



Nottingham & Nottinghamshire
REFUGEE FORUM

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Registered Charity Number: 1121560

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to write this short foreword to the Forum's Annual Report. Since becoming its patron last year I have become increasingly aware of and impressed by the sheer range and volume of work undertaken on behalf of and with asylum seekers and refugees.

Highlights this past year have included the return to a norm of face-to-face working post lockdown (while still maintaining phone support), seen in the building buzzing with people who might otherwise be very isolated, the vibrant café providing great food and companionship and the beautiful garden that offers some peace and tranquillity.

I was particularly pleased to read about the development of the Client Participation project which seeks to give those seeking asylum and refugees the opportunity to be heard, develop new and existing skills and contribute to the life and work of the Forum. Such initiatives underline the importance of treating asylum seekers and refugees with respect and of recognising the expertise they bring based on experience.

Important too this past year has been the Forum's success in fundraising – especially winning the tender to support people arriving through the UK Resettlement Scheme (one of the country's few safe and legal routes) and getting a Big Lottery Raising Horizons grant.

All this takes place in an increasingly hostile environment of abusive and demonising language used by some elements of the media and leading politicians. As I write, the Illegal Migration Bill is being challenged, clause by clause, in the House of Lords because, as the UN High Commission for Refugees has made clear, it represents the end of the right to claim asylum in the UK. Only those arriving by 'safe and legal routes' will be allowed to stay.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are lucky to have the Forum and I hope that you will be impressed as I have been when you read what it has achieved this past year.

**Ruth Lister- NNRF Patron
Baroness Lister of Burtersett CBE**



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

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

CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum's Annual Impact Report for April 2022 to March 2023. The report sets out the achievements of the exceptional staff and volunteers who continue to provide such a range of high-quality services and activities for more than 2,000 asylum seekers and refugees and their families.

The situation for asylum seekers wishing to come to the UK is even worse than when I wrote in the 2021/22 report. Less than a year since the Nationality and Borders Act came into force, the government has introduced the even more punitive and inhumane Illegal Migration Bill aimed at deterring people coming to the UK – particularly but not exclusively in small boats across the Channel. The government and the media are promoting a very negative image of asylum seekers and their impact on the country. This unwelcoming stance creates uncertainty and anxiety for our clients adding to the stress and tension they face. By contrast we are fortunate to be working closely with the City Council which continues to seek to provide a welcome for asylum seekers in the city.

One of the very exciting aspects of the work of NNRF in 2022/23 is how we are once again able to welcome people to the building – the café has reopened, we had a party in the garden in June for Refugee Week and activities for asylum seekers and refugees are part of the weekly timetable. There is a buzz about the place again.

During this time, we have said goodbye to some long-standing members of staff whom we thank for their contributions and wish them well in their new roles. We have welcomed several new members of staff to the NNRF team and we very much value their fresh ideas and new perspectives. Frank Forman took over as Director in September 2022 and has quickly settled into his role of leading the Forum and providing strategic direction for the organisation. We are very appreciative of Debbie Royle, who was Acting Director for the time before he took

up the post. Debbie and the Management team did an excellent job of not just holding the fort, but continuing to take plans forward.

At the Extraordinary General Meeting in December 2022 the Trustees brought to the membership a series of proposed changes to the Forum's Articles of Association and membership policy (please see page 53 for full details). These changes have brought governance of the organisation up to date and in line with Charity Commission guidance. I am grateful for the support of vice-chair Helen O'Nions for all her work on this and of course to all the Trustees in collectively ensuring NNRF keeps to its purpose and uses our resources responsibly.

As always none of this would have been possible without the passion and commitment of the 260 volunteers delivering services. I am proud to report that once again NNRF has received the Investing in Volunteers accreditation, the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. Achieving the standard shows our volunteers – and potential volunteers – how much they are valued and gives them confidence in our ability to provide an outstanding volunteer experience.

We have had some notable successes with funding applications and winning contracts that mean for the time being the Forum is in a reasonable place financially. However, much of this funding is for specific projects and unrestricted funding is much harder to come by. We are extremely grateful to its donors and fundraisers who contribute to this much needed unrestricted funding.

Jennie Fleming
May 2023



MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

We do this by:

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I came to the Forum in September, to a team that had transitioned back to working in shared spaces and delivering face-to-face work. I could see that the staff teams had worked hard to bring stability during a period without a full leadership team in post. The commitment and passion that the staff and volunteers bring to helping those looking for support and advice shines through and underpins the heart of the Forum. In the relatively short time I have been involved, it is evident to me that every day we make a difference.

We are currently facing a climate of political uncertainty, hostility and what appears to be unconsidered punitive policies and responses, initiated by government, to those seeking asylum and refuge. Despite this, the Forum has striven to operate to create a level of stability for both our clients, volunteers and staff.

During the last year we secured the tendered Resettlement contract for Nottingham City Council. This will fund a joint team of 10 staff delivering the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and we were awarded a large National Lottery 'Raising Horizons' grant worth £486k over 3 years. This grant will help fund our General and Special Advice teams, Interpreters, Volunteering Manager and Client Participation worker. The grants team has also successfully achieved a range of other grants, which combined, finds the Forum in a good financial position from which to further develop.

Our staff and volunteer team sit at the core of any success the Forum achieves, and although we have seen some long-standing staff members move on, we have recruited new and talented members to help keep the development and heart of the Forum.

Successes

Our café 'Narjis' is now well established since its re-opening in October. Huge thanks to the Gemini Trust, who have funded the café hosts. The café sets the tone for the building, bringing a warmth and softness to the Forum, as well as providing for basic needs of clients and our team.



The community garden is literally growing, providing a positive space for both those who work it and for those who visit. I get to see the benefit of seeing the garden develop daily and I am grateful for the hard work of the garden volunteers who have made this happen.



We have started on our journey to becoming trauma-aware and have introduced Vicarious Trauma training for staff, with ongoing group and individual support sessions; the feedback from this has been very positive. Over the next year there will be a focus on creating a trauma-informed organisation, with a high level of support for staff, volunteers and clients built into our everyday practice.

Morale in the staff team is good and this has been reflected in our staff survey which was very positive. The staff survey has also provided useful feedback that has been integrated into our 3-year plan.

Development and next year

Following on from the Pilotlight programme we have developed a 3-year plan, which highlights our focussed areas for development. The plan is one of development and has been designed with the input from staff and is linked to the volunteer strategy.

With Refugee Action, we are training up most staff and volunteers to OISC level 1 Asylum and Protection, this will allow them to support clients more effectively and be legally compliant.

Our landlords, the Renewal Trust, have handed back the running of the building to the City Council and in turn we have taken on the management of the building for a year while we look to secure a long-term lease. This is very much seen as an opportunity for the Forum to establish a secure home in the future. Although in many ways the building is challenging, we have certainly made the space work for us, with the bonus of having a café and community garden area.

The need for this organisation to be able to income-generate is becoming more important. We will be building on the foundation that our professional interpreting service, Voices in Refuge, has established. Following on from consultation set up through Lloyds Foundation we are looking to grow the model and generate income for the Forum and create employment opportunities for those with lived experience of the asylum process.

Over the last year we have seen the increased use of hotels for asylum seekers, with additional hotels opening in Belvoir, Long Eaton, Kegworth and Mansfield, where we are working in partnership with other charities to offer a range of support, both in the hotels and having asylum seekers coming to us at the Forum. Also over the last year, we have seen the threat to send people to Rwanda and an attempt to make asking for asylum a criminal act. More recently we have seen the introduction of the Asylum Claim Forms; this potentially presented us with the challenge of how we would respond to a portion of the 12,000 forms being sent out. In response we provided support to 4 clients directly, while many of our clients received support from their current solicitor and the anticipated numbers did not materialise.

The current political climate with changing laws and varying schemes highlights the need for the Forum to have a stable base from which to be able to respond to the changing needs of, and challenges facing, asylum seekers and refugees. The strength of the Forum lies in its staff and volunteers. We will be striving to support and empower our team to continue to make a difference to those we support.

Staffing

At 31 March 2023 we employed 48 staff of which 16 were full time and 32 part time. Of those 48 staff 17 have been recruited in the last 12 months. We have recruited new project leads for our Advice, Anti-Destitution and Resettlement Teams. We recruited a new Client Participation Worker, initially on a 3 days a week contract but having secured National Lottery funding this role will convert to full-time from 1 April 2023. Finally, we recruited a permanent role to provide more support to clients living in hotels and our General Advice Team was also increased to 3 staff to reduce our reliance on volunteers.



Frank Forman



MEMBERS OF STAFF

The Board of Trustees would like to express their gratitude to all staff who worked at NNRF during April 2022 – March 2023 (and those who have joined us since) for their incredible commitment and hard work, without whose contributions and support the Refugee Forum would be unable to provide vital services to those in need of them.

We would like to acknowledge here the essential work of our operational staff, who are not named in the Project Reports but who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure NNRF is running smoothly: John Gordon and Zanele Ndhlovu in finance, Nosheen Ahmed, Katie Rogers, Sarah Norris, Iqra Mehdi and Alan Burton in administration, Bernie O'Rourke and Sally White in cleaning and staff from Elite Security Personnel.

Abdulrasheed Sadiq
Adel Hamad
Aiza Javed
Akhtar Konari
Alan Burton
Alex Winters
Bahman Mohammed
Barbara S. Dhliwayo
Bernie O'Rourke
Beth Potter
Caitlin Sorrell
Charlie Stubbings
Debbie Royle
Fairouz Shermado
Fatemeh Hosseini
Fawad Mousawi
Fiona Broome
Frank Forman
Gary Lockhart
Gemma Pillay
Gita Salimi

Hanan Al Habach
Hermione Berthels
Hong Chi
Iqra Mehdi
Jane Oakley
Jas Shergill
Jemima Tidiman
John Gordon
Juliette Bone
Kadria Fahmy
Karam Radwan
Katie Rogers
Mahmoud Noor
Mai Ahmed
Matt Bedford
Matt Atkins
Nancy Pswarayi
Nawzad Mouloud
Nicole Shametiova
Nosheen Ahmed
Patricia Oduputa

Reem Salih
Richard Martin
Richard Powell
Rosie Evans
Sally White
Salumeh Abady
Sarah Norris
Sarah Wilson
Sebastian Bretnall
Sharmin Akhtar
Sherene Acheampong
Siobhan Gosrani
Sonia Bilkhu
Sophie Scott
Thomas Tilahun
Valeria Aquino
Zahra Elmsellati
Zanele Ndhlovu
Zina Yasiri
Zoe Kasujja



MEMBERSHIP REPORT



Our members comprise our volunteers, our staff and donors who make regular financial contributions to NNRF. Membership entitles someone to attend the AGM, vote for trustees, stand for a board position and to receive a monthly newsletter. Without all 3 of these groups NNRF would not be able to function.

Volunteers: at 31 March 2023 we had 260 volunteers. The contribution of the volunteers in supporting NNRF is summarised in the volunteering section of this report.

Staff: at 31 March 2023 we employed 48 staff of which 16 were full time and 32 part time.

Donors: 65 people regularly donate through direct bank transfer contributing £18,000. 91 donors have set up regular monthly donations on our website. These members contributed £16,000 of unrestricted funding through their contributions.

We'd like to thank all our members who have provided so much support without which we would not be able to offer the services we do.



SAFEGUARDING

Keeping People Safe: Our Approach

Safeguarding is at the heart of our work. Our aim is to support asylum seekers and refugees and to do everything we can to help them to feel safe and welcome. Our safeguarding policies and procedures make specific reference to safeguarding children and adults at risk. However, all NNRF clients may be considered to be "vulnerable" in respect of their immigration status and other personal circumstances, so our procedures for keeping people safe apply to everyone.

How we assess safeguarding risks

The Board of Trustees formally reviews risks associated with safeguarding as part of our 6-monthly review of our Risk Register. The trustee with oversight of safeguarding meets with the Safeguarding Team every month and the agenda always includes a review of current challenges and risks on the horizon. The Safeguarding Team maintains a central safeguarding register of all clients for whom safeguarding has ever been a concern.

Learning Lessons

The monthly Safeguarding Team meetings include a standing item on the agenda about recent "near misses". The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Team provide regular and frequent safeguarding updates for staff.

Our policy and procedures

NNRF's safeguarding policy and procedures have been reviewed and renewed this year. All staff, trustees and volunteers have been trained in the policy. Our policy is underpinned by three fundamental principles - (i) that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; (ii) that we all

need to know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and (iii) that we all have a duty to report safeguarding concerns.

Complaints, Concerns and Disclosures

Our policy is explicit about how to report any safeguarding concerns, including referral pathways to outside agencies. This includes any concerns about the conduct of staff, trustees and volunteers. The policy makes clear that if anyone feels dissatisfied with how a safeguarding concern has been dealt with, they can and should escalate their concern directly to the relevant agency (e.g. Social Care). We have a separate Whistleblowing Policy which sets out how individuals can - where necessary - speak up.

How trustees ensure the effectiveness of our safeguarding policies and procedures

The trustee with oversight of safeguarding meets with the Safeguarding Team and reports back to the whole board every month. This includes a review of current safeguarding cases. The trustees have recruited a new member to the board who has significant and extensive experience of safeguarding both children and adults. She will take over from the current safeguarding trustee in the course of the coming year through a managed handover.

Safeguarding cases handled in 2022-23

At the time of writing there are 30 open cases (adults and children) listed in the Safeguarding Register. These include clients suffering from poor mental health including low moods, self-harm and suicide, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, neglect and vulnerability associated with destitution and homelessness.

Pete Strauss (Safeguarding Trustee)



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Total clients worked with **2,131**
+ 1,340 dependants

New clients worked with **832**
+ 232 dependants

VOLUNTEERING

260 volunteers from 52 countries, speaking 42 languages

525 hours volunteered each week

31% of volunteers had lived experience of forced displacement

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

- Provided 2,364 hours of interpreting to NNRF programmes
- 124 people attended our interpreting training course
- 90% of clients used our interpreting service
- 142 clients referred to ESOL classes



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

98 women attended the Pamoja Women's Group

ANTI-DESTITUTION PROJECT

11 clients moved to Section 4 support

839 visits to our Friday group



COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY

7 organisations provided a total of 4,422 people with advice, information and guidance

SPECIALIST ADVICE

174 clients received resettlement support following a positive decision on their asylum applications

46 families settled in Nottingham following Refugee Family Reunion

294 clients helped to secure suitable accommodation and set up their homes



Community Café

2,625 meals served

ANTI-DESTITUTION PROJECT

Project Title: Anti-Destitution Project
Project Leader: Sophie Scott
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 1.8

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):

- Gemma Pillay (2012 – July 2022)
- Salumeh Abady (October 2022 – current)
- Bahman Mohammed (January 2022 – current)
- Sophie Scott (January 2022 – current)

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: Current: 15
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 70 (m), 10 (f)

Project Description

The Anti-Destitution (or Refused Asylum Seekers) Project helps destitute refused asylum seekers in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with their immediate needs and provides holistic support via casework and referrals to external services or partners.

Clients join our project following a negative decision from the Home Office and the discontinuation of Home Office support. This is an incredibly stressful and difficult time for those without support networks or family in the UK. We help by providing assistance with issues surrounding their legal case, health and wellbeing, and provide a warm, welcoming and inclusive space for clients.

The Friday Group is at the core of what we deliver. Here, clients can access a selection of groceries, toiletries, and a hot meal from our community café as well as gain fortnightly access to HOST's clothes bank. To supplement this support, we offer a 4-weekly cash payment and casework support which is focused on moving clients out of destitution, including asylum support applications when eligible.

