



Reading
Refugee
Support
Group

Reading Refugee Support Group



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

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Charity reg no: 1098058
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Annual Report and Accounts



2020-2021

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A message from our Patron

Lord Alf Dubs



The Covid pandemic was a challenge to us all. Our day to day lives changed totally. It is difficult to understand just how tough life became for refugees and asylum seekers on top of everything else they have had to deal with in their journey to get here. RRSg have responded well and took many services online quickly. Well done.

Forbury Gardens, where three innocent people lost their lives, was another challenge faced by RRSg. As Patron, I was pleased to be able to help and advise the trustees on strategies to best protect the staff and services users in a world where social media is beyond control, where the wrong stories get the headlines.

Small grassroots charities like RRSg are vital in delivering meaningful support to those who most need it. I will continue to try to hold the Government to account over the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill, which is likely to criminalise and punish many people seeking protection in this country.

Together we make a good team. I am proud to be your Patron.

Alf Dubs



A message from our Patron

Olivia Graham Bishop of Reading



It has been a challenging year for refugees and asylum seekers. Contrary to the stories in the media, compared to the millions of people fleeing for their lives worldwide having lost everything, only a small number seek sanctuary in the UK.

RRSG and Reading City of Sanctuary seek to offer a welcome, friendship and support in Reading in West Berkshire and in Wokingham. What could be more important? The lockdown due to Covid-19 made RRS's job more difficult, at exactly the same time that the number of dispersed asylum seekers living in hotels in Berkshire started to increase. Together with the High Sheriff of Berkshire Mary Riall, I visited one of the hotels and was heartbroken by some of the stories we heard. It is so evident to me that, in addition to good social and practical support, appropriate and timely mental health support is crucial for all who have experienced the trauma of displacement and worse – an opinion reinforced by the terrible events in Forbury Gardens in June last year.

I am so proud to be a Patron at RRS. My heartfelt thanks and prayers go to all the staff, trustees, their incredible volunteers, and to every asylum seeker and refugee we work with and support.

+Olivia Graham
Bishop of Reading

VISION & MISSION



Our Vision is for an inclusive and supportive society where refugees and asylum seekers are treated with humanity, dignity and respect.

This year we have maintained our campaigning. We continue to support Lift the Ban and argue for Safe Routes.

We continue to look for solutions to the problem of No Recourse to Public Funding". With the support of our emergency accommodation fund, in partnership with Reading Rotary and a St Lawrence Trust grant, we accommodated 2 asylum seekers meaning they didn't have to sleep rough.



Our Mission is to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers through providing support and advice, promoting awareness and facilitating integration into the local community.

This year the Reading City of Sanctuary befriending programme has been successfully expanded. We now have over 40 amazing volunteers.



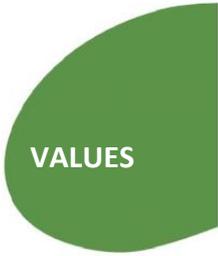
We have streamlined our casework support service in response to Covid-19 and maintained a service throughout the pandemic, reaching more services users.

We continued our work towards embracing a culture of "nothing about us without us" and have appointed a service user with lived experience to our board of trustees.



We have stepped up our work as an advocate for dispersed asylum seekers living in hotel accommodation. A number of serious safeguarding issues were raised on their behalf and we continue to do all we can to protect people living in very challenging and dehumanised conditions.

We continue to develop new partnerships with other charities and agencies. Red Kitchen and Care4Calais are doing fantastic work supporting dispersed asylum seekers.



Our Values are central to the work of the RRSG and guide the staff and trustees. We will check in every year to ensure we are upholding these values which are:

1. That social justice, human dignity and respect as prescribed by the European Convention on Human Rights and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) must be upheld.

RRSG has continued to publicly challenge misrepresentation of the facts and issues facing refugees and asylum seekers in the media where appropriate and effective.

2. That diversity including race, culture, ability, sexuality, gender, age, religion and other beliefs are beneficial to the community and should be celebrated.

RRSG has continued our collaboration with arts organisations, our partnership working with the LGBTQ+ community and the Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality. Reading City of Sanctuary is developing a number of initiatives and we are planning an Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

3. That the rights of individuals defined in the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the responsibilities of signatories to that convention should be respected and upheld.

RRSG were signatories to several national campaigns this year and we have lobbied MPs on a number of local and national issues.

4. That working in partnership with other organisations improves effectiveness and spreads understanding.

Thank you to the many organisations across Berkshire who we work alongside, in particular Healthwatch, Red Kitchen and Care4Calais in supporting asylum seekers in hotel accommodation, and Readifood for their ongoing dedication.

5. That maintaining confidentiality in working with those we seek to help is of the greatest importance in generating trust and security.

RRSG increasing lived experience representation on our board of trustees this year. Working towards realising the goal of 'nothing about us without us', we introduced a Deputy CEO position now held by someone with lived experience.

6. That the services and activities of the organisation should be accessible to all people who need them regardless of their individual circumstances.

We worked hard this year on increasing internal communications across all teams and support activities, to ensure increasingly holistic support services.

