommodation, education, and health.

Trips and activities such as running a sports day, bike rides and art workshop at Lakeside Arts. Visits to Wollaton Park, St Anns Community Orchard, Nottingham Playhouse, Matlock Bath Heights of Abraham and The Luminarium at Nott's University.

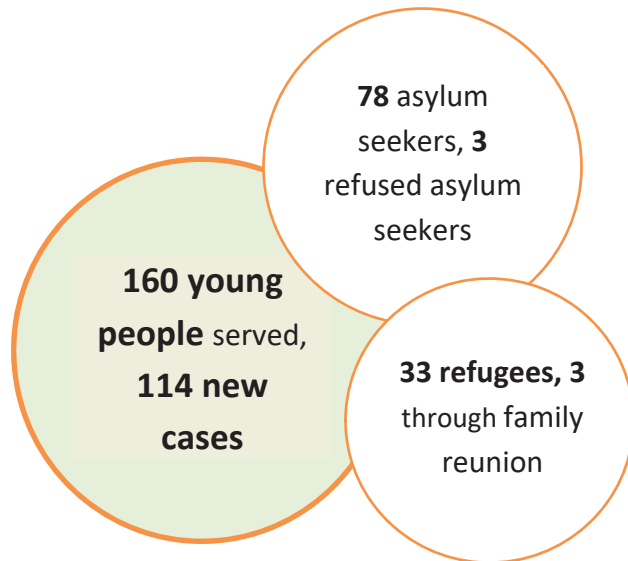
We have continued to deliver weekly sessions at NGY My-Place throughout the year, which are very well attended. Sessions include: cooking, drawing, painting, while allowing young people just to hang out, socialise with each other, and talk to project staff and volunteers.

English/academic/homework support:

- We carried out a 1-week summer school with Nottingham Trent University's (NTU) Academic English department last summer and 15 young people took part.
- We have developed and delivered monthly sessions with the outreach team at NTU, which have included a monthly English class and 3 visits to explore the 3 different campus sites of NTU.
- We started a weekly Youth ESOL class at NNRF run by volunteer ESOL teachers due to the increasing number of young people not being in education and the long wait to access college.
- We also worked with a local group called 'Faiths into Action' who applied for funding from 'Near Neighbours' and ran a 6-week ESOL class for young people at a local venue.

With **3 staff members** and **11 volunteers**, we've achieved our goals of:

- Increasing awareness (by unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people) of the asylum and care process, and their rights and entitlements within it.
- Young asylum seekers and refugees having an increased knowledge and awareness of life in the UK, in particular the local area and youth specific services
- Reducing social exclusion



"It's been wonderful being part of the youth group it really helped me get through bad times and helped me improve my English and I want to say thank you to the staff so much." - S, aged 15, female from Sri Lanka

"The support, advice and guidance offered by the Refugee Forum is pivotal to the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of the young people they support. Initially, the young people have the opportunity to receive immediate empathic support with someone who speaks their language. They are able to offer practical support with advice on shelter, provide emergency clothing and legal advocacy services. Refugee Forum works closely with NCC once it is identified the young person requires Children's Services. We have received advice and guidance on a number of issues, beyond our level of experience, which have enabled us to better support the young people within our service.

Refugee Forum offers the young people an environment where the young people can engage in activities with others who have similar life experiences to themselves. They have provided staff teams with training opportunities, which have developed our understanding of the legal aspects of the asylum system.

Without the support of the Refugee Forum, I am of no doubt that our young people would have struggled to begin their new journey of integration" (July 2016) - Sue Slavin, Manager - NCC – Children's Residential Services - Internal Semi Independent Provision

CASE STUDY

M arrived in the UK in October 2016, following the closure of the Calais jungle camp. M is 16 years old and from Sudan. M was processed by UKBA under the Dublin regulation as he had a brother in the UK and he was an unaccompanied minor in Calais. M had spent several months in Calais having made it there after a harrowing journey 8 months earlier from war-torn Sudan. The older brother had previously been a client of NNRF and brought M to the Refugee Forum a week after his arrival in the UK.

We invited them to attend an information session we put on for the young people and family members newly arrived from Calais, where they could find out about services available, and practical information on how to access a GP, find a solicitor, and apply for school/college. The NNRF youth worker assisted M to register at college, register with a doctor, and find a local solicitor to progress his asylum claim. We also contacted the Home Office several times to communicate with them in regards to giving an extension for the submission of the form that under-18 unaccompanied minors are given when they claim asylum.