Our services:

Friday Food Group

- Food bank offering a selection of groceries and toiletries
- Warm meal from our community café – a social space for clients
- Fortnightly access to HOST's clothes bank

Cash Group

- Four-weekly payment of £40 to each client

- Regular updates with volunteers on legal, health and accommodation-related issues
- Ongoing casework, support and referrals to relevant organisations

Asylum Support Applications

- Support with applications for Section 4 and Schedule 10
- Gathering necessary evidence for further information requests
- Support with section 4 appeals and referrals to Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP)
- Help with following up section 4 decisions/outcomes
- Preparing clients for dispersal

Internal referrals (NNRF)

- Into the Mainstream (help with accessing health services)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- New Refugee Clinic
- Pamoja Women's Group

External referrals

- Nottingham Arimathea Trust
- Host Nottingham
- Adult Social Care
- British Red Cross
- Bhatia Best Solicitors
- Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP)

Project Successes

- Two new part-time caseworkers helping to increase support capacity
- We help by providing assistance with issues surrounding their legal case, health and wellbeing, and provide a warm, welcoming and inclusive space for clients to relax

Data (from August 2022):

- 4 clients granted Leave to Remain
- 11 clients granted section 4 support
- 839 client visits to Friday Group

Major Challenges

The biggest challenge currently facing this client group, not just on the project but nationwide, is the lack of legal aid capacity and solicitors. This means many cannot access the help and support they need to navigate and understand an already complex system. Without quality immigration advice or representation, and enough evidence to pursue their claim, clients are left for years without recourse to public funds or a path to rebuild their lives.

Project Outcomes

Target	Status	Reasons/comments
Re-establish hub following Covid	Achieved	In-person visits to NNRF on Friday have increased in 2023
Destitute asylum seekers referred to the project will continue to be offered practical, emotional and financial support	Achieved	Clients receive holistic support. Capacity of team increased which means we're able to focus on mental health and wellbeing as well as supporting with legal issues.
A hot meal in the café on Fridays	Achieved	Café hosts and volunteers have worked tirelessly to reopen the community café. Our clients can now enjoy a hot meal from Monday to Fridays.

"Everything the project does for me is very good. I needed to find a solicitor for my case, and they supported me throughout. The Refugee Forum and everyone there is a big help". - Kiros, Anti-Destitution Project client



"This place is amazing. They're doing a great job here. Since I've been coming here, I've had lots of help. Food, clothes, advice." Joyce, Anti-Destitution Project client



"I'm happy for the conversation with the volunteers and staff, the cash support and food. It makes me feel better and supported, I'm so happy. I've volunteered at NNRF, and it helped me a lot. I worked in the garden, it kept me busy, I meet people, it makes me feel better being with people in the same situation - they have the same issues as me. I hope to start again soon." - Ahmed, Anti-Destitution Project client.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Working closely with Nottingham Arimathea Trust's legal adviser (regulated by OISC - the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner), we are working towards offering legal advice on Fridays to all clients on the project. The aim is that people are better informed about what has happened up until this point with their asylum claims, and what they need to do next to gather evidence for their fresh claims
- We plan to establish a programme of workshops, trips and activities on Fridays

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

A thank you to Gemma Pillay, the previous coordinator on the Anti Destitution Project who worked tirelessly to support clients from 2012 – 2022.

Our amazing volunteers in the foodbank and cash group who show up every week to support the project and offer their skills, knowledge and kindness to help clients.

Bhatia Best continue to support by legally challenging delays to asylum support applications.

Asylum Support Appeals Project for providing advice to advisers on asylum support applications, and advocating for and representing clients in asylum support appeals.

HOST Nottingham for running the clothes bank and hosting clients in their homes.

Nottingham Arimathea Trust for their accommodation provision and continued support both to clients and NNRF.

CAFÉ NARJIS

Project Title: Café Narjis
Project Leader: Hanan Al Habach and Rosie Evans
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 2 (1.1 FTE)
Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Hanan Al Habach and Rosie Evans (both started in September 2022)
Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 23
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 2,625

Project Description

The café aims to provide a safe and welcoming space for asylum seekers and refugees to meet and socialise. We provide drinks, lunches and snacks free of charge to clients of the Forum and at a nominal fee of £2 for the staff and public. The café provides WiFi, books, information leaflets and educational materials, as well as games and activities.

Objectives:

- To reduce the effects of loneliness and isolation by supporting community activities and to create a safe, non-judgemental space to meet
- To reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis by providing food at a very low cost for staff/the public or free for clients
- To bring people together from different communities
- To provide opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to volunteer and contribute to the community
- To sell at least 15 meals at £2 a day to staff and the local community, which will cover lunch food costs for the day

Vision:

- To combat hunger created by poverty

- To create a community environment in the café so clients will use the space for socialising as well as when they are waiting for appointments
- To promote healthy eating and friendship within the asylum seeking and refugee community
- To be a financially self-supporting (but non-profit) project

Projected numbers:

The goal is to increase the number of clients we serve over the coming months as the café re-establishes itself, with numbers up to 40 a day after 6 months. We are looking to run 4 celebration events over the year, open to clients and volunteers.

Project Successes

- We reached a maximum of 77 clients and staff members served in a day, with an average of 38 servings a day within the first 4 months
- We are officially gaining more than we are spending on cooking ingredients
- Recruiting and retaining a strong team of volunteers who are reliable and provide us with great food
- Successfully catering for events hosted by the Forum – the Christmas party catered to over 100 people and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to around 50 people
- Providing a regular free food service that clients can rely on – we have clients waiting for lunch after their appointments, visiting the Forum just for lunch and the takeaway service we provide has been utilised more frequently, especially over Ramadan

Major Challenges

- Volunteers' availability due to other commitments
- Working on a restrictive budget
- Finding reliable and cost-effective suppliers

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Selling 15 meals at £2 a day to staff and the local community, which will cover lunch food costs for the day	Achieved	This target was set so that we can ensure the project is sustainable by generating as much income as the expenditure to run the café
Increase the number of servings over the coming months as the café re-establishes itself, with numbers up to 40 a day after 6 months	Achieved	To ensure our services are reaching as many people from the asylum seeking and refugee community as possible
We are looking to run 4 celebration events over the year, open to clients and volunteers	Achieved	We have already successfully hosted/catered to the Christmas Party and the AGM but we will also be hosting an Eid celebration and a summer party. This target has been set to ensure we provide fun and enjoyable events for the clients and to celebrate the work and achievements of our staff and volunteers

"The Café is raining kindness" – an asylum seeker said on 22-03-2023.

"As a volunteer I can say with confidence that the atmosphere within the NNRF since I began volunteering has always been so welcoming, not only amongst staff and volunteers but clients most of all. The clients always bring energy to the atmosphere and make the café and the building a wonderful environment to cook and socialise in. Each week I look forward to my time volunteering, as I can get away from the stresses of my university course and spend time helping to cook which

is something I love to do in my free time. I always enjoy my time volunteering at the NNRF," Sally – Café volunteer.

"I've loved learning new recipes and watching other chefs cook, which has increased my knowledge of cooking. As well as this, having interactions with clients, staff and other volunteers makes the time there that much more enjoyable as the space is" Eva Gosling – volunteer.

"Everything is perfect. This place is full of energy. People who come here suffer with rejection everywhere they go, while in here everyone is smiling," Saman – volunteer.

"I never thought I would have an opportunity to volunteer at an organisation that greatly impacts people's lives so this has been such a great opportunity and an eye opener to as well. I love the warm and welcoming atmosphere in the café, from the volunteers to the staff and clients. Everyone is kind which makes the experience even better. The café has also made me want to try more vegan food options which was something that has never crossed my mind. I've bumped into a few of the clients outside the Forum and they were kind and encouraging saying "you're doing such an amazing job". I received a lot of support from the café hosts who are also very kind," Shanice Wanjiru – volunteer.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Expand our services to more local businesses and therefore generate income which can be channelled back into the café
- Host cooking activities/competitions for the clients in the café, i.e. NNRF Bake Off
- Build a strong relationship with the gardening group and St. Ann's allotments so we can use locally grown vegetables in the café to promote healthy eating and sustainability and reduce waste generated by the café, i.e. through composting

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Our volunteers
- Julliette Bone, our Client Participation Worker
- Barbara Spreiz Dhliwayo
- The National Food Service



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Project Title: Children and Families
Project Leader: Sarah Wilson
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 1 FTE

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Sarah Wilson – 30 hours | Valeria Aquino – 7 hours (September 2021 – current)

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 1
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 47 (F:35, M:12)

Project Description

The Children and Families Project (CAF) seeks to holistically support the most vulnerable asylum-seeking and refugee families across the county and city. We do this by combining casework, and organising outreach projects and events to best support clients, helping them to connect with others and to live with dignity and respect.

We run a weekly women’s group called Pamoja – which means ‘together’ in Swahili. We meet every Friday morning at the Refugee Forum. Every week an average of 10 women come to share their experiences and skills. This group creates a safe space for women to be part of a community and reduces isolation, while giving them the opportunity to learn new skills, have fun and relax. Each meeting has the purpose of creating a friendly environment for women to enjoy life, feel free and create a supportive network. We also run other activities in the school holidays for families.

Our casework focusses on the whole family, looking at everyone’s needs. We work in partnership with healthcare professionals, particularly the midwifery and early years services, to reduce barriers in accessing appropriate health care.

In addition, we promote better access and integration to mainstream services and provisions. Through our work we have successfully helped vulnerable families, experiencing serious difficulties, into social care and improved their



orientation and engagement within Nottingham, providing support regarding children’s health, education, and safety. We are committed to developing communication skills, and to lessening the burden of adulthood placed on young lives, through holistic and compassionate support, enabling children to thrive in their new home in Nottingham.

Project Successes

- **Support for vulnerable families:** The project effectively provided social care to vulnerable families facing serious difficulties. This was achieved through housing support, asylum support queries and challenging relocation requests, referring children to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and holding multi-agency meetings with partners working on the cases. It allowed us to escalate issues and achieve the best outcomes for our clients
- **Strengthened advocacy support:** The project actively engaged in advocacy efforts on behalf of asylum-seeking and refugee families, raising awareness of their rights and needs within the broader community. For example, we participated in policy discussions locally and regionally with organisations that support women with maternity issues, and the ending of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practices. This allowed us to collaborate with other organisations to influence positive changes in the asylum system
- **Empowerment and self-advocacy:** CAF empowered the clients to become self-advocates by providing them with knowledge, skills and confidence to express their needs and assert their rights. Clients were able to articulate their concerns, engage in self-advocacy, for example going to appointments alone when they previously needed support, and were actively able to participate in decision-making processes relating to their lives, demonstrating an increase in confidence and independence

Major Challenges

- **Language and Communication barriers:** our clients come from diverse backgrounds, which makes effective communication and provision of services challenging. Some organisations were not able to provide interpreting and translating services to bridge the language gap, due to internal funding issues in those organisations, and this impacted our clients accessing their services
- **Trauma and mental health issues:** our clients may have experienced significant trauma and may struggle with mental health issues. Long waiting lists or a lack of interpreters have been barriers to accessing services that support individuals
- **Policy and Legal constraints:** changes in immigration policies, or legal restrictions, have created difficulties for our clients in accessing support. For example, limited financial assistance for those living in hotels and are pregnant or have health issues, and have dietary requirements. Accessing suitable housing has been another challenge, especially for families in hotels/hostels, as has navigating the legal system and obtaining legal advice due to limitations on legal aid

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Reduction in isolation and improved integration	Ongoing	
Improved communication skills	Ongoing	
Restoring a chance to experience childhood	Ongoing	

This case study showcases our commitment to supporting vulnerable asylum-seeking families and promoting stability. By providing comprehensive assistance and prioritising the needs of both children and parents, we empowered a single mother and her asylum-seeking son to overcome obstacles and settle comfortably. Through educational support, addressing daily needs, and advocacy for their asylum case, we fostered positive outcomes:

The client, a single mother and her asylum-seeking son, faced numerous challenges due to their uncertain legal status. We intervened promptly, tailoring our support to their specific needs. Facilitating access to essential services and resources, we ensured their well-being while addressing asylum-related requirements.

Education played a vital role in the son’s well-being. Through collaboration with local authorities, we facilitated his enrolment in college, resulting in significant improvements in his mental health. The client expressed gratitude, stating, “Ever since he’s gone back to college, my son’s mental health has improved.” This highlights the transformative impact of education on well-being.

Recognising the importance of daily needs, we provided essential supplies and assistance, creating a supportive environment throughout the asylum-seeking process. By alleviating practical concerns, we enabled the family to focus on their well-being and asylum case.

The client’s appreciation for our holistic approach is evident in her statement: “I can’t thank you and the CAF project enough because you focus on the children and their parents. You support us with our daily needs as well as our needs for our asylum case so that we can settle comfortably.”

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- **Expand outreach and engagement:** we aim to increase our reach and actively engage with more asylum-seeking and refugee families in Nottingham. By collaborating with community organisations, schools, and local authorities, we will work towards reducing social isolation and fostering stronger social networks among these families
- **Enhance parental involvement and empowerment:** we recognise the significance of parental involvement in promoting children’s well-being. Through workshops, support groups, and capacity-building activities, we will empower parents and encourage their active participation. By strengthening internal community links and facilitating integration into the wider society, we aim to enhance parents’ ability to support their children’s health, education, and overall well-being
- **Strengthen integration and access to mainstream services:** our project is dedicated to improving access and integration into mainstream services for asylum-seeking and refugee families. By collaborating closely with healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and social care agencies, we will bridge gaps and provide guidance, advocacy, and practical assistance. Our goal is to ensure that families can navigate systems, overcome barriers, and thrive in their new home by receiving the necessary support and accessing mainstream services

Through these goals, our project aims to reduce social isolation, build strong social networks, empower parents, and enhance the overall well-being and integration of children and families of asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham.

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Nottingham City Community Cohesion Team
- Nottingham City Council Community Cohesion Team
- Nottingham City Council School Transport
- Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) Trust midwifery staff
- The Arches, Nottingham
- SERCO
- Migrant Help
- Begin
- Belong
- Bhatia Best Solicitors
- HOST Nottingham



Images from the Children and Families Project and Pamoja Women’s Group

CLIENT PARTICIPATION

Project Title: Client Participation
Project Leader: Juliette Bone
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 1

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 1 – Juliette Bone – August 2022 to present

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 8
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 90

Project Description

The Client Participation Project seeks to give refugees and those seeking asylum in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire the opportunity to be heard, develop new and existing skills, and contribute to the life of the Forum.

The project works on three levels, firstly by looking at integrating Experts by Experience (EBE) into the structure and the function of the organisation. Currently we are looking into developing training for the staff and volunteers on co-production (i.e. staff and clients working together), to be followed by establishing a lived experience advisory group which will feed into the structure and running of the service. This is a long-term goal and will take some time to build-up so we look forward to creating more of a power balance.

Secondly, we look at the individual, trying to develop and nurture existing and new skills within the asylum and refugee community by creating dedicated groups, projects and activities to respond to their needs. We have a lived experience communications group which creates and publishes content about the Forum and the experiences of refugees and those seeking asylum in Nottingham and the UK. We also run regular workshops on a Thursday afternoon developing practical skills which contribute to the Forum including art for the garden and café.

Collaboration between Sherene Bingham and Jane Oakley, UKRS Employability Caseworkers, and Charlie Stubbings Specialist Advice Team caseworker has created additional support for clients. We now have a Tuesday employment drop-in for those looking for support with further education and work, and an LGBTQ+ group who meet regularly, providing a space for those who feel doubly isolated from the community.

Finally, we look outward to the community, forging partnerships and running events to encourage integration, celebration and foster a connection to the wider city. Community events, activities and workshops take place throughout the year such as the Christmas party, Let's Eid Together and Refugee Week. For many of our events we collaborate with our external partners and encourage client planning and participation to make the events as successful and accessible as possible.

Project Successes

In collaboration with Café Narjis and the Grassroots Community Garden, we have made great strides towards developing a community hub at the Forum. Through building relationships, skills-auditing and one-to-one conversations we have been able to tailor workshops and lived experience groups to the clients we serve.

This year we have run a competition for the café name, with suggestions from the community. The final result, as voted for by 50 clients and 30 staff, was Café Narjis. Meaning daffodil in English, it matches the yellow and green of our café and conjures images of resilience, community, hope, and new beginnings.

We have successfully coordinated and developed a programme of social and educational activities for those who use our services. From over 50 clients attending the Christmas party, to building our lived experience communications team of 8 – “The Dream Team” – and providing the workshops for up to 10 clients on a Thursday afternoon, including willow weaving, our community is continuing to grow.

We have been working on client representation across the Forum, working closely with Refugee Action to provide bespoke lived experience leadership training opportunities. We have also had two staff attend facilitation training and they are now able to put their skills into action with our new communications and LGBTQ+ groups.