April 2020 to March 2021

In this extraordinary year of Covid 19 we found ourselves running an organisation in ways none of us had foreseen. Our staff worked primarily from home and the Board of Trustees carried out its work without any of us meeting up in person. This was, of course, a story repeated across the UK. In that sense it was not exceptional. However, what was exceptional in my view was the deep commitment to continue supporting refugees and asylum seekers displayed by our employees, volunteers and trustees. We all know how the pandemic has put a great strain on our personal and family lives. What stands out for me as I reflect on this year is the way in which the people involved with this organisation still managed to find the will and the drive to continue providing high quality support to our clients. What they understand is that, if it has been difficult for the population generally, it has been so much more difficult for people trying to rebuild their lives after fleeing terror and conflict. Thank you everyone. Because of you we ended this difficult year strong, confident and hopeful.



In the course of the year the key areas of our governance work were as follows:

Financial Sustainability – our Treasurer’s Report will give more detail but it is worth noting that at the end of 2020 we secured a substantial grant from the Lloyd’s TSB Foundation matched by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. This gave us a degree of security in very difficult times for local charities. Furthermore, the Foundation is a top class and demanding funder and to secure such an award from them in the face of stiff competition – for which our staff must take the credit - is no small achievement.

Supporting Our Staff – working with the Chief Executive we returned again and again to the need to support the mental health of staff who are exposed to stressful situations. We approved a restructure which involved the appointment of an existing staff member to the post of Deputy Chief Executive. Part of the aim here was to allow the Chief Executive more time to concentrate on strategy. After the restructure we set up non-managerial support for the new deputy provided by our Vice Chair. We reviewed the pay of managers. We initiated a system of giving staff some time at each Board meeting to talk about their work. Unfortunately, Covid scuppered our plans for a trustee and staff away day but this has been rescheduled for September '21.

Maintaining Best Practice – we reviewed several policies and procedures including Confidentiality, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding and Lone Working. We carried out a risk assessment of the organisation and made sure our financial procedures were up to scratch.

Developing a User Led Organisation – No-one has a better understanding of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers than those people themselves. Ensuring that this understanding is embedded in the organisation is challenging work that needs to be tackled on several levels. During the year we appointed another trustee with a refugee background as a trustee, making 3 in total. In our restructure we appointed Flora Roshi as Deputy Chief Executive. Flora, who originally came to the organisation as a refugee has served it longer than anyone else. We conducted user feedback surveys about our services and secured input from our users to inform our new business plan which came into force in April '21.

Campaigning – providing support services to refugees and asylum seekers is our primary purpose but when we see other organisations badly letting down these vulnerable people we have every right to challenge them. Sadly, the main culprit in this respect is the Home Office which seems to have learned very little from the Windrush scandal and the report that followed it. During the year we continued campaigning for the right of asylum seekers to work while they wait, sometimes for years, for the Home Office to make a decision on their asylum claim. We had to challenge the treatment of the many asylum seekers who were placed in local hotels during lockdown by contractors appointed by the Home Office. An example of this was when we had to threaten the Home Office with legal action under human rights legislation over the failure to provide face masks for the asylum seekers. At the end of the year the Home Secretary outlined her asylum reform proposals to parliament. These were so appalling in their implications for people claiming asylum under international law that, along with just about every refugee support organisation in the UK, we signed up to the national campaign to defeat these disgraceful proposals. See our website for a full explanation of our position.

Forbury Gardens – the terrible murder of 3 local men in Forbury Gardens on June 20th 2020 was a major concern for our board of trustees. Because the murderer, now in prison, was known to us, we had a perspective on the events that we felt to be important. We were not able to make any public statements on the matter until the police investigation had been completed and the trial concluded in the new year. We continue to have a strong concern that lessons should be learned by all the relevant agencies so that such an event does not occur again.

Trustees and Patrons – during the year we said goodbye to Bet Tickner, our longest serving trustee, who was a major asset to the trustee board. Thank you Bet. The board was strengthened by the appointment of Thabo Makuyana whose commitment to empowering refugees and asylum seekers and making their voice heard will be a strength to us. Mary Richardson was appointed as Vice Chair and I am glad to have her experience and judgement to call on in my work as Chair. Finally, a big thanks to our two patrons Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading and Lord Alf Dubs. Far from being just figureheads these two people have been actively engaged in supporting our work and our Chief Executive throughout this difficult but productive year.

Mike Martin MBE Chair

I imagine thousands of CEO reports from charities across the country are going to begin with 'it's been a challenging year'.



I am going to go one further and say this has been the single most challenging year of my entire 25 year+ voluntary sector experience.

A tragedy unfolded on 20th June this year in Forbury Gardens where three innocent people, James Furlong, David Wails and Joe Ritchie-Bennett were murdered. Our thoughts remain with the family and friends they left behind. A public inquiry is expected so we can't yet comment on circumstances other than to say we believe this tragedy was totally avoidable had we collectively got together and put in place the mental health support that was so badly needed.