M was living with his brother in a shared house in Nottingham City. Unfortunately, shortly after his arrival the landlord informed the brother that he was in breach of his tenancy agreement and unable to continue to have his brother living in the property and gave them notice to leave. M and his brother came to the Refugee Forum for advice about housing and we informed the duty social worker of the housing issues. While the local authority was completing their assessment, M became homeless as his brother decided he could no longer care for him as he didn't want to lose his own accommodation and as he was claiming benefits himself he could not afford to support his younger brother. M came to the Refugee Forum on a Friday afternoon. Due to the emergency nature of the situation, the youth worker contacted a local organisation called HOST who agreed to find an emergency placement for him in the community whilst the local authority was sourcing a more sustainable long term solution. M was taken by the youth worker to the HOST placement that night, where he then spent the next 10 days with a volunteer host who provided him with somewhere safe to sleep and 3 meals a day. He was also provided with a 20-day bus pass so he could get around and still visit his brother who lived in another part of the city.

M has now been taken into the care of the local authority and lives in a semi-independent house in the city. We enrolled M at college and he is now studying 7 hours a week while awaiting a full time place at college in September. The Refugee Forum youth team have continued to work closely with the local authority and the support workers, attending his LAC review meetings and CAMHS appointments.

M is currently completing the bike project and is very excited about learning to fix and maintain a bike which will then be his. M has also accessed various group activities including the weekly youth group, and the monthly Nottingham Trent University outreach sessions, where M showed a talent for art and design, and has talked about his desire to study engineering in the future once he has improved his English.

M was taken to his substantive asylum interview by a Youth Project volunteer, who had built up a good relationship with M since his arrival to the UK, and M requested she go with him on the day. M has now been granted 5 years' refugee status in the UK and is growing in confidence and maturity and looking forward to progressing his English language skills and focusing on his future.



Next Year

- We will continue to plan and run orientation sessions for newly arrived young people.
- The location of the youth group will move to a new venue from September 2017 for better accessibility and resources/space.
- We will continue to arrange trips and activities in line with opportunities that become available through partner agencies we work with, and based on consultation with the young people about what they are interested in.
- The main bulk of our work centre around 1-1 case work for young people with specific issues. These issues could be around immigration, age disputes, support, accommodation, education, and health.
- A new venture for year 3 of the project is our plan to develop and utilise the skills of our young people, many of whom we have now worked with for several years and inviting them to become youth ambassadors.
- We plan to deliver further training packages around the needs of young asylum seekers and refugees to a variety of organisations and groups.
- We will continue to work alongside key schools and colleges and the university to enable young people's access to a wide range of educational opportunities.

Comic Relief funding for the youth project is due to end in August 2018, so we are actively looking for alternative sources of funding to enable the youth project to continue.

Partnerships

We have continued to build and develop our partnerships in the city, working in particular with: Nottingham Trent University, Lakeside Arts, Bikeworks.



We would like to thank...

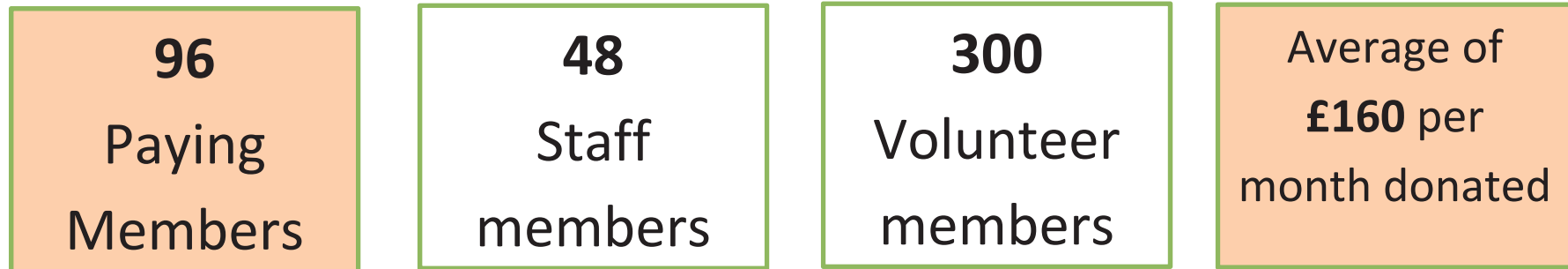
Nottingham Bikeworks, Ideal, Pat Fenton (volunteer), Jess Ternent (Volunteer), Lakeside Arts, NGY My-Space.

Naomi Jemmett, Liz Pritchett, Jessica Wallis - Youth Project Workers

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There has been little change in the membership figures from last year, although there has been a small increase. The two main areas of change are of those taking out a paying membership and in staff membership. However, we have experienced challenges with notifying and moving all of our members' donations into the new bank account will cause us to lose a few we were unable to reach.

We are though, as ever, immensely grateful to those that stick with us through thick and thin. Thank you for your support and solidarity.



* The above figures are not exclusive as some people fall into more than one category.