Alongside the Christmas party we have also held an open garden event and, again, in the Grassroots garden, taken part in the Fill the Skies with Hope campaign organised by Together with Refugees, a coalition of refugee organisations across the UK. Both these events welcomed the whole community with around 30 people attending each event. We sent our paper aeroplanes from the Together with Refugees event to Nadia Whittome, our local MP, and were delighted to receive a letter in support of our actions.

We have successfully developed a co-production group of client representatives to contribute and lead on our communications plan. They will also take part in campaigns, public events, and staff training. Our team of 8 covers 3 continents and 6 countries, with experience in journalism, film, photography, and social media content creation.

In collaboration with the UKRS Employability caseworkers, we have helped support 15 clients with their next steps into education or work. Our small team of four began in February to fill the gap we had identified in employability advice for those seeking asylum with or without the right to work, and new or existing refugees trying to find their feet in the system and develop their careers. Through



Adnan has been attending our support for destitute clients on a Friday. He told me he was interested in YouTube, making videos, and had previously made music. I invited him to join our communications group and he was very keen. His passion and commitment to the group has shone through, providing affirmation for other client participants, ideas for content creation and motivation to get started. He mentioned in one of the earlier sessions that “I’m very happy, because this place has given a lot to me, and I want to give back.”

Reem, member of The Dream Team – “I joined in order to be able to present something of what I know and do the thing that I love. I benefitted from the group by meeting new people and being part of a team trying to change.”

Sabelo, Open Door Thursday client – “I enjoyed it (willow weaving) a lot and looking forward to another training. I liked that it makes me to use my mind like problem solving.”

Helen, Open Door Thursday volunteer – “I have recently started volunteering at the Refugee Forum in a new project called ‘Open door Thursdays’ which involves working with asylum seekers and refugees on art projects such as willow weaving, making bird boxes and mosaics. I began volunteering at the Refugee Forum as I became increasingly frustrated by things I was hearing in the news and wanted to try and do something to help people feel welcome and safe in an uncertain world.”

our appointment-based advice sessions we can personalise their support, signpost to existing services and partners and follow-up on their progress further along the line.

We have also worked closely with the gardening team to help build the confidence of clients volunteering in the garden to understand and contribute to garden meetings, plans and creativity. This has also involved coordinating Natural England’s buddy scheme with two of our volunteers; building friendships with the clients to support their development and understanding of the natural world.

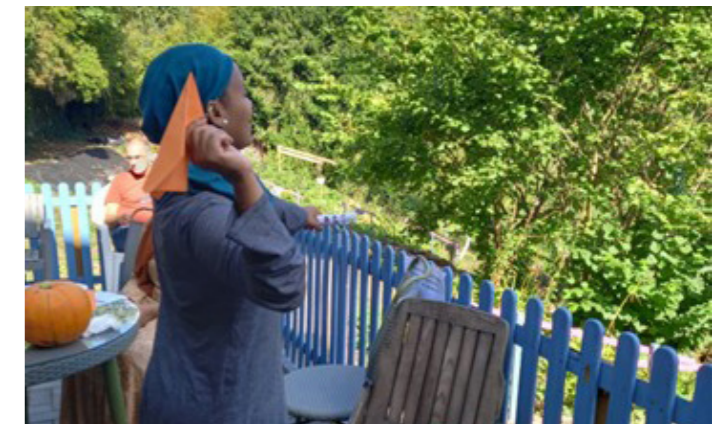
With Charlie from the Specialist advice team, we have created and established a regular LGBTQ+ group which has provided a much-needed space and community for those feeling isolated due to their gender or sexuality. Those who attend have remarked on their ability to relax in the group environment and the ability to share openly and be their authentic selves with each other.

Major Challenges

Retention and funding are the biggest challenges we face in our work. After Covid, community attendance had reduced significantly, and as NNRF is primarily an advice service, it has been hard to re-establish the centre as a community hub. This has manifested itself in the numbers of people coming to events and activities.

Funding is also a big challenge; travel continues to be a barrier for many clients, and there is a need for resources for workshops and training.

Another challenge is that clients are denied the right to work, becoming frustrated at being stuck in limbo for a long time and they are looking for meaningful roles and projects to engage with.



Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Continue increasing opportunities for client leadership and co-production
- Provide bespoke refugee training to up-skill and increase confidence in the community
- To improve client participation and leadership for Forum events including Refugee Week

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

Refugee Action for the one-to-one support they have provided, especially Ibtissam who has provided her experience, understanding and insight when creating our new lived experience groups.

The volunteers on the project who have given up their time, contributed their skills, knowledge, and passion in everything they do and create. Thanks to Sherene and Jane, UKRS Employability caseworkers and Charlie from the Specialist Advice Team for their support and guidance.

Thanks to Barbara for championing client participation and bringing back the fun to the Forum.

Thanks to Debbie for her help and guidance with the garden volunteers.

Thanks to City Arts for hosting our artistic creations during Refugee Week and opening their space to create a kindness café in the midst of the hostile environment.

Thanks to Nottingham Arimathea Trust for their ongoing collaboration and support to run events for clients throughout the year.

Thanks also to British Red Cross, Nottingham Refugee Week, Chris Baxter – Willow Weaving, Refugee Roots, City of Sanctuary, Notts County Foundation, World Jam, Canal and Rivers Trust, School of Artisan Food, Refugee Action, Nottingham Playhouse, Nonsuch Studios, Vanclaron Chats, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Heya, Refugee Football.

COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY

Project Title: Communities of Identity
Project Leader: Debbie Royle
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): No full-time staff. Debbie Royle, Sarah Norris and Iqra Mehdi all support the project.

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Debbie Royle | Sarah Norris | Iqra Mehdi

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): N/A

Project Description

The Communities of Identity Project (CoI) is a consortium of 14 organisations that deliver a range of activities and services that help asylum seekers and refugees access information, advice and guidance, provide a range of skills and confidence-building activities including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and youth activities, and enable them to become active citizens.

Project Successes

Asylum seekers and refugees receiving:

- Information, advice and guidance - 4,422 were supported by 7 organisations
- Building skills and confidence - 845 individuals were supported by 6 organisations
- Support for basic needs - 2,099 were supported by 3 organisations
- Improving/acquiring English language skills - 914 people from 3 organisations
- Volunteering - 220 were supported by 4 organisations
- Support for development of group - 38 groups were supported by 3 organisations
- Young people supported - 196 were supported by 2 organisations
- Intergenerational work - 48 people were supported by 1 organisation

Please note that some of these numbers may be double counted as people may attend more than one organisation, and each quarter people may count an individual again!

Major Challenges

A reduction in funding over the past few years has affected all partners in the consortium and meant that we have not been able to employ someone to coordinate this work.

Project Outcomes

Aims	Target	Outcome
Asylum seekers and refugees provided with good information, advice and guidance	2,327	4,422
Building skills and confidence	625	845
Individuals receiving support for basic needs	1,225	2,099
Asylum seekers and refugees improving/acquiring English language skills	352	914
Individuals supported to volunteer	94	220
Groups to develop	21	38
Young people supported	75	196
Intergenerational work	48	48- All priorities met or exceeded the targets

The Communities of Identity network creates lots of opportunities for partnership working and sharing of information.

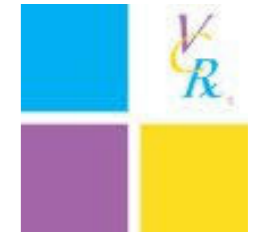
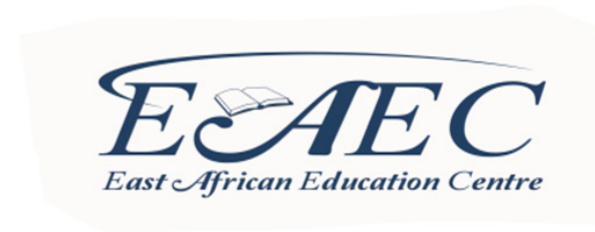
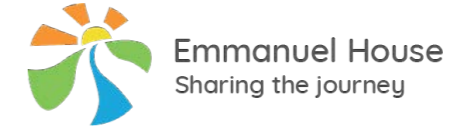
Fiona from BEGIN said "For 16-19 year-olds, College is full for ESOL, as is the specialist Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team (NEST) provision. We have lobbied the Nottingham College and they are hoping to increase provision despite a lack of space and teachers. Meanwhile we are in regular communication with other CoI partners, such as NNRF, Mojatu, Refugee Roots and Belong, regarding spaces for conversation classes. These relationships have greatly increased the opportunities we can provide for asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham, helping them to improve their English while waiting to attend college"

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Develop the Consortium despite continuing reduction in funding again this year
- Hold an event for asylum seekers and refugee community groups and organisations

Partner organisations:

African Institute for Social Development (AISD), Begin, Belong, Cameroon Support group, East African Education Centre, Emmanuel House, Host Nottingham, Mojatu Foundation, Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT), Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), Refugee Roots, Senior Support Group & Vanclaron Chats.



GENERAL ADVICE

Project Title: General Advice

Project Leader: Beth Potter

Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 3 (2 FTE)

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):

Beth Potter (November 2022 to current) | Abdurashed Sadiq (April 2022 to current) | Karam Radwan (April 2022 to current)

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 44

Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 1,596 (Male 1,222, Female 374)

Project Description

General Advice serves as the first point of contact for many clients visiting the Forum. The aim of the project is to provide both telephone and in-person advice on a wide range of issues such as housing, welfare, asylum support and social activities. General Advice aims to resolve issues where possible and provide basic support, as well as refer clients to other projects both inside and outside of the Forum. The project is run by a team of volunteers under the supervision of staff.

Project Successes

Over the past year the project has seen an increase in face-to-face support, with the return of the pre-Covid daily drop-in service. This has meant that clients are able, once again, to receive support on the day that they visit,

rather than having to wait. This has been achieved whilst maintaining a phone-based service for clients who find it difficult to access the Forum building. We have also been able to increase the number of face-to-face appointments offered.

From March 2022 to April 2023 we have trained 15 new General Advice volunteers who are now fully integrated into the team and doing an excellent job as General Advisers.

In early 2023 volunteers were invited to complete the Office of the Information Services Commissioner (OISC) Level 1 training and by April around half of all General Advice volunteers will have completed this qualification. Once registered, this will increase the range of issues we are able to support clients with within the project, where previously we have been restricted in doing so.

Major Challenges

A significant challenge in the return to drop-in appointments has been capacity to see more clients in person whilst equally maintaining a phone-based service. We continue to adapt to this challenge by monitoring and directing our attention to the most urgent cases as a priority and balancing our drop-in capacity, depending on the quantity of calls received.

Another challenge has been the increase in clients accessing our services due to several new Initial Accommodation hotels falling into our remit. We have had to adapt quickly and have organised visits, supported by volunteers, to be able to register large groups of clients in-person at their accommodation so that they are able to access ongoing support by phone.

Reza and Afra are asylum seekers who approached the Forum, having been newly dispersed to Nottingham with their young children, to register and see what help we could offer. Supported by an interpreter, we registered Reza and helped the family make a school application for their two children. We referred both parents to receive an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) assessment at the Forum so that they could start to learn English, which they were very grateful for. We made a further referral to the Into the Mainstream project (ITM) to support the family with GP registration. Lastly, we provided Afra with information on Pamoja Women's Group, as well using the activities pack to source activities appropriate for families to combat social isolation in a new city.

From Clients

"Thank you for all that you have done to assist me. Your kindness and generosity have made a significant impact on my life, and I will always be grateful for your help."

"Thank you so much for helping me, because of this I'm happy and I want to say thank you to anyone in your organisation, I hope to see you all again"

From Volunteers

"It's lovely to have the smell of cooking from the kitchen, a buzz of chatter in the café and people around. The staff continue to be helpful, encouraging and endlessly patient despite doing an increasingly challenging job." Jan

"As a volunteer general advisor, it's great to feel that you can make a small difference. I feel well supported in the knowledge that we all work together to help change lives. I am constantly surprised by the patience and endurance of our clients in their circumstances, and this makes our work rewarding." Sally

"The camaraderie is excellent and fuelled by the knowledge that we all want the same thing, a better life for people impacted by war, climate change and the aftershocks of colonialism. Everyone is pulling in the same direction." Richard M



Plans and hopes for the coming year

The primary target in General Advice over the coming year is to increase the number of clients we are able to see at the drop-in service. This will be achieved by increasing the number of volunteers in the Forum to full capacity, as well as training volunteers to specialise in specific issues so that we can deal with clients' issues more efficiently

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

General Advice simply wouldn't exist without the ongoing commitment and support of our team of dedicated volunteers. Each week General Advice volunteers show our clients empathy and respect, investigating often-complex issues to achieve a resolution. This process is all assisted by the work of Reception and case administration volunteers who ensure clients' issues are heard and recorded accurately. It is a huge privilege to work with such a kind and hard-working team!

A further huge thank you to all of the Forum's interpreters for all their invaluable work supporting our clients in allowing their voices to be heard.

Thank you to all staff who support General Advice through supervision, triaging, finance and administration, as well as stepping in to support the project, providing further information when needed.

Thanks also to Migrant Help, British Red Cross, SERCO, Host Nottingham, Begin, St Ann's Advice Centre, Nottingham Law Centre, Bhatia Best, Sharewear, The Arches, Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team (NEST), Bikeworks, Street Outreach (Nottingham), Emmanuel House.



GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY GARDEN

Project Title: Grassroots Community Garden
Project Leader: Debbie Royle
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): No designated staff. Project supported by Deputy Manager Debbie Royle and Client Participation Worker Juliette Bone
Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished): Debbie Royle & Juliette Bone
Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 23
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): Over 100 clients have used the garden over the past year.

Project Description

Our vision is to have a safe, green space where all clients (including children), volunteers and staff can engage in a range of social, educational, therapeutic and creative activities, learn about nature, and grow plants and food or simply sit.

Acknowledging that people, nature and the climate are interconnected, providing an alternative outdoor space is a key part of NNRF's commitment to providing a holistic service for our clients.

It is important that clients 'own' and build this project, fostering a sense of empowerment, ownership and belonging.

We aim to:

- ensure active client participation in planning and developing the garden
- provide a safe and welcoming area for social and cultural events
- enhance people's mental health through positive experiences in a green outdoor space
- increase collaboration with the café, including providing food, waste solutions and serving the outdoor area
- provide social, therapeutic, and creative opportunities for asylum seekers

- and refugees to use their existing skills and learn new skills through involvement in the project
- protect and promote local wildlife and respect for natural habitat and provide opportunities for the community to learn more about the natural environment
 - encourage projects within NNRF to have their own space to grow what they choose to
 - provide a space for staff and volunteers to use for meetings
 - provide a space for staff, volunteers and clients to relax and socialise

Project Successes

The development of the garden has had a huge impact on NNRF clients, volunteers and staff. We held our first event since Covid in June which was extremely well attended.

We have a dedicated group of volunteers both clients and non-clients who work in the garden every Tuesday and Friday mornings, meeting monthly to highlight any issues, discuss funding applications and plan for the next month.

A lot of work has been done in the garden this year. Volunteers have made another pond in the shape of a heart and a flower bed in the shape of a heart. We have grown a lot of fruit and vegetables such as tomatoes, raspberries, strawberries, pears, potatoes, squash, courgettes, chives, mint, beans, peas, blueberries and pumpkins!

Highlights include the wildlife - buzzards, owls and woodpeckers, the quality of the soil, the ponds, volunteers' building skills from frames for vegetables, to footpaths and compost bins.

Major Challenges

- Approval and then funding for the extension of the patio
- We continue to apply for funding for a dedicated worker to focus on the garden and support the volunteers

Project Outcomes

Outcomes/ Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
To build a pond	Completed	Clients wanted to have 2 ponds in the garden.
Develop the cooking space and stage	Partially done	We now have a pizza oven.
Extend the existing patio area	Approval gained	Work continues on this piece of work.
Gain funding for a Grassroots Community Garden Support Worker	Ongoing	Funding applications continue.

'It was a wonderful experience as I learned how to take advantage of small spaces to grow a lot of vegetables, fruits and some flowers, as well as recycle the available materials in arranging and decorating the garden. I also had the honour of knowing a wonderful group of volunteers who were friendly and cooperative.'

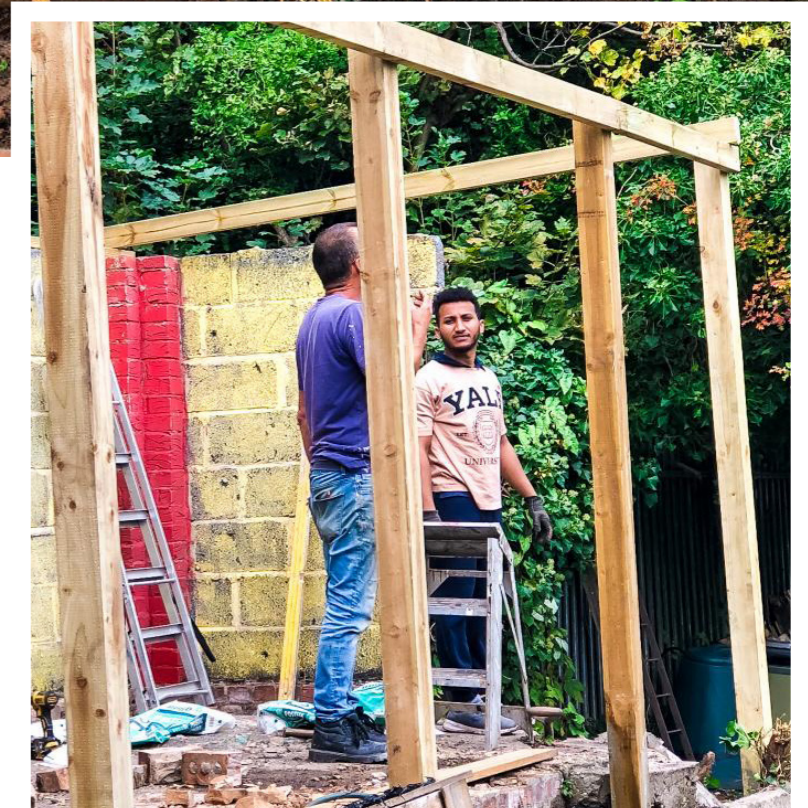
'I think it's been a fantastic team effort to do so much clearing, weeding, planting, weeding, growing, weeding, harvesting...and did I mention the weeding? My highlight would be the pleasure Mo and Robi took in constructing - and especially filling - the heart pond. A lovely symbol of the garden.'

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Extend the existing patio area
- Access funding and recruit a Grassroots Community Garden Support Worker
- Develop client participation in the garden

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- All the volunteers
- Alan who worked on the breeze block building
- SCSJD for the very generous funding for extending the patio/decking
- National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grant
- NNRF Grants Team
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- St Ann's Allotments
- Nature England



INITIAL ACCOMMODATION

Project Title: Initial Accommodation
Project Leader: Jas Shergill
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 0.4
Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Jas Shergill, April 2022 to present
Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 91 Males, 13 Females | Total 104

Project Description

The purpose of the Initial Accommodation (IA) project is to support, advise and advocate on behalf of those asylum seekers currently housed in initial accommodation sites in the city and county. This is primarily delivered by way of a casework and advice service. We facilitate access to services, support and community networks for our clients, as well as ensuring that their basic needs are being met. In addition, we aim to coordinate the Nottingham-wide response to the IA hotels, through regular meetings with all partner organisations involved with supporting the residents.

The IA project:

- Co-ordinates the response of partner agencies
- Provides case work support and advocacy
- Escalates safeguarding needs
- Provides holistic support
- Develops positive relationships with the statutory and voluntary sector

Project Successes

The project established itself in the hotels where asylum seekers are housed, to raise awareness of the Refugee Forum and the services available, signposting and providing advice through weekly drop-in sessions, which were very successful.

There was a good attendance at workshops we held in the hotels, Hate Crime being one example.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) vouchers from Tesco were given to all residents in the hotels and residents in a third hotel were given food parcels which were much appreciated.

A resident was helped to be reunited with his family who all arrived from Iran and were placed in different hotels; the accommodation project was able to reunite the family and they were placed in a hotel together.

A wheelchair and care services were put in place for a hotel resident with disabilities.

In the early days of the Initial Accommodation project, when advice was offered, many people were registered with the Refugee Forum, connected to solicitors, GPs and dentists, and asylum issues were dealt with. The project also saw many people drop in to talk and express their unhappiness with their situation and it was good to be able to provide an outlet for this.

Major Challenges

- Language barriers, time, and navigating people through a creaking asylum system without them becoming totally despondent
- Being aware of the difficulties for particularly vulnerable clients in the hotels
- The uncertainty caused by constantly changing government policy, for example residents receive letters which threaten them with deportation to Rwanda, causing them further anxiety



Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
To establish and raise awareness of the project and its role in the hotels.	Ongoing	
To ensure that residents are empowered by signposting them to the right places and assisting them to navigate the process of asylum.	Ongoing	
To build networks and contacts to help escalate issues.	Ongoing	
To work in partnership with hotel residents and staff.	Ongoing	

Written by a resident of a hotel who wanted to share their very personal experience of living in a hotel as an asylum seeker.

"My first days in the hotel I couldn't feel comfortable at all, the smell in the hallway is awful, poor hygiene (bed sheets pillow cases are dirty and old, also there's flies, bugs everywhere its bad it makes your skin itch), the food is horrible, my laundry has been missing for two months now. Since then I had to wash my clothes in my room with my own bare hands.

I couldn't feel safe around men or people who has no clue what it is like or means being part of the LGBTQ2+. I've avoided engaging with anyone there for my own safety and I felt like I was still living in my old situation, the same state of constant fear, feeling paranoid, I did wish if there was someone I could share this with and it was Jas. She really helped me to talk about it and I slowly started to feel comfortable around someone, she helped me with a couple of things such as ask them to provide better food for my health condition, and having my own food served to me in my room due to my social anxiety and safety, she also helped me get in contact with someone who can support me on things around my LGBTQ2+ identity and that helped me a lot thankfully but still in my accommodation I have had to be extremely careful. When I tried volunteering in the Refugee Forum the workers were really nice and thoughtful, my problem is with the people there, who I am afraid to be my true self around, it was overwhelming for me however it's safe to say that I can at least talk about it and the workers will hear me out and fix the issue if there is any and that is really helpful".

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Establish groups and workshops in all the hotels that are both beneficial and fun for residents
- Continue to improve access to services for all residents
- Expanding the project to work with the increasing number of hotels

Appreciation: We would like to thank...

Thanks to Serco staff, Belper Helping Hands and Johanna Montgomery for providing invaluable information and advice regarding one of the hotels, Sharewear for delivering clothes to some of the residents, Nottingham City Council for providing funding for Tesco vouchers and food parcels, Rosemary Frampton for being my trusty driver. Thanks also to Upper Parliament Street Health Centre, Nottinghamshire Police Hate Crime Team, British Red Cross, Nergiz Women's Group, Care4Calais, VanClaron.

INTO THE MAINSTREAM HEALTH PROJECT

Project Title: Into the Mainstream Health Project
Project Leader: Reem Salih
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 0.6 FTE

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Daniel Robertson - left March 2022 | Reem Salih - started August 2022

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 211 Male, 68 Female | Total 279

Project Description

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

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

Project Successes

ItM has supported clients in a variety of ways:

- NHS debt cleared
- Correct medicine obtained by advocacy with GP
- Mental health referral
- Register with GP
- Register with dentist
- Referral to Optician

- Restarted casework
- Attending appointments with clients if needed
- Obtaining HC2 certificates (right to free health care)
- Making health appointments
- Making referrals to psychological support

Major Challenges

- Registering clients with dentists
- The delay in getting Section 95 asylum support letters. This means that people who have sought asylum and don't have a place to stay or can't afford basic necessities have to wait longer to receive housing and financial support from the government. Once they receive this support letter, they can apply for HC2 certificates, which cover their full healthcare costs
- GP practices not having appointments available
- Mental health integrated and intensive support for clients: it is difficult to refer/get clients to access these due to lack of interpreters/long waiting lists



Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Improved access to primary health care, increased clients' knowledge.	Ongoing	
Support and advocacy for clients to access the healthcare system	Ongoing	

I saw Mrs Sarah in her Home Office accommodation; she is a disabled client and an elderly person. Mrs Sarah received a letter from the hospital asking her to send them her S95 letter, otherwise she would have to pay for her treatment. The client couldn't provide this proof because she hadn't received it from the Home Office. I gained Mrs Sarah's consent to contact Migrant Help to see if they could help her and contact the Home Office regarding her proof of right to free health care. After a few weeks I contacted Migrant Help again and they said Mrs Sarah had received the letter. I called Mrs Sarah through the Interpreting Team and asked her to send me a photo of the letter, which she was unable to do. So I arranged an appointment with Mrs Sarah to see her in her accommodation as she's in a wheelchair and I felt that it would be more comfortable for her if I visited her. I found the letter and, with her permission, took a photo and sent it by email to the hospital. I received a reply from them stating that they had removed her debt.

Mrs Sarah was happy and appreciated my support. She said "I was really worried about the debt. I'm an asylum seeker in the city and I can't pay this amount of money. Because of my health condition I have to go to the hospital, now with your support I can take my treatment with peace."

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Establish partnerships with healthcare providers for easier access to services and deliver workshops to raise awareness of rights in accessing health care
- Advocate for policy changes to address healthcare barriers
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Homelessness and Severe and Multiple Disadvantaged in Primary Care - NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG
- Changing Futures- Nottingham City Council
- Care4Calais
- Nottingham City Council Community Cohesion Team
- Serco
- Migrant Help
- Specialist Midwife for asylum seekers, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Voices in Refuge
- Parliament Street Medical Centre
- Nottingham Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum
- Homelessness Voluntary Sector- Primary Care
- Nottingham City General Practice Alliance



LANGUAGE JUSTICE

Project Title: Language Justice
Project Leader: Matt Bedford
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 12

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Mai Ahmed (until Feb 23), Fawad Mousawi (until August 22), Mahmoud Nour (Nov 22 onwards), Akhtar Konari (August 22 onwards), Zina Yasiri (Feb 23 onwards), Iqra Mehdi, Thomas Tilahun, Nawzad Mouloud, Gita Salimi, Fairouz Shermado, Fatemeh Hosseini.

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 40 plus
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): Approximately 90% of Forum clients use an Interpreter

Project Description

The Language Justice team provides Interpreters to NNRF clients, staff and volunteers and English lessons to clients who have recently arrived in the area.

Our English classes are primarily aimed at those who are facing long waits for college places. We provide classes at all levels, according to the need of the students who are referred to us. We have 15 volunteer teachers and classroom assistants and 142 people have been offered classes.

We train all our Interpreters in-house and all our employees volunteered with us before applying for a job.



We receive applications for interpreting training from all over the world but prioritise asylum seekers and refugees for the limited places on these courses.

We also advocate for professionalism in interpreting and for those Interpreters to be valued and appropriately paid by the organisations who need their expertise.

Similarly, we aim to encourage our interpreting staff into caseworker roles, where their lived experience is an essential part of their work with clients.

Through our CIC (Community Interest Company), Voices in Refuge, we hire out Interpreters to external agencies and supply community interpreter training around the UK and internationally.

Both interpreting and English language learning serve the same purpose: to help give clients the means to make their own decisions about their lives.

Project Successes

The programme transitioned from a partly remote service during Covid to a fully in-person service. We've tried to keep the best parts of the changes we were forced to make during lockdowns, such as dedicated Zoom session interpreting, training and ESOL classes while converting the majority of our NNRF work to in-person.

We provided 2,364 hours of interpreting to NNRF programmes in addition to approximately 10 hours per day in General Advice.

We trained 124 Interpreters over 6 courses.

2 long-term interpreting staff members achieved caseworker jobs. This brings the number of our trained Interpreters with lived experience who have gone on to caseworker roles here and elsewhere to 19.

12 of our trainees went on to paid interpreter roles here or elsewhere. This brings that number to 70 (that we know of).

Major Challenges

- Satisfying the demand for interpreter training
- Interpreter capacity: we always need more staff

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Restart in-person ESOL classes	Complete	Most online classes converted to in-person. One class remains online for students who live further away
Encourage more interpreting staff to apply and achieve paid roles as Caseworkers both at NNRF and elsewhere	Ongoing	Two of our long-term staff have left us to take caseworker roles; Mai Ahmed, who was employed as a Family Caseworker by the UKRS programme and Fawad Mousawi who now works as a Refugee Support Worker at Refugee Roots
Increase interpreter training sessions to reflect demand	Ongoing	We now also run evening courses
Rebuild external interpreter sales that were impacted by Covid	Ongoing	Sales continue to grow with new solicitors and housing organisations among the types of organisations to start using us during the last year

I am currently working as a refugee support worker, and my experience working as an interpreter at NNRF played a critical role in preparing me for this role. I am grateful for the opportunities I had to learn and grow through this work, and I continue to draw on those experiences in my work today.
Fawad Mousawi - former Interpreter and now support worker at another organisation.

Working with NNRF as an Arabic Interpreter for more than six years gave me the opportunity to work very closely with refugees from the minute they arrive in the UK and throughout their journey. This gave me the skills, ability and confidence to apply for a job as a UKRS Family Case Worker where I am now. Working as an Interpreter was a journey of myself and career development.
Mai Ahmed - former Interpreter and now UKRS Caseworker at NNRF.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Expansion of training capacity and accreditation
- Increase outside interpreting sales through Voices in Refuge
- Teacher training (teaching within communities)

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Barbara Spreiz Dhiwayo and Halima Hamza for their commitment to extra training in their spare time
- Across Borders
- Voices in Refuge, our Community Interest Company, www.voicesinrefuge.com - providing interpreting training and external sales



MONEY SORTED

Project Title: Money Sorted
Project Leader: Hong Chi
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 1 FTE

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Hong Chi, 25th August 2021 to 30th September 2022

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 17 (10M, 7F)

Project Description

The Money Sorted project finished in September 2022. It provided support and personally tailored interventions for people experiencing financial difficulties. It aimed to help refugees take control of their money, build confidence and the skills needed to tackle barriers and improve their financial wellbeing.

It was part of the Building Better Opportunities programme, and was funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund. Since it launched in 2017 it has supported 168 unemployed and economically inactive refugees to achieve better financial inclusion.

Project Successes

By the end of the programme we celebrated a number of achievements with our final cohort of participants.

All reported that their debt problems had been addressed, and that they had improved their basic understanding of financial notions, such as debit and credit cards, loans and debt.

Two participants left in full-time work, one started university, one is attending an access course for Higher Education, and one is enrolled in a full time English for Speakers of Other Languages course (ESOL).

Of the remaining 12 participants, they left the programme with a variety of different outcomes:

- 12 participants are actively job searching, including 6 with their first CV
- 11 are attending ESOL classes
- 3 were transferred to the Towards Work Project
- 2 were referred to Pathways to Health and Social Care Project
- 1 applied to volunteer
- 4 signed up for Security Industry Authority training (SIA)

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
10 new clients signed up to the programme each quarter	Part-achieved	10 new clients were signed up between April and September 2022
Improve participants' capability and confidence to manage their finance better	Participants base knowledge on financial products improved	All participants now have bank accounts, and most of them know how a bank works, how to budget, what is a loan and what is a debt
Improve participants' financial wellbeing and inclusion	Participants' financial wellbeing improved	The participants on the project have a better understanding of their income and outgoings, and their ability to budget has improved. The majority understand that employment is the best solution to their financial problems

Meena is a young single mother, who had left home with her 5-year-old son to avoid domestic violence.

She was living independently for the first time and, at the time of her referral to Money Sorted, she had accumulated debts, including several months of council tax arrears and £300 of unpaid energy bills.

She also needed help to change her ESOL class because she was finding it too challenging and had stopped going. Due to the language barrier she was finding it hard to find one that would be a better fit and was feeling stuck.

Her Money Sorted caseworker contacted Nottingham City Council on her behalf and set up a payment plan. She then contacted British Gas to ask for a new bill based on her actual usage and set her up with a repayment plan. Meena was then referred to St Ann's Advice Centre for further advice on avoiding debt.

Her caseworker contacted her college who re-assigned her to a new ESOL class where she felt more comfortable.