Dave Hewitt – Membership

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



NNRF offers more than professional casework support, legal assistance and English classes; it is a diverse, spirited community for so many who have been forced to leave theirs behind. From its volunteers right up to its Director there is a very evident culture of warmth and vivacity, which is so important in a field of work which demands a great deal of emotional resilience.

The British Red Cross could not hope for a more ideal partner in our mutual objective to support asylum seekers and refugees. Both of our organisations work collectively to ensure that we do not turn anyone in crisis away. NNRF refer several vulnerable migrants who are not asylum seekers and refugees to the British Red Cross, and in turn the Red Cross refers asylum seekers and refugees to NNRF. More recently NNRF has also began supporting the British Red Cross in referring victims of trafficking.

The only drawback I can put forward is that other counties do not have an NNRF. Counties need more county-specific local enterprises like this to meet the increasing demands in support for those newcomers who need that local helping hand to help them find their feet. - **Robert Lloyd, Service Manager (Refugee Support)**



Migrant Help Outreach

An outreach adviser from Migrant Help attends NNRF every Monday to see vulnerable service users who need advice and assistance in applying for asylum support. Most service users come through general advice but also from other NNRF departments such as the anti-destitution project. NNRF caseworkers and volunteers pre-book appointments in a diary kept in the general advice hall. Each Monday there are four appointments available for service users. Since the beginning of 2017 almost all available appointments have been fully booked. Outreach has seen a mix of service users including newly arrived asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers who have been destitute for some time, irregular migrants and victims of trafficking.

Outreach works closely with NNRF staff during the week to update on cases or take urgent referrals that can't wait for the next available appointment. NNRF staff also help with many other aspects of the support application such as collecting evidence, responding to further information requests from the Home Office Asylum support assessment teams and appealing to the Asylum Support Tribunal for service users whose applications have been rejected. Migrant help is very happy to provide advice at NNRF and appreciate all the help NNRF have provided. - **Nikhil Advani, Outreach Client Adviser**



A large number of Forum clients – aged from 3 to 74 - have taken part in cycle training delivered by Nottingham-based organisation RideWise over the last year.

Regular training sessions take place on Monday afternoons. The first hour is for those who are learning to ride for the first time or working on their basic cycling skills, while the second hour covers key skills for riding on quiet roads. Clients have been referred for training particularly by the Young People's project as well as through General Advice.

In collaboration with the Women's Culture Exchange group, additional family sessions were provided in October half-term and during the Easter holiday. Around 20 people attended in total, with several children learning to ride bikes for the first time!

Connections to the wider Nottingham community have been developed: we have been pleased to welcome a small number of members of the wider community to the sessions, which provides integration opportunities both for them and for asylum seekers and refugees. A small number of clients from the Rainbow Refugee Project based in Bobber's Mill have also attended, with one 74-year-old lady currently learning to ride.

Over the year a total of 69 asylum seekers, refugees and family members have received training. Of these 9 have learnt to ride for the first time, 32 have learnt off-road cycling skills (passing national 'Bikeability Level 1' standard), and 16 have learnt key skills for cycling on quiet roads (passing national 'Bikeability Level 2' standard).

Once clients have completed on-road training, efforts are made to help them with access to bikes as a very valuable, free form of transport around the city. Eleven clients have been able to borrow a bike from RideWise for a period of two or more months in the last year. Meanwhile, RideWise have very recently received a donation of bikes which can be given to clients to keep permanently. In collaboration with the Nottingham Gets 2 Work project – an EU-funded project which helps unemployed young people with transport to new work and training opportunities - two Forum clients received donated bikes in August 2017. - **Michael Howard, Instructor**



Host Nottingham was set up in 2011 to coordinate and support those wishing to host destitute asylum seekers in Nottingham. We provide a framework and support for hosts so that they have a structure within which to host. We are very grateful to NNRF, one of the original Steering Group for Host, for allowing us to have office space in the Sycamore Centre. Shingai, our Project coordinator, works in the office at least one day a week and our Clothes Bank is an integral part of the Advice sessions which take place throughout the week and for the Destitution Group on Saturdays.

Since we started we have been able to host more than a hundred guests and have had some amazing hosts. At present we have around 20 active hosts who offer a room in their home for a period of a few days to three months and sometimes more. The need for this accommodation is increasing all the time as those seeking asylum have increasing difficulties. One of the main issues is finding a solicitor as there are fewer of them and their case loads are ever increasing. Also the Home Office is also taking longer to assess applications and the whole process is increasingly protracted. However, we are both very grateful and deeply thankful to have hosts who offer a welcome, friendship, support and so much more to their guests. This year we have been able to host 24 guests. 9 are destitute asylum seekers, but we have also hosted 15 newly recognised refugees who have been granted Leave to Remain, but have had to wait many weeks for their National Insurance Number and biometric card, without which they are not able to apply for housing or benefits. We have also hosted three young men from Sudan who came through Calais to join their families, but whose relative is unable to accommodate them and for whom no other provision was initially made. One of our more recent activities this year is to have a Clothes Bank which has been purpose built for us. This enables our guests as well as any asylum seekers or refugees attending advice sessions at the Forum, to access clothing, shoes and some bedding. We are very grateful to our volunteers who staff this and provide a welcome for the clients.