Meena also expressed an interest in getting a job, and as a first step wanted to volunteer while her English improved. Her Money Sorted caseworker helped her with an application to volunteer at the White Rose charity shop as she had an interest in fashion. This was successful and she began a month later. Her confidence is growing as she continues to build her new life.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

The Money Sorted programme came to an end in September 2022. Since it launched in 2017 it has supported 168 unemployed and economically inactive refugees to achieve better financial inclusion.

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- St Ann's Advice Centre
- Newstart programme
- Towards Work Project



OPPORTUNITY AND CHANGE

Project Title: Opportunity and Change
Project Leader: Zoe Kasujja
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 3 (1 FTE)

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Zoe Kasujja (Sept 2021 – March 2023) | Sarah Norris (May 2017 – March 2023) | Debbie Royle (March 2020 – March 2023)

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 11 (6M, 5F)

Project Description

Opportunity and Change was a support programme for people with multiple and complex needs. Supported by a Personal Navigator (equivalent to a Caseworker), participants on this programme engaged with an individually tailored and holistic package of support, training and therapeutic interventions. By increasing their self-confidence

and teaching them new skills, the ultimate aim was to help these participants become socially and economically included, through access to education, training and employment.

The programme came to an end in March 2023, after six years. Since its launch in 2017, 70 refugees have been supported through the programme, with 54 of them reporting improvements against their support needs.

Project Successes

- 5 participants were settled into permanent accommodation
- 2 participants have been attending regular counselling sessions
- 2 participants took part in the Loudspeaker arts programme at Nottingham Contemporary
- 7 participants showed demonstrable improvement in their mental health
- 3 participants moved from economically inactive into job search
- 5 participants enrolled onto English for Speakers of Other Languages classes (ESOL)

Ahmed gained his refugee status in 2022. As is often the case with new refugees, he was in an unstable situation following the end of his asylum support. He was homeless, and was experiencing depression, anxiety and a feeling of hopelessness. He wasn't aware of his options and didn't know what to do next. NNR's Specialist Advice Team referred him to the Opportunity and Change project as they thought he would benefit from some intensive support.

His housing situation was particularly difficult because he has a disability which makes movement painful, and he was therefore in need of ground floor accommodation. His Personal Navigator began making urgent housing referrals for suitable housing, based on medical grounds. After 3 weeks of referrals and follow-ups he was finally offered a ground floor room at the YMCA. He is also now on the housing register, so can start bidding for other properties as they become available.

His Personal Navigator helped him complete a Work Capability Assessment, which led to the Job Centre reducing the number of appointments he had to attend in person. This helped significantly as he was struggling to get to the meetings and was at risk of sanctions. We also submitted a successful bus pass application which helped him move about the city, attending GP and Department of Work and Pensions appointments.

After just these interventions Ahmed's mental health began to significantly improve, as he was settled in his accommodation and felt more in control of his options. Ahmed was referred for ESOL classes at Nottingham College. Waiting lists are currently one year, and he is due to start in September 2023.

Ahmed said "I am so grateful to the support I've received from Notts Refugee Forum, I will never forget it".

Plans and hopes for the coming year

The Opportunity and Change programme came to an end in March 2023. Since its launch in 2017, 70 refugees have been supported through the programme, with 54 of them reporting improvements against their support needs.

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- This project was managed in partnership with Framework Housing Association
- Improving Lives
- Nottingham Contemporary

"Opportunity and Change was part of the Building Better Opportunities programme, and was funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund"



SPECIALIST ADVICE TEAM (SAT)

Project Title: Specialist Advice Team (SAT)
Project Leader: Nicole Shametiova
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 4

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Fiona Broome, Charlie Stubbings, Sharmin Akhtar – since October 2022,
 Nicole Shametiova

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 3 casework volunteers, 4 Refugee Clinic volunteers, 3 social work students on placement.
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 519; F 137, M 380, 2 not specified.

Project Description

The Specialist Advice Team provides specialist advice and support to asylum seekers and refugees through complex casework. Our main areas of work are:

- resettlement support for newly recognised refugees
- post family reunion support
- welfare rights and benefits
- homelessness and housing
- complex asylum support issues
- access to health and social care
- access to education and employment
- support for families with no recourse to public funds
- support for survivors of domestic or racial abuse
- support for LGBTQ+ clients

Project Successes

- We set up the Refugee Clinic Project to help us meet the high demand for our service by resolving non-complex issues. In the past year our 4

dedicated volunteers completed 58 Universal Credit claims, 16 Child Benefit applications, 2 applications for Carer’s Allowance, 4 Blue Badge applications, 2 Sure Start Maternity Grant applications, opened 17 bank accounts, assisted 18 clients with setting up utilities, made 20 applications to the Severn Trent Water discount scheme, helped 22 clients apply for Council Tax Support or resolve Council Tax arrears, applied for 3 Integration loans

- As a result, capacity in the team was increased. Caseworkers have more time to deal with more complex cases and clients are attended to in a timely manner
- 174 clients received resettlement support following a positive decision on their asylum applications
- We helped 46 families settle in Nottingham following Refugee Family Reunion
- 194 clients were able to meet their basic financial needs through accessing the correct benefits. This is 21% above the target set out by our funders
- We helped 294 clients secure suitable accommodation and set up their homes. This is 63% above the targets set out by our funders
- We further developed our support for LGBTQ+ clients. 12 clients were supported this year and we also started a social group to help these clients feel less isolated

Major Challenges

The major challenge we faced this year was capacity in the smaller team. We recruited a part time caseworker and expanded our volunteer team to tackle this issue and we continue to explore ways to increase capacity for casework as we also wish to embark on new projects and activities.

The housing crisis is deepening. There is not enough housing in the city and waiting times for supported accommodation are longer than ever before. This means that we are seeing more newly recognised refugees facing homelessness.

We supported an asylum-seeking family of 5. Mum and her 3 children were dispersed to Nottingham by the Home Office. They arrived in the UK by crossing the channel in a small boat and were initially accompanied by dad, but they were separated on the way and were unable to make contact. They went for months without hearing from each other after arriving in the UK and they did not know where dad was. Eventually, they found out that he had also managed to make the crossing, claimed asylum, and was accommodated by the Home Office in a hotel in London.

The family were desperate to be reunited and live together. They first tried to resolve this through Migrant Help but to no avail, so they came to the Refugee Forum for help.

We needed to get their asylum support claim linked for them to be accommodated together. I supported them in completing a Change of Circumstances Form and submitting this to Migrant Help along with several supporting documents, including self-statements from the client and her husband, which I helped them draft, explaining their situation.

I followed up on this multiple times and escalated the issue via the official routes as well as with our Migrant Help contacts, but after several weeks, their request was still not considered.

In the end we referred the family to a public law solicitor to bring a legal challenge against the Home Office’s lack of response. After a long legal process, the family were finally reunited and are now living together. –Charlie Stubbings, SAT Caseworker

“Thank you for your support!” – SAT client

“I feel much better after speaking to you. Thank you for your help and encouragement.” – SAT client

“I find the nature of the work very gratifying as it involves helping newly recognised refugees who require assistance in their transition into the society. I am very proud and honoured to be a part of the Refugee Forum.” – Sharmin Akhtar, SAT Caseworker

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
160 individuals (40 per quarter) assisted with benefits (no longer destitute).	21% above target –194 clients assisted with benefit applications, reviews and enquiries.	
160 individuals (40 per quarter) assisted with housing (are no longer homeless / threatened with homelessness).	56% above target – 249 clients assisted with housing advice, advocacy and referrals to supported accommodation.	Most of the clients we support with housing are newly recognised refugees. We make referrals to the local authority as well as supported accommodation hostels. We also help people challenge local authority decisions around housing, complete applications for social housing and offer support and advocacy relating to tenancy issues such as disrepair or evictions.
40 individuals (10 per quarter) able to improve their communication in English.	53% below target – 19 referred for ESOL classes.	This is quite low, due to most clients already being signed up for English for Speakers of Other Languages classes (ESOL) via General Advice when they are still asylum seekers.
20 (5 per quarter) assisted with setting up a home (furniture, setting up bills).	125% above target – 45 clients assisted setting up a home.	These are people moving to social housing or private rented accommodation.
120 (30 per quarter) individuals given information on the labour market.	58% below target – 51 clients signposted to employability related activities.	We believe that the number is quite low compared to the other figures because clients are given some level of support by the Job Centre, where they have a named Work Coach. Newly recognised refugees, transitioning from asylum support to the mainstream system, are not usually in a position to look for work straight away due to immediate homelessness and destitution. They will usually start looking for work later in the process.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

This year we would like to focus our work on early intervention. We plan to:

- Provide more support with making asylum support applications
- Deliver workshops on the asylum process to clients in initial hotel accommodation across the city and county in collaboration with the Initial Accommodation project
- Together with the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy project start delivering integration workshops for refugees

In addition, we will:

- Increase our capacity to deal with the large volume of casework by further developing our volunteer roles
- Provide regular training on housing and benefits for all Refugee Forum volunteers to increase knowledge at all levels of the organisation and ensure good quality of advice and support

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

Our partners and funders who make our work possible. Special thanks to our funders:

- Nottingham City Council
- Communities of Identity
- Refugee Action is supporting our work through their Early Action programme, offering funding for our work as well as support and guidance

Our wonderful volunteers for their time and positive energy with which they support the team and our clients. Nottinghamshire Deaf Society – working together to support mutual clients. We are holding monthly outreach sessions at the Deaf Society with the assistance of their sign language interpreters.

To support our LGBTQ+ clients, we work with Nonsuch Studios, Rainbow Migration, Micro Rainbow and Kairos. Housing Providers – we refer our clients to Nottingham Arimatea Trust, Nottingham Night Stop, YMCA, East Midlands Housing Cooperative, Framework Housing Association, Tuntum Housing, Rene House.

Bhatia Best Solicitors and Nottingham Law Centre assist our clients with legal matters, from housing and debt disputes, challenging delays in benefits or asylum support, to family law issues.

SAT caseworkers are also members of national networks such as Asylum Support Advice Network or Housing and Immigration Group and local ones, such as the Nottingham Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum. This gives us an opportunity to share experience and best practice, keep up to date with changes in the asylum system, access training opportunities and receive news and updates from the sector.

UK RESETTLEMENT SCHEME: AFGHAN RELOCATION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY (ARAP) AFGHAN CITIZEN RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (ACRS)

Project Title: UK Resettlement Scheme: Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
Project Leader: Aiza Javed
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 4

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Aiza Javed, Jane Oakley, Sherene Bingham, Slobhan Gosrani (left May 2022), Richard Martin (started August 2022), Sophie Scott (left January 2023), Alex Winters (left March 2023), Richard Powell (started March 2023), Hong Chi started October 2022

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 28 families in total, including 126 individuals, 16 ARAP scheme holders, 12 ACRS scheme holders

Project Description

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was launched by the UK government in April 2021 to relocate and resettle current and former Locally Employed Staff (LES) that worked directly with the British Armed Forces, the British Embassy and aided British operations in Afghanistan. The scheme was developed to resettle individuals who were considered most at risk from threat to life when the NATO troops withdrew from the country in September 2021.

Subsequently, the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) was introduced in January 2022 to support individuals who assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and the rule of law and was extended to vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk.

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) has worked in partnership with the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils to provide specialist resettlement support to the ARAP and ACRS scheme holders since August 2021. The ARAP team at NNRF work with families from their arrival in Nottingham for a period of three years. When they first arrive, families receive comprehensive 1:1 support from caseworkers, ensuring that they have access to benefits, healthcare, housing and education. As they continue to settle into the community, we support their integration through learning English, developing their skills to support employability and nurturing their individual goals and passions. The overall aim is to empower families to become independent and integrate into the UK.

Project Successes

- Enhanced resettlement support was provided to a total of 28 families including 126 individuals
- Developed a women-only rolling integration programme to empower and upskill female clients on the scheme
- Helped and facilitated policy change on Sure Start Maternity Grant together with Child Poverty. The new law protects all scheme holders (including those on the Ukrainian and HongKong schemes)
- Developed and maintained positive relationships with statutory and voluntary sector service provider partners
- Enabled and supported 13 individuals into paid employment
- Enabled 24 individuals into employability courses including Security Industry Authority (SIA), Construction and Hair and Beauty

- 6 clients successfully completed an accredited Interpreting Course with Voices in Refuge
- All clients on the scheme were invited to multiple job fairs throughout the year
- An award night was organised in partnership with the Nottingham City Council to celebrate clients' employability achievements
- One scheme holder was recruited as an interpreter for Voices in Refuge
- Two individuals with previous experience working with the BBC in Afghanistan are involved in the NNRF Media project as volunteers
- Caseworkers and employability support workers provided regular information sessions on British culture and customs and helped with integration
- Delivered a successful Q&A session on British citizenship
- Five new babies were born into the clients' families. Caseworkers advised and supported the parents throughout and ensured that parents were supported and looked after by the health services
- Multiple children and families' events were organised throughout the year including Eid Dinner, Summer Picnic, Farm Trip, Art and Craft sessions, Children's Cricket Sessions with the Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, Trent Bridge Cricket Ground Tour, Christmas Party, and Youth Activity Sessions
- All ARAP team members completed the Vicarious Trauma training which equipped them with essential trauma-informed knowledge and skills to deal with clients who have experienced trauma
- A comprehensive NNRF Welcome Pack was curated for the ARAP/ACRS scheme holders. The pack is currently being used as a learning tool to teach women on the scheme everything about their personal information, benefits, utilities, schools and much more
- Given the increasing number of clients, a new paid position for a resettlement caseworker was created
- Developed multiple NNRF interproject integration workshops focused on welfare benefits and housing to increase clients' knowledge and understanding of the UK benefit and housing system. The workshops are to be delivered to clients throughout the year

Major Challenges

- Clients' transition from the Initial Accommodation Hotel to fixed accommodation amid a cost-of-living crisis**

Many clients lived in the hotel for over a year since their arrival in the UK. This meant that when they were finally allocated a house, they experienced a shock with the drastic increase in their expenditures. This was exacerbated due to the increasing cost of living. Many clients, at first, felt overwhelmed with managing their finances. However, since then, with the in-depth support and continuous guidance from their caseworkers, clients have demonstrated a remarkable improvement in learning, understanding and managing their finances and lifestyles. Clients are continuously encouraged and supported to explore different avenues to improve and stabilise their finances. This is effectively done by offering and supporting them with different paid and unpaid job opportunities and other employability workshops.

- Delays in processing of the British Residence Permit (BRP) cards**

Several clients, mainly the ARAP scheme holders, were issued their BRP cards with the incorrect leave to remain upon their arrival in the UK. This resulted in some clients being unable to receive medical treatment due to inconsistencies in their settled status. With continuous support and efforts from the ARAP team and the partners at Nottingham City Council

in challenging the Home Office, by September 2022, all clients received their new BRP cards with Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

- Finding legal representatives to support legal aid cases**

Due to the recent cuts in legal aid provisions by the government, at least two families were unable to find legal representation to support their family reunion applications. Being unable to process their family reunion application has certainly impacted clients' resettlement experience. However, the caseworkers are continuing their efforts to

find clients' legal representation by making regular contacts with local and regional solicitors.

- Reduction in staff**

Since the start of this year, two ARAP staff members (a caseworker and an administrator) left the project to move on to different roles. This affected the level of service we were able to provide to clients. However, since then a new caseworker has been appointed in March and another caseworker is being recruited to start in May.



Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Provide intensive resettlement support to clients.	Achieved/ Ongoing	So far, 126 individuals have been supported with their resettlement in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
More clients resettled to rebuild their lives in Nottingham.	Achieved/ Ongoing	Since April 2022, 16 new families, including 59 individuals, joined the project and were supported with their resettlement.
Women-focused programme to increase engagement and involvement.	Achieved/Ongoing	The Afghan Women Integration Programme (AWIP) was launched on 05/09/2022 to enable women's integration and empowerment. The first phase of AWIP consisted of 13 weeks of educational workshops. The second phase provided a practical learning opportunity with the enrolment of 15 women in the Sewing for Beginners course which started in February 2023.
Improve ESOL attendance.	Achieved/Ongoing	Last year saw a substantial increase in ESOL attendance. Specifically, women's attendance and engagement in ESOL classes and employability workshops has increased to over 90% compared with 40% in 2021/2022.
Explore avenues to integrate individuals into the wider society, including offering volunteering opportunities and educational workshops.	Achieved/Ongoing	24 clients were enrolled in employability courses, such as Security Industry Authority (SIA), Construction, Hair and Beauty, to increase their employability skills.

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
Facilitate individuals to seek paid employment.	Achieved/On-going	Supported 13 individuals into paid employment.
Additional integration initiatives for new arrivals.	Ongoing	Enrolment in the UK Life, Skills and Employability course. New arrivals were invited to multiple children and families and social events to meet others on the scheme.

“When we first arrived in the UK, we felt vulnerable, scared, and isolated as we didn’t know anyone or weren’t even familiar with the culture, customs, and system of the country. But looking back at our resettlement journey, I am so proud of our accomplishments as a family. My children are well-settled. They speak English fluently. My wife has learned so much. She is learning English and is so happy to attend her ESOL classes and enjoys the sewing course where she has made a lot of friends. You (caseworker) are like our relative because you have been part of our journey since we first arrived in the UK. We are happy with you and Nottingham Refugee Forum.”

Laila is a human rights activist who worked for an NGO fighting for gender equality in Afghanistan. Following the political development in 2021, Laila along with her husband and three children were relocated to the UK under the ACRS scheme. From being a working woman in Afghanistan to starting a new life in the UK, Laila faced many challenges learning everything about their new life in Nottingham. However, Laila is keen and eager to gain knowledge and new skills to improve her life. She is known to be ‘the hostess’ amongst her friends as she loves cooking and hosting gatherings for her friends.

“This Eid was a special one because it was our first Eid in our house. We spent the last two Eid in the hotel where we didn’t have the facilities to cook or invite people. This Eid I invited many guests to our house. It was lovely seeing friends celebrating Eid together and sharing happiness. My family and I are so happy to have found a place we call our home. We finally feel settled as opposed to the uncertainty of almost one and a half years we lived in the hotel. We really appreciate the support you (caseworker) have given us.” - Laila ACRS Client.

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- **Project Development**
Enhance and develop the ARAP project by creating positions for new staff and volunteers to cater to the increasing volume of new clients. Support long-term integration, goals and action planning, capture clients/staff achievements. Organise appropriate training opportunities for team members.
 - **Employability Goals**
Where possible, at least 1 person from each family is to be supported into paid employment (part-time or full-time); at least 3 women are to be supported into paid employment and at least 5 to 7 individuals are to be signed up for voluntary work.
 - **Integration**
Enhance and streamline the Afghan Women Integration Programme (AWIP) with a variety of educational and practical employability courses and workshops including driving theory, IT courses, digital literacy, business enterprise etc.
- Regular informative workshops on employability in addition to welfare benefits and housing are to be delivered to clients to strengthen their learning.
- Refer clients to NNRF Pamoja Womens’ Group and Youth Project to streamline support available at NNRF and further increase integration between groups from different backgrounds.

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) contacts in Nottingham and Newark
- Voices in Refuge – Dari and Pashto Interpreter
- Carole Batey – The Furniture Project Nottinghamshire
- Caroline Seal – Trent Vineyard Church
- Jade Goulding – Op Courage, The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
- Merci Szinnay – Enable –English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provider
- Kerry Reeves – Early Help – Children’s Integrated Services
- Zaynab Asghar – Nottingham Muslim Women’s Network (NMWN)
- Gareth Issac – Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club
- Jonathan Scott and Bahman Mohammad – Nottingham Law Centre
- Shanine Fasasi – Diversify Education and Communities CIC
- First Universal Enterprises Limited (FUEL)
- East Midlands Strategic Migrant Partnership (EMSMP)



UNITED KINGDOM RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

Project Title: United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme
Project Leader: Richard Martin
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 8

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Adel Hamad , Caitlin Sorrell (left Aug 2022), Kadria Fahmy, Jane Oakley, Sherene Bingham, Mai Ahmed (started Dec 2022), Hong Chi (started Dec 2022)

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 56 families - (217 individuals)

Project Description

The UK government launched the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) in 2021 as a continuation of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), but the criteria were expanded to accept vulnerable refugees globally, not limited to those affected by the Syrian conflict. Resettled individuals and families have been identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), based on criteria including serious medical conditions, survivors of torture and violence, and women and children at risk. Those arriving on this scheme receive the same long-term support from the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) as those who previously arrived on the VPRS between 2015 - 2021.

The NNRF has worked in partnership with Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County since the beginning of the VPRS in 2015, to provide specialist support to newly-arrived refugee families. Families remain on the scheme for 5 years and caseworkers from the UK Resettlement Team work intensively with new families for the first 2 years. This ensures that they have access to health services, benefits, schools, language learning, employment training and opportunities, and other services that provide them with opportunities to integrate and establish their new lives in the UK. The support provided is tailored to the needs of each family and is designed to encourage independence. After 2 years, families are moved to a drop-in service where they can receive advice and support for their remaining 3 years on the scheme.

As well as caseworkers supporting the families, the UKRS Employability Team works with all clients during their 5 years on the scheme, providing them with tailored employability plans, training courses and support in applying for voluntary or paid positions.

The clients we support are predominantly Syrian, but we also support clients from Iraq, Kurdistan, Somalia and Sudan.

Project Successes

- We are currently providing intensive casework to 40 families. The remaining families receive drop-in support from the UKRS Advice Worker to help them towards self-sufficiency
- The Employability Team have expanded their Employability and Life Skills programme in partnership with Nottingham College and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This course provides clients with education on social norms, culture in the UK, sexual health, equality and diversity and financial management amongst other important topics. The team initially focused on enrolling the most recently arrived families and then, as the course has developed, they have enrolled earlier-arriving cohorts with the aim to have offered the course to all clients currently on the scheme as well as those who have recently left
- 18 clients are currently in paid employment
- 1 client is in further full-time education
- 31 clients are regularly attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes through Enable to improve their English language skills

Major Challenges

Over the last year there have been numerous challenges that the team has worked hard to overcome.

- Many families have struggled to come to terms with rising inflation. There have been numerous cases of families struggling financially and caseworkers have had to work very hard with clients to enable them to manage their expenses. Families have often faced large increases in rent, which has caused a level of panic. In some cases, this has resulted in the need to work intensively with external partners to secure more affordable accommodation
- Problems with the new system the government uses to enable employees to prove their right to work has resulted in numerous clients, who have the right to work, not being able to access employment as the system doesn't recognise their right. It has been a lengthy process to find a resolution to this issue and unfortunately, this is still unresolved. As a result a number of clients have had offers of employment withdrawn which leaves them in considerable financial difficulties
- The resettlement team are seeing an increase in new families from Somalia. Currently the team does not have access to face-to-face Somali interpreters. Attempts have been made to recruit a Somali interpreter, but currently there has not been anyone appointed. Arrangements have been made to access interpreting over the phone; however, in some cases this has proved to be very difficult, such as for dental appointments. With more Somali families due to arrive in the future this is an ongoing challenge

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status
Roll out the life skills and employability course to earlier cohorts to give all clients on the UKRS the opportunity to access this course	This has been achieved and now all clients have been offered the course
Increase the numbers of clients throughout the scheme that are in paid or unpaid employment	There has been a significant increase in clients in paid employment
All adult clients that are receiving support from caseworkers to agree on structured action plans, tailored to their needs and aspirations, to facilitate their integration and development	All clients have agreed action plans with their caseworkers

Targets	Status
All adult clients to be able to access English language learning that is appropriate for their level and needs	All clients are registered with Enable on arrival
Support clients that are leaving the scheme to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain	Caseworkers have been supporting clients to do this
Employability Team to provide clients exiting the Resettlement Scheme with a work and education based action plan	This is in progress and the team are working through the cohorts to do this

Tamsin arrived in the UK with her family in 2019. She is blind and is unable to go out of the house independently as she requires someone to guide her.

Tamsin did not speak any English when she arrived in the UK and due to not being able to learn online she was unable to study English throughout the Covid restrictions. Her caseworker sourced a volunteer befriender who worked extensively with Tamsin, taking her out for walks, meeting other women and helping her with conversational English. Tamsin's caseworker and the befriender made referrals to organisations that can provide additional support with integration. As a result Tamsin has been able to access an English class based at a local charity for the visually impaired and a conversational class at a local church and is now receiving permanent support from Adult Social Care 6 hours per week to help her with tasks such as shopping.

Through her own determination and desire to integrate, coupled with the support received from the Resettlement Team and the befriender, Tamsin has taken enormous strides forward. She is able to book taxis on the phone and communicate with her caseworker in English. She supports other learners in her English class and is working towards taking part in volunteering opportunities.

Tamsin said *'The support that I have received, particularly from the befriender, has been fantastic for my English and integration. I was very isolated before but now I go to the gym, a women's group, I can order a taxi on the phone and speak to my caseworker in English. I have so much more confidence and freedom.'*

Tamsin's Caseworker added *'The transformation in Tamsin, from when she first came to the UK, is amazing. Her English is at a higher level than many other clients that arrived at the same time. Whereas before she would be very reluctant to speak to people she didn't know, now, she will converse confidently and has built a network of friends.'*

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Continue to increase the number of clients accessing paid employment
- Establish greater links with employment agencies and training providers
- To continue to develop strong relationships with partner agencies to provide the best support possible for clients in such difficult financial times

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Befriending groups, in Nottingham, Gedling, Newark, Ruddington, Southwell and West Bridgford
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) contacts in Nottingham and Newark, including Ian Brooks and Monica Bryce
- Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils
- Voices in Refuge and all the interpreters that have supported caseworkers and clients
- Zeenat Karim, OISC 3 solicitor
- Staffline
- Enable
- Refugee Roots
- East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (EMSP)
- Enable: English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) equipped2succeed
- First Universal Enterprises Limited (FUEL)
- Nottingham Educational Sanctuary Team (NEST)
- Nottingham Trent University



VOLUNTEERING

Project Title: Volunteering
Project Leader: Barbara S. Dhliwayo
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement - FTE): 1 (1FTE)

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Barbara S. Dhliwayo, December 2012 - present

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 123 (47% of all volunteers)
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 260 - 96 (37%) Male, 162 (62%) Female, 2 (1%) non-binary/other

525 hours of their time each week (equivalent to 14 full-time staff members) to deliver essential services. 31% of our volunteers also have lived experience of forced displacement, which adds value and credibility to our organisation.

Project Successes

We are extremely proud that we have, once again, been accredited with Investing in Volunteers, demonstrating excellent practice in volunteer management across the organisation. During the year-long process of self-improvement and assessment, we have updated key policies, clarified procedures, provided training for staff who manage volunteers and engaged volunteers in several consultations.

Major Challenges

A lot of interest in volunteering but not enough suitable roles to offer everyone a chance.

Our volunteers face challenges in their personal lives which can affect their availability to volunteer, sometimes at short notice. This sometimes causes gaps in services or staff members jumping in to cover.

Project Description

Volunteering at NNRF is an opportunity to get involved locally and make an impact on the lives of the asylum seekers and refugees we support. An eclectic mix of volunteers, from 52 countries and speaking over 42 different languages, provides a warm welcome and safe haven to those in need. Across over a dozen different roles, volunteers give their time, energy and commitment to solve problems, give advice, teach, cook, welcome, inform, interpret and much more. They are the heart and soul of NNRF, providing over

Some quotes from NNRF Volunteers:

'There's an ocean of need but I feel I can make a tiny bit of difference'

'When we came here, we needed to build new CVs and to get new experiences. That's why we took this opportunity to help others and to help ourselves as well. We give our experience to clients to give them hope'

'I'd like to thank the Forum, it has been very eye-opening and nice to think I have helped if only a little bit.'

'I will say that some of the attractions of being a volunteer with the Forum are:

- a dedication to helping people who have experienced a hostile environment and often continue to experience difficulties in their host country
- willingness to work together
- being allowed to have a degree of independence and initiative taking, whilst benefiting from the organisation's and its staff supports. This is particularly attractive for volunteers since it allows a balance of individual resourcefulness with the knowledge of understanding supervisors'

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Recruiting a new Volunteering and Engagement Coordinator to take on most of the operational tasks related to volunteer management
- Celebrate VOscars once again - the first volunteer awards ceremony since the pandemic
- Implement a digital volunteer database to better manage volunteers' data and engagement

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- Dave Hewitt, our loyal volunteering project volunteer
- All staff and volunteers who actively participated in the Investing in Volunteers accreditation process
- All volunteers, past, present and future, who choose to dedicate their time and effort to supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire through NNRF
- Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS), Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Investing in Volunteers - Volunteer Now

We are also remembering and appreciating Jean Crookall, our long-standing volunteer, who sadly passed away in September. She was an inspiration to us all, and she is greatly missed.



YOUTH PROJECT

Project Title: Youth Project
Project Leader:
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): Gary Lockhart (22.5 hrs), Valeria Aquino (10 hrs)
Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 Gary Lockhart: Youth Project Caseworker: started 4/1/2022, Valeria Aquino: Youth Project Activities Worker: started 11/2/2022
Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: 0
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): 80 young men, 9 young women

Project Description

The Youth Project provides client-centred holistic support, advice and assistance to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and young asylum seekers aged 13-21. This includes challenging Home Office age-assessments, referrals to local education providers, signposting to local community events and support groups, empowering young people to make choices and decisions and supporting them to access mainstream services to improve their emotional mental health and wellbeing.



By running a weekly youth club and other activities, we aim to help young people develop friendships and support networks, gain confidence with the English language, and develop a fulfilled life in the UK. This helps young people to navigate a complicated asylum system, which often has a negative impact on their emotional well-being. Through weekly Youth Club activities and a dedicated young person's caseworker we stay in touch with young people, ensure they understand changes in regulations and have access to services they need.

Project Successes

- Youth Club Participation has increased over this year
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes for young people who have not been allocated a place at college
- WhatsApp Youth Group – in operation for all young people to access information on events and comments /feedback
- The Youth Club has moved from the Mansfield Road Baptist Church to BASE 51 which is a more central location
- We have continued to have activities organised by Valeria, our Youth Project Activities Worker
- Ten-pin bowling has been a popular activity
- Day out to Alton Towers
- Base 51 has a gym and staff onsite which has been a success in benefitting young peoples' wellbeing
- Challenging Home Office Age Assessments
- Positive working partnership with Nottingham Educational Sanctuary Team (NEST) schools
- Signposting and referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Major Challenges

- Many semi-independent accommodation providers have been reluctant to share information, and so it has been difficult to fully support people at times
- Working as one part-time caseworker in the project
- Finding suitable services in the statutory and voluntary sector to meet the immediate needs of the UASC

Project Outcomes

Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
80 young people each year will directly benefit from this funding	Completed/achieved	The service is the only specialised service in Nottinghamshire for asylum-seeking and refugee children
Young people will have greater awareness of their own emotional health and wellbeing through 'emotional wellbeing' workshops, and through a wide range of activities, while gaining skills to identify and articulate their feelings and emotions, and to seek support to minimise the negative effects of stress in their daily lives	Completed/achieved	Through attending a variety of activities and emotional wellbeing events, the young people have gained skills necessary to seek help and support when required
Young people will feel safer in their community, and with an increased sense of belonging, by having a safe space to engage in activities which are meaningful to them. They will make positive choices about how they spend their free time, and develop sustainable relationships with each other and trusted adults	Completed/achieved	The young people have access every week to the youth club where they have a safe space to express and engage in meaningful activities
Young people will make better informed and independent decisions and display appropriate behaviour in a wide variety of contexts as they become more informed and empowered by increased access to information in a language and format relevant to them	Completed/achieved	Young peoples' WhatsApp group provides increased access to information relevant to their wellbeing status and to local community events

Simon was referred to the Forum after being placed in Interim Accommodation. He had been housed in an Initial Accommodation hotel with adults. He did not understand English and appeared to be confused and withdrawn. He was younger than the Home Office had decided he was (22), and he could be sent to Rwanda under the new government policy.

He attended the Forum as he needed some clothing. The advisers were concerned about his age and emotional wellbeing. Simon left without waiting to be seen and so a referral was sent to Youth Project.

I arranged an initial meeting at the hotel (with an interpreter over the telephone). I contacted Bhatia Best Solicitors to act on his behalf and request a new assessment to be undertaken by Nottingham Children's Services. Simon was given a SIM card. Simon's appeal was successful; it was accepted that he was a child, and he was placed in semi-independent accommodation by Nottingham City Council Children's Services. A referral was made to NEST for a place in September 2022.