We would welcome anyone who would be interested in considering being a host or volunteering with the clothes bank or supporting our guests in different ways. Please contact: hostshingai@gmail.com or phone 07963 740 175. - **Jane Henson**

PLANS FOR 2017-18

One of the projects we will be starting next year is the Employability Project. The aim of the project is to support refugees to find sustainable employment. Building partnerships with organisations that can deliver workshops around the employment system in the UK and how to find and get a job. Using the staff team to support refugees on a 1 to 1 basis to offer individualised support to overcome barriers to employment.

Refugees have been identified as one of the most unemployed and underemployed groups in the UK and at the Forum we see this in action every day. But we also know that employment is one of the best ways to empower people and help them to integrate, reducing mental health problems, preventing isolation, improving language and supporting skill development. Therefore, the forum's employability programme is seen as an important part of our provision.

We will be partnering with Nottingham City Council – Community Cohesion, Nottingham City Council- Employment and Skills, Futures, Nottingham Works Plus, and Awaaz.

We also look forward to relaunching our Children & Families services which is being funded by Children in Need. The Children and Families project is about lessening the burden of premature adulthood and allowing children to regain their childhoods. We aim to integrate families into Nottingham city allowing them to take advantage of the opportunities available. The project also aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

As I write this the annual accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 have been completed by CA Plus and are about to be signed off. We were not required to have the accounts audited this year as our income is below the Charity Commissioner's limit of £1,000,000.

The financial position, which I summarise below, shows an improvement on last year with increases in income, reserves and cash at bank. Funding streams cannot be relied on to continue indefinitely of course, and considerable effort has been and must continue to be taken to maintain the Forum's income. Thanks are therefore due to Fiona and the Funding Committee for their work in securing new grants from Lloyds Bank (£25,000 per annum for three years) and Tudor Trust (£40,000 per annum for three years). The Forum now receives a significant proportion of its income for the work it does supporting Syrian families, brought to the area under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme. Funding for those in their first year on the programme is unpredictable as it is granted on a per individual basis and is therefore dependent on the numbers of people who are resettled in the area. For those in their second year Fiona was able to negotiate a flat rate grant for this continuing work.

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31 March 2017

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2017 £	Total 2016 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	63,302	-	63,302	151,337
Charitable activities	3	3,660	907,769	911,429	767,069
Other trading activities	4	684	-	684	2,182
Investment income	5	131	-	131	219
Total Income		67,777	907,769	975,546	920,807

Income. This totalled £975,546, an increase of 6%, and included £856,283 of grant income. Individual donations were £41,739 for the year representing over 4% of our total income.

We would like to thank all donors for this important contribution to the Forum's ongoing work.

Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	6	(124,010)	(900,124)	(1,024,134)	(885,578)
Total Expenditure		(124,010)	(900,124)	(1,024,134)	(885,578)
Net (expenditure)/income		(56,233)	7,645	(48,588)	35,229
Transfers between funds		(4,720)	4,720	-	-
Other recognised gains and losses					
Net movement in funds		(60,953)	12,365	(48,588)	35,229
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		135,117	28,887	164,004	128,775
Total funds carried forward	18	74,164	41,252	115,416	164,004

**The full accounts can be viewed on the Charity Commission website*

Expenditure. We spent £1,024,134 in the year, which represents an increase of 16% on 2015. Wages rose considerably in line with an increase in average staff numbers from 28 to 35.

Reserves. As a result of the above our reserves decreased to £115,416 of which £74,164 was unrestricted funds. We were, however, also able to carry into the new financial year £120,904 of deferred income which is similar to a reserve.

Cash at Bank. Bank balances rose from £163,278 to £220,594

Thanks finally to Erica (who left towards the end of the year), Temi (who replaced her in February as the new Operations Manager) and Zanele for their work throughout the year. Together, and with the help of a loyal band of volunteers, they were able to manage the various demands of the admin and finance functions and provide us with the information needed to manage the finances of our growing organisation.

Clive Lamb – Treasurer



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VOLUNTEERING

NNRF relies heavily on our volunteers in all areas. You may have specialist skills you are willing to help us with, from legal qualifications through to teaching, gardening and cooking. You may speak one of the languages of our asylum seekers as well as English and be able to train as one of our interpreters. 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 working with one of our projects.

If this is something that interests you, please send an email to volunteer@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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Registered Charity No: 1121560. Company No: 05352679



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