Our ESOL Coordinator agreed to organise a special class for young people who wanted to learn English and were waiting for places in college/school in September; Simon attended some of the classes.

He connected with the Youth WhatsApp group, started to attend the youth club and meet other young people and integrated well.

A request to his social worker for a travel pass was successfully made prior to starting school in September 2022 and Simon was given a place at NEST and commenced full time education.

He was happy and stated he felt safe in his new accommodation with his peers. He attended the Youth Club and activities regularly. He was given an award for his 100% attendance at school and received a certificate. Simon continues to develop his English language skills and settle well in the community. He also continues to attend the youth club regularly.

Gary Lockhart: Youth caseworker

Plans and hopes for the coming year

- Promote activities for females only
- Develop Basic English classes for newly arrived asylum-seeking children over the summer holidays

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

- The Nottingham Educational Sanctuary Team (NEST) schools – Jude Clark (Head Teacher), Beth Hilditch (School counsellor) and all the staff
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – Sandy Redgate (Clinical Specialist nurse)
- Voices in Refuge – Matt Bedford
- Open Homes @Night stop – Justin Dicken/Freya Watson
- Bhatia Best Solicitors – Scott Laing and team
- University of Derby – Derby Legal Services
- Notts County Cricket Club – Ian Dipaolo (Deputy Community and Development Manager)
- Staff at Base 51
- St. Nic's Church – Ellie
- The Pythian Club – Ben Rosser



JUSTICE TOGETHER INITIATIVE (JTI) DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROJECT

Project Title: Justice Together Initiative (JTI) Development Grant Project
Project Leader: Sebastian Bretnall
Number of Project Team Staff (Staff Complement – FTE): 1

Project Team Members during 2022/23 (names, dates started/finished):
 N/A

Number of Volunteers during 2022/23: N/A
Number of Clients served (M/F/total): N/A

Project Description

The Justice Together Initiative (JTI) Development Grant Project was set up with the ‘end-goal’ to submit a collaborative bid alongside partners from across the East Midlands, to secure funding for the provision of immigration advice and casework in the region.

Process:

1. To establish and develop an East Midlands Immigration Legal Network (ILN) of partner organisations. These organisations are those who either deliver immigration/asylum advice directly, or whose clients require access to such advice. The network aims to create a better-connected sector in the region, by:

- facilitating partnerships and collaboration between practitioners and organisations
- facilitating referral pathways
- enabling collective problem-solving and advocacy development
- enabling the sharing of good working practices

2. To understand the present situation with regard to the provisions of immigration and asylum advice in the East Midlands, as well as the issues and barriers being experienced in the sector.

3. To encourage and facilitate a collaborative (regional) bid for a JTI Advice and Representation Grant. This has been proposed to the ILN member organisations (see below) and aligns with the general aim of working to improve the capacity of immigration and asylum advice in the region.

Project Successes

Upon commencing the project in April 2022, the initial focus was to establish contact with all potential ILN members to invite them to participate in the work. Meetings were held with all those who expressed an interest, to further explain the aims and ethos, as well as the potential benefits they could receive by participating in the network (and possibly the future collaborative bid).

25 organisations expressed an interest in joining the ILN. The majority of these are OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) -accredited charities, as well as law centres. It was most difficult to secure engagement and responses from the legal aid law firms in the sector (presumably due to their severe capacity constraints), however, we have been able to work with two firms who have participated in the ILN. Although the member organisations cover the vast majority of the East Midlands, a definite gap exists in respect of Lincolnshire.

All ILN members were invited to participate in the bid. This resulted in 9 organisations expressing an interest and submitting a proposal for what they wished to fund with part of the grant money. This is a larger group than originally anticipated, especially considering that the grant amount

being applied for would not be nearly sufficient to cover all of the proposals made by these organisations. The maximum possible grant amount is £500,000 for the whole East Midlands region, to be split over 3-year period. This represents just £167,000 for the region per year, and if split by each locality of participating organisations (Nottingham/Nottinghamshire, Derby/Derbyshire, Leicester, Northampton/Northamptonshire) amounts to only £40,000 per area per year.

Key Decisions/We agreed that:

- Community Advice and Law Service, Leicester (“CALs”) shall take the role of lead organisation. This is regarding the submission of the actual bid, as well as leadership of the partnerships created if the bid is successful (see below)
- In general the bid will consist of the bulk of the grant money going to OISC L3 ‘hub’ organisations in each area of the region. This will fund senior adviser/caseworker positions in these organisations, in order to secure or expand capacity of high-level advice across the region. In return for receiving the bulk of the funding, these organisations will commit a portion of these roles (roughly 25%) to ‘levelling-up’ organisations of a lower accreditation wishing to raise their accreditation and capacity. This ‘levelling-up’ work will most likely

consist of providing training packages, supervision arrangements and/or mentoring; however the exact packages are the subject of ongoing discussions

- In Nottingham this role will go to the Nottingham Law Centre
- The bid will also look to fund a Partnership Coordinator role, to be hosted by the lead organisation. This will be a part-time role, probably around 0.4 FTE. The purpose will be to lead and manage the formal partnerships created by the grant, e.g. the ‘levelling-up’ arrangements between organisations. In addition, this role will lead and develop the wider ILN, to maintain a forum for East Midlands practitioners, to facilitate further partnerships and development of services, and in general to continue the work to increase the capacity of immigration and asylum advice in the region

Major Challenges

- The initial sum of £500,000, when split across the region does not go very far. The major challenge has been how to have the biggest impact with the funding provided
- Working across a large geographic area with many partners, while working to a tight timeline

Project Outcomes

Outcomes/ Targets	Status	Reasons/comments
To submit a successful joint bid for the East Midlands	Achieved. The initial amount of £500K was reduced to £450K	This was a successful example of joint working across the region.
NNRF to secure support to develop 6 OISC level 2 Asylum and Protection registered workers (ASP) over the next 3 years, with support from Nottingham Law Centre	Details to be confirmed	

Plans and hopes for the coming year

We plan to apply for support for two Level 2 OISC workers, once they have been trained and registered

Appreciation: we would like to thank...

All those organisations who have been involved in the bid:

- Community Advice and Law Service (Leicester)
- Community Law Service (Northamptonshire)
- Derbyshire Law Centre
- Nottingham Law Centre
- The Race Equality Centre (Leicester)
- Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council
- Refugee Roots (Nottingham)
- Mojatu Foundation (Nottingham and Derbyshire)



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

- Across Borders
- African Institute for Social Development (AISD)
- Asylum Support Advice Network (ASAN)
- Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP)
- Base 51
- Befriending groups in Gedling, Newark, Ruddington, Southwell, West Bridgford
- Begin
- Belong
- Belper Helping Hands
- Bhatia Best Solicitors
- Bikeworks
- British Red Cross
- Cameroon Support Group
- Canal and Rivers Trust
- Care4Calais
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Chris Baxter – Willow Weaving
- City Arts
- Communities of Identity
- Community Advice and Law Service (Leicester)
- Community Law Service (Northamptonshire)
- Derbyshire Law Centre
- Diversify Education and Communities CIC
- East African Education Centre
- East Midlands Housing Group
- East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (EMSMP)
- Emmanuel House
- Enable
- equipped2succeed
- First Universal Enterprises Limited (FUEL)
- Framework Housing Association
- Hallam
- Halliday Reeves Solicitors
- Heya Nottingham
- Hope into Action
- HOST Nottingham
- Housing and Immigration Group (HIG)
- Ignite!
- Improving Lives Notts
- Investing in Volunteers – Volunteer Now
- Jawaid Khaliq Boxing Academy
- Kairos
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Lush Cosmetics Nottingham
- Mansfield Road Baptist Church
- Micro Rainbow
- Migrant Help
- Mojatu Foundation (Nottingham and Derbyshire)
- National Garden Scheme
- Nature England
- Nergiz Women's Group
- New Start
- NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Homelessness and Severe and Multiple Disadvantaged in Primary Care
- NHS Homelessness Voluntary Sector- Primary Care
- NHS Nottingham City General Practice Alliance
- Nonsuch Studios
- Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council
- Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT)
- Nottingham City and County Councils
- Nottingham City and County Social Services
- Nottingham City Council Community Cohesion Team
- Nottingham City Council Community Cohesion Team, School Transport
- Nottingham City Council, Changing Futures
- Nottingham City of Sanctuary
- Nottingham College
- Nottingham Community and Voluntary Services (NCVS)
- Nottingham Contemporary
- Nottingham Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Nottingham Education Sanctuary Team (NEST)
- Nottingham Health and Education Support (NHES) befrienders
- Nottingham Homelessness Voluntary Sector Forum
- Nottingham Law Centre
- Nottingham Muslim Women's Network
- Nottingham Night Stop
- Nottingham Playhouse
- Nottingham Refugee Week
- Nottingham Trent University (NTU)
- Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club
- Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) NHS Trust, Specialist Midwife for asylum seekers
- Notts County Foundation
- Nottinghamshire Deaf Society
- Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue
- Nottinghamshire Police Hate Crime Team
- Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) Trust Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) Trust Midwifery Team
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)
- Op COURAGE
- Pilotlight
- Rainbow Migration
- Refugee Action
- Refugee Football
- Refugee Roots (Nottingham)
- René House
- School of Artisan Food
- Senior Support Group
- Serco
- Sfice
- Sharewear
- St. Ann's Advice Centre
- St. Ann's Allotments
- St. Nic's Church
- Street Outreach Team (Nottingham)
- The Arches
- The Furniture Project
- The National Food Service
- The Pythian Club
- The Race Equality Centre (Leicester)
- Total Insight Theatre
- Towards Work Project
- Trent Vineyard Church
- Tuntum Housing
- University of Derby
- University of Nottingham
- Upper Parliament Street Health Centre
- Vanclaron CIC
- Voices in Refuge
- Wild Things Ecological Education Collective Ltd
- World Jam
- YMCA



CARE 4 CALAIS

Care4Calais, Nottingham

Care4Calais is a volunteer-run charity delivering essential aid and support to asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, Northern France and Belgium. A small but dedicated Nottingham team was set up during lockdown to support asylum seekers who were stuck in hotels.

Working with other organisations, to ensure we did not duplicate existing services and that we could meet real need, was central to establishing ourselves in the city.

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) has always been welcoming and supportive. In the early days, staff were happy to give advice and assist us to become an effective group, which could help to improve the lives of asylum seekers. Two and a half years later, Care4Calais Nottingham provides English conversation classes in three venues each week, holds a weekly social event, visits people in their homes, provides support outside normal working hours, encourages volunteering and transports people to hospital and schools.

Our aims are very closely aligned to NNRF. We want to help asylum seekers adjust to their new surroundings, gain confidence and restart their lives.

With the cost of living crisis, an acute lack of affordable housing and a hostile government, it is vital those who help the most vulnerable in society work together.

Sharing knowledge, best practice and contacts is a good use of resources and a powerful tool for providing the best services for those we support.

Abi said: "The Refugee Forum told me about Care4Calais Sunday socials and I go most weeks. I've helped to cook as well. It was great to eat food from my country."

Mo, who was referred to Care4Calais when his phone was smashed, said: "I wasn't able to contact anyone. It made me feel really bad. I didn't know what to do. When I was given a phone I couldn't stop smiling. I am very lucky."

Smart phones are always in demand as they are so important for asylum seekers and refugees to keep in contact with their families, for making their way around the city and keeping in touch with people and events.

At the same time they are very hard to source. **If you've upgraded recently and have your old one lying in a drawer, please consider donating them to NNRF so we can give them to people who would really appreciate them.**

If you are able to donate a phone, please take it to NNRF Reception at the Sycamore Centre and mark it 'for the attention of Karam Radwan'. Do make sure it is wiped clean of all data.

Thank you.
Karam Radwan, Nottingham lead, Care4Calais



Nottingham City of Sanctuary

City of Sanctuary is a small national charity building a network of welcome to people forced to flee their homes and arriving in the UK seeking sanctuary. Across the country, small groups of volunteers grow a network of welcome, working with individuals, community groups, schools and universities, libraries and the arts to encourage inclusivity and compassion to people from a forced displacement background.

Nottingham City of Sanctuary sees itself as an umbrella organisation, reaching out to the host community and encouraging them to join the network of welcome. We work closely with NNRF, creating links between them and schools, both the universities, arts organisations, sports groups and community gardens. By encouraging Nottingham organisations to embed solidarity and inclusion in their work we recognise and celebrate groups, who go above and beyond, with a sanctuary award.

The voices of people with lived experience are vitally important in our work and through NNRF we hope to bring these voices to the forefront. Working with NNRF we are also able to make sanctuary seekers aware of some of the opportunities available to them. For example, we recently hosted a meeting between Notts County Foundation, Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, NNRF and Nottingham Arimathea Trust to discuss providing sports activities for asylum seekers in the city.

It is through social contact and facilitating friendship that changes are made and people can build a better future together.



Nottingham Arimathea Trust

Since moving to the same site in the summer of 2021, Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT) and NNRF have worked closer together than any other time.

We have worked in partnership on a wide variety of things including:

- Project work – the new Fresh Claims project was launched in July 2022, to support destitute refused asylum seekers in Nottingham to access legal representation if they do not have a solicitor. This Partnership Project, developed and supported jointly by NAT and NNRF, continues to evolve
- Case work – NAT and NNRF have shared client base, we find that working together is mutually beneficial to both charities and especially our clients, ensuring that they receive co-ordinated, complimentary and specialist services
- Events – together we have hosted 2 events this year, a summer party during Refugee Week in June and a Festive Celebration in December
- Fundraising – In January we were both fortunate to be the beneficiaries of the John Rutter ‘Come and Sing’ event at the Royal Concert Hall. This was a tremendous event that was organised by amazing volunteers of both charities

Having merged with HOST Nottingham in the New Year, NAT are very grateful for NNRF’s support and providing the space for the Clothes Bank.

We, the NAT team, would like to thank NNRF for their support and solidarity in our shared work with asylum seekers and refugees, especially at a time where we find ourselves in a negative and punitive environment.

NNRF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The work of NNRF is overseen by the Board of Trustees whose role is to supervise the running of the organisation, set and review strategic direction, ensure we follow our legal obligations and pursue a sound and stable financial policy. There are places for 12 Trustees, elected by the NNRF members, and an additional two co-opted members.

All Trustees are volunteers and come from a variety of backgrounds, so each has different areas of knowledge and skills, for example leadership, project management, strategy development, safeguarding, Human Resources, Health and Safety, finance, understanding of issues facing asylum seekers and refugees, organisational skills, bid writing and grant applications. The Board undertakes a Skills Audit and Self-Assessment of Performance annually to ensure that we are working to the best of our ability and to identify any gaps or issues that need addressing.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of Board membership, particularly welcoming those who have lived experience alongside relevant skills for governance.

The full Board meets every two months. At these meetings we discuss the direction of the work of our various projects, review financial reports, discuss and decide issues related to the future work of NNRF and consider the implications, for our clients and our work, of changes in policy and legislation which affect asylum seekers and refugees.

There are 6 sub-committees whose roles are to support the different aspects of NNRF’s work. The sub-committees meet monthly and each produces a report to the bi-monthly Trustees’ meetings for information or discussion. Each sub-committee has a mixture of Trustees, volunteers and staff and has clearly defined responsibilities:

- Finance deals with matters such as income, expenditure, budgeting and budget forecasting to ensure the Board is kept fully informed of our financial position and, in particular, is aware of any potential shortfalls in order to look at alternatives
- Human Resources ensures the organisation operates within employment law and follows best practice for the benefit of all NNRF’s employees and the work of the organisation
- Safeguarding’s remit is to ensure the organisation creates and maintains a safe environment for children and adults and actively promotes their wellbeing in our service delivery
- Health and Safety’s purpose is to ensure that NNRF abides by Health and Safety legislation and good practice and provides a safe environment for staff and all who visit the centre

- Grants’ role is to search for, investigate the suitability of, and apply for funding to allow our existing projects to continue along with any new projects or priorities that may be proposed
- Fundraising has the responsibility of raising unrestricted funds, those that are not tied to a particular project and can, therefore, be spent wherever the organisation desires

Throughout the year there are also working groups set up to consider specific issues and report back to the full Board, e.g. reviewing policies, or governance issues. Trustees are also part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group alongside staff and volunteers.

The Board recognises its responsibility to identify, assess and manage any risks linked to the achievement of NNRF’s objectives. The Board and its sub-committees have developed a register of the risks that could face the work and safe operation of NNRF. This register:

- Identifies risks
- Assesses risks in terms of their likelihood and impact
- Sets out actions to be taken to reduce the risk where possible

The Risk Register covers the range of risks that the organisation might affect, including financial, governance, operational, external, regulation and reputational risks.

Sub-committees are responsible for some sections of the risk register and consider risk at each sub-committee meeting. The risk register is formally reviewed at the full Board meeting twice a year in June and December. It is updated as necessary with regard to the likelihood of the risk, its possible impact and mitigating actions. However, risk management is ongoing and sub-committees can also bring changes to the risk register to any Board meeting if necessary.

The main risks faced by the organisation at present are considered to be staff well-being and burn out, financial security and government policy affecting asylum seekers.

Conflicts of Interest

New Trustees are asked to set out their interests in accordance with Charity Commission guidance (Conflicts of interest: a guide for charity trustees (CC29)) by completing a declaration of interests form. All Trustees are required to recomplete this form on an annual basis. Trustees are also asked, at each meeting of the Board of Trustees, to declare any new interests

If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact chair@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



List of Trustees

Jennie Fleming has been a Trustee since November 2018	Chair of Board of Trustees; Finance Committee member; Human Resources (HR) Committee member	Re-elected as Chair at AGM 1 December 2022
Helen O'Nions is an academic at Nottingham Law School and since November 2021 has been vice-chair of the Board of Trustees	Vice-Chair of Board of Trustees	Elected at AGM 25 November 2021
Graham Ferris is Trustee and Treasurer of the Forum. He used to teach law at NTU. He is happy to support the work of the Forum, by being part of the team that oversees the organisational and formal structures that enable the great staff and volunteers to carry out their work	Treasurer; Chair of Finance Committee	Elected at AGM 1 December 2022
Bilal Hazzouri is a Senior Impact and Business Analyst, International Development, Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation expert. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Advisor		Elected at AGM 1 December 2022
Amdani Juma	Health and Safety Committee	Re-elected at AGM 26 November 2020
Councillor AJ Matsiko		Co-opted 9 March 2020
Carol Mombeyarara is an accounting professional with lived experience and is passionate about helping people in need to advance their lives and influencing strategic business decisions	Finance Committee member	Elected at AGM 26 November 2020
Stella Nickolay is a longstanding NNRF member and volunteer and has been a Trustee since November 2018	Chair of Grants Committee until December 2022	Re-elected at AGM 25 November 2021
Allan Njanji	Lead of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group	Re-elected at AGM 1 December 2022
Heidi Richardson is a supporter of the work of NNRF and an English language volunteer	Fundraising Committee	Elected at AGM 1 December 2022
Pete Strauss is a retired Primary School Head teacher and a volunteer with the General Advice team	Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility	Re-elected at AGM 1 December 2022
Roger Tanner brings to NNRF his experience of managing secondary schools in the Nottingham area as well as being an active trade unionist and regular volunteer at the Forum	Chair of HR Committee	Re-elected at AGM 1 December 2021
Darren York lives in Nottingham and is Chief Executive of The Conservation Volunteers	Lead of Governance Working Group	Elected at AGM 26 November 2020
David Sadler, a retired accountant with some experience of the voluntary sector	Treasurer; Chair of Finance Committee	Resigned 1 December 2022
Edith Iheama	Chair of Health and Safety Committee	Resigned July 2022



David Sadler



Edith Iheama



Bilal Hazzouri



Amdani Juma



Allan Njanji



Heidi Richardson



Jennie Fleming



Helen O'Nions



Cllr. AJ Matsiko



Carol Mombeyarara



Pete Strauss



Roger Tanner



Graham Ferris



Stella Nickolay



Darren York

Revision of NNRF Articles at Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) 1st December 2022

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum's articles were old and out of date. After reviewing Charity Commission guidance and taking advice, the Board of Trustees chose to revise them.

The process by which these changes were made was as follows:

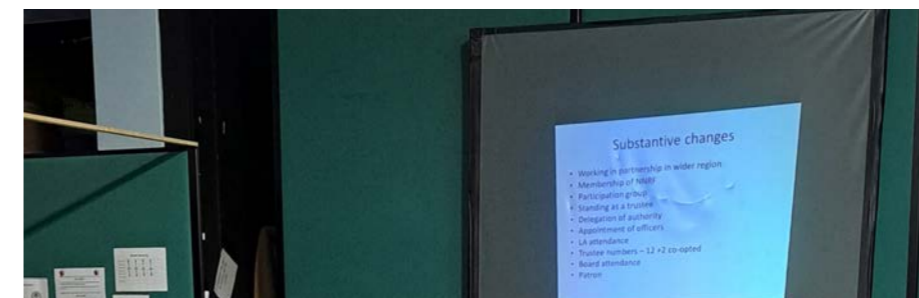
- decision by the Board that the NNRF's governing document was out of date in many areas and needed to be revised
- getting legal advice and support in the redrafting from The Legal Advice Centre at Nottingham Trent University
- the Board discussing and agreeing the changes

The revisions were presented to the Extraordinary General Meeting of members, together with a revised membership policy, on 1st December 2022. The changes were agreed unanimously, subject to some amendments on the membership policy that were subsequently incorporated. They were approved by the Charity Commission in May 2023.

We wished to make our governing document clearer and more transparent. Most of the changes relate to this updating. Other specific changes include:

- **Partnership:** we have included the potential for partnership working in the wider region, outside the area of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This is not a substantial change but highlights our partnership work so that funders can know we may work in collaboration with other organisations
- **Age of trustees:** reduced from 18 years old to 16 in line with Charity Commission guidance and to improve diversity and inclusivity

- **Membership:** we have included reference to a separate Membership Policy which sets out more clearly who our members are and their rights and responsibilities. We have excluded staff members from being able to nominate Trustees (in line with Charity Commission advice) and this helps separate governance and operation. We have removed the subscription membership in favour of a clearer new membership policy which has been ratified at the EGM with minor amendments. This also included removal of corporate/organisational members which we did not actually have
- **Appointment Removal and Disqualification of Trustees Section:** we have reduced the number of Trustees to 12 with the possibility of co-opting 2, making an absolute total of 14 (previously 20). We have limited the time individuals can serve as Trustees to two 3-year terms with the allowance for an exceptional extra term. The period of acceptable absence from Board meetings has been reduced to two consecutive meetings from three, to ensure Board members are actively engaged
- **Regulations:** have been modernised to more clearly identify the relationship between Board and Sub-committees in line with our delegation of authority document
- **Officers:** removal of Board secretary as an officer of the Board position. It is difficult to recruit to this role. We had legal advice on this. We already have a company secretary in addition to an independent minute taker
- **Inclusion and clarity on role of client participation group:** the precise mechanism for feedback from the group is to be determined. We are committed to ensuring accountability to our members and beneficiaries
- **Conflicts of interest:** modernised and clarified for greater transparency



FUNDRAISING REPORT

With the continued easing of Covid-related restrictions on group activities, 2022 to 2023 has proved a much better year for fundraising, for both internally and externally organised events.

In April/May, Experian staff took part in running, walking or hiking from Land's End to John O'Groats, plus the Yorkshire 3 Peak Challenge, and raised £3,080 for us.

Hallam were finally able to hold their Digital Summit, deferred since 2020 because of Covid, which made the fabulous sum of £15,000 for the Forum. Tribute and thank you must go to Olivia Wood, our paid Fundraiser in 2020, who was solely responsible for Hallam choosing us for this; thank you Olivia.

Our Christmas Appeal, online and off, raised £6,274 and the concurrent Christmas e-card promotion raised £246.

After a two-year break, 'Come and Sing' at The Royal Concert Hall returned in January to an almost sold-out attendance of singers, their families, friends and supporters led by composer and conductor, John Rutter.

"Ticket sales were unnervingly slow to begin with but picked up considerably towards the end of 2022 with a possible full house on the cards. On the morning itself the atmosphere was of cautious excitement while dozens of volunteers and Concert Hall staff busied themselves in preparation for the singers arriving. However, once the singing started we could relax a little knowing that everyone was in for a wonderful afternoon."

At its end the audience was a sea of beaming smiles and clapping hands as they loudly cheered and applauded John Rutter and his accompanists. As ever our eternal thanks go to John-without him there would be no Come

and Sing. Thank you also to The Royal Concert Hall staff and management for allowing us to put on this event"; (the Come and Sing organisers).

The total raised after expenses was £15,088, shared this year between the Forum, Nottingham Arimathea Trust and Host Nottingham, with the Forum receiving £6,035.

The Beekeeper of Aleppo was staged at the Nottingham Playhouse in February 2023 which many of us attended. We were allowed to have a bucket collection following one of the performances which raised £1,200.

Website donations generated £35,000 income with a further £8,000 collected through other payment portals e.g. Just Giving.

For the record, we received £19,000 of one-off donations ranging from £5 to £3,000. Some of these were responding to either a particular event or a fundraising appeal whilst others are people who have donated previously.

In 2022/23 the total revenue raised from donations and fundraising, including gift aid, was £108,000 which was 8% higher than 2021/22.

Once again we thank everyone who contributed financially to the Forum last year. Without these funds we would not be able to offer the services we do and any donations however small are much appreciated in these challenging economic times; we are immensely grateful for your continuing love, solidarity and support.

The Fundraising Committee; Hilary Hare Duke, Emily Heaven, Bob Blatchford, Barbara S Dhliwayo, Zanele Ndhlovu, Dave Hewitt.



FUNDERS

- ASDA Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- DWP Hardship Fund
- Evan Cornish Foundation
- Forrester Family Trust
- Framework Housing Association
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Jessie Spencer Trust
- JN Derbyshire Trust
- Justice Together
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Loughborough Town of Sanctuary
- National Garden Scheme – Community Garden Grant
- Nottingham City Council
- Refugee Action
- Sherwood Open Gardens
- The AB Charitable Trust
- The Bramley Fund
- The Gemini Trust
- The Gordon Trust
- The Henry Smith Charity
- The Jones 1986 Charitable Trust
- The Lady Hind Trust
- The Mbili Charitable Trust
- The National Lottery – Awards for All
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The National Lottery Community Fund and The European Social Fund
- The Pat Newman Memorial Trust
- The Postcode Community Trust
- The SCSJD Charitable Trust
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- The Southall Trust
- Whitaker Charitable Trust



FINANCIAL REVIEW

The year to 31st March 2023 was one of consolidation after the disruption of Covid. We were successful in securing multi-year funding for a number of core projects, reopened our café and recruited a Client Participation Caseworker to ensure we are providing the most appropriate support service for our clients and to facilitate community events.

In that financial year we made a surplus of £13k. Our unrestricted reserves fell by £8.5k to £207k, primarily because our unrestricted income streams did not rise sufficiently to meet the cost of living pressures on support staff salaries and building-related overheads.

Turnover from charitable activities increased by £103k to £999k. This was due to the hard work of our Grants Committee securing additional grant funding for our projects. It included £180k over 3 years from the Henry Smith Charity for our Anti-Destitution Project and £480k over 3 years from The National Lottery for support for our advice services, interpreters and volunteers. We were delighted to win a competitive tender to provide a support service for all refugees resettled in Nottinghamshire under the United Kingdom Resettlement and Afghan Resettlement Schemes.

This new contract is for 3 years from 1st October 2022 with the possibility of a further 2 year extension. Under the contract we also continue to support families who arrived before 1st October 2022 under these schemes who are still entitled to receive resettlement support. Growth in income from the resettlement contract compensated us for a fall in income from other Nottingham City Council (NCC) contracts which were cut by around 15% as a result of pressures on local government finances. Income under the new contract will be dependent upon the number of families arriving in Nottinghamshire over the next 3 years, but we expect it to be worth between £1m and £1.2m.

Income from donations and legacies fell by £15k. We received a record amount of donations in 2021/22, including a number of one-off donations, as a result of the Ukrainian and Afghanistan crises. The decrease in donations since

was largely offset by our ability to run more fundraising events that had been cancelled because of Covid, including our annual Come and Sing event at The Royal Concert Hall. Fundraising income rose by £11k to £26k.

The primary task of the Forum's Community Interest Company, Voices in Refuge, is to supply interpreters to the Forum and also generate additional revenue by supplying interpreters to NCC and other 3rd party entities. This revenue grew by £15k to £32.5k as demand grew with the return to normality.

Staff costs increased by £53k (7%). A full review of staff salaries and job grading, conducted with Human Resources professionals, was completed in April 2022 with average increases of around 6%. Average number of staff employed increased by 4, consisting primarily of caseworkers. Other costs are broadly at 2021/22 levels apart from increasing food costs as a result of reopening our café and cost of living increases, increasing utility charges driving an increase in our building rental and a one-off charge of £7k for food tokens for clients housed in hotels. The latter cost was funded by a specific Government grant.

Turning to the consolidated balance sheet on page 58, we invested £15K in the provision of work laptops for all staff, to facilitate more flexible working. Trade debtors have increased as a result of timing differences on NCC invoices and a one-off invoice for £18k that was paid in April. Net current assets are virtually unchanged at £350k. Our cash balances of £614k contain £346k of deferred income due to timing differences between the receipt of grant income and expected grant expenditure as contracted for in the grant agreement. Our unrestricted reserves stand at £207k, which represent around 2.5 months of recurring operating costs. This is consistent with our reserves policy but slightly below the level of reserves recommended by the Charity Commission.

We are pleased to end on a positive note by saying we are expecting to deliver a balanced budget in 2023/24.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Current Financial Year

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	2023	2023	2023	2022
Income from:				
Donations & Legacies	73,009	9,387	82,396	97,673
Charitable Activities	175,539	823,379	998,918	896,095
Other Trading Activities	58,145	0	58,145	32,204
Investments	2,788	0	2,788	77
Total Income	309,481	832,766	1,142,247	1,026,049
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	324,541	796,938	1,121,479	1,008,576
Other trading activities	6,327	0	6,327	5,935
Total expenditure	330,868	796,938	1,127,806	1,014,511
Net income/(expenditure)	-21,387	35,828	14,441	11,538
Transfers between funds	14,323	-14,323	0	0
Tax on activities	-1,820	0	-1,820	-285
Net movement in funds	-8,884	21,505	12,621	11,253
Fund balances at 1 April 2022	215,801	136,052	351,853	340,600
Fund balances at 31 March 2023	206,917	157,557	364,474	351,853



CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	2023	2022
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	14,323	2,316
Current assets		
Debtors	128,335	104,600
Cash at bank and in hand	613,933	642,104
Total	742,268	746,704
Liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-392,117	-397,167
Net current assets	350,151	349,537
Total assets less current liabilities	364,474	351,853
Income Funds		
Restricted funds	157,557	136,052
Unrestricted funds	206,917	215,801
Total consolidated funds	364,474	351,853

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	2023	2022
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash generated from/(absorbed by) operations	-13,837	-44,693
Corporation tax	-1,820	-285
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	-15,657	-44,978
Investing activities		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	-15,302	-2,346
Interest received	2,788	77
Net cash generated from/(used in) investing activities	-12,514	-2,269
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-28,171	-47,247
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	642,104	689,351
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	613,933	642,104

VOLUNTEER

NNRF relies heavily on our volunteers in all areas. There are many ways in which you can support the work of NNRF and build your skill set while you do.

We appreciate any time you have, whether it's a couple of hours to help at an event, or a regular commitment to volunteering with one of our projects.

If this is something that interests you, please send an email to:

volunteer@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

DONATE

Donations are one of our most crucial income sources which allow us to continue delivering the services we offer, specifically our anti-destitution work.

If you'd like to make a one-off or regular donation, please visit our website (donations page) for details.

We also take food donations for our community café and anti-destitution projects.

www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



Nottingham & Nottinghamshire
REFUGEE FORUM

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Nottingham
NG3 4NB

☎ 0115 9601230
✉ info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk
💻 www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

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**STAY IN TOUCH**

Thank you for your interest in the work of NNRF. We would love to stay in touch by sending you our monthly newsletter.

To sign up, please visit:

www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk



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REFUGEE FORUM