Mental Health is in a lot of conversations at the moment. We can see the mental wellbeing of our RRSB service users has deteriorated (see Page 12). Post Covid, this is going to be a huge challenge for everyone, service users, staff and volunteers alike. As CEO am I worried? No. I have watched the staff and volunteers at RRSB pull together during dealing with everything thrown at them this year and they have done so with such compassion and care for their fellow human beings. I am proud to be part of this team.

The arrival of dispersed asylum seekers accommodated in hotels in Reading and West Berkshire marks a new stage in RRSB's development. We are not strictly involved in supporting people in hotels, but we believe there are huge gaps in the Home Office contracts with private sector companies and a national charity. It was only a matter of time before people were knocking on our door. Our Patron Bishop Olivia and the High Sheriff of Berkshire Mary Riall visited people in one hotel and were immediately so concerned they were motivated to help raise the funding to put in place a small mental wellbeing support programme. Our question to the Home Office is 'why isn't this already included?'

How can RRSB respond to these issues? We haven't the space at the moment to help everyone. So our long term plan is to raise the funds to buy our own centre. We run a drop in centre once a week, a safe space for refugees. We need to offer this support 5 days a week. RRSB has been active for 26 years in Reading. We now work across West Berkshire and Wokingham and I suspect our services will be needed for another 26 years.

Nick Harborne CEO



In a year heavily affected

by the COVID-19 pandemic the Charity has performed well, offsetting the many adverse operational issues by making successful applications for the Government grant funding intended to alleviate the problems we experienced. Two major grants, from the Lloyds Bank Foundation and the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport Community match Challenge, totalling

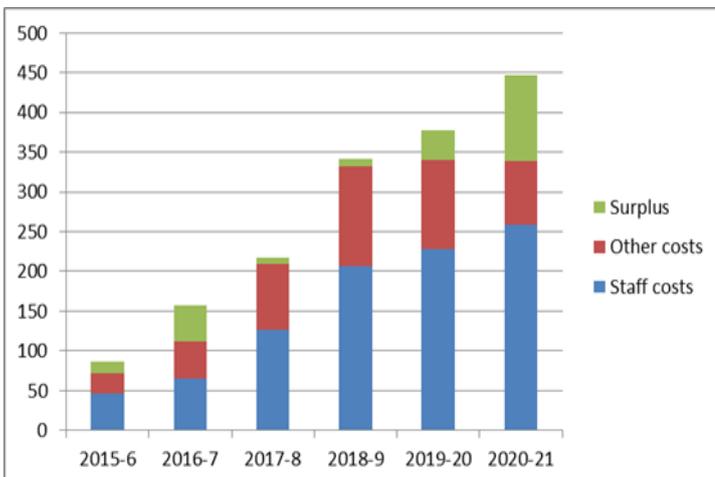
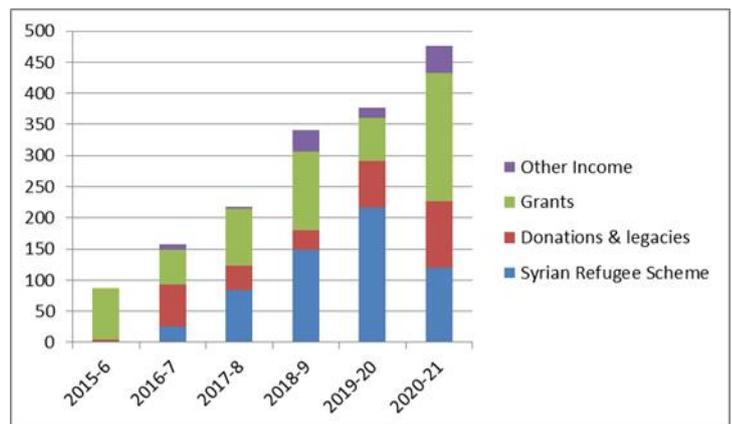
£ 111,159, served to provide the core support needed to continue our activities throughout the year and to move forward with adequate reserves to support a following year of recovery.

Income from the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme fell markedly as expected but donations overall held up well and reserves were given an unexpected boost towards the end of the year by a legacy receipt of £25,000.

Expenditure reduced slightly due to tight controls with increases in payroll costs being offset by reductions in premises and consultancy costs arising from changes in operating practices during COVID.

Income by type

A combination of successful grant applications and opportunity cost savings have resulted in an operating surplus for the year of £108,442. It should be noted that this is in part due to the accounting convention that the £50,000 Covid Recovery grant be all treated as income in the year awarded rather than over the next two years, where in fact it will be deployed from reserves as intended by the grant terms.



Allocation of income to expenditure

The Charity is therefore able to enter 2021-22 with reserves of £241,705, which are adequate to enable it to meet its obligations under the under the Government Grants and to maintain an operating reserve of three months expenditure. Trustees consider this requirement to be £85,000 based on these accounts.

Jon Linley, RRSB Treasurer



Our Achievements, Performance and Service User feed back 2021 (2020)

Casework Support

- Female service users **38%** (47%), male: **57%** (53%) (9 unidentified)
- **Top three** OISC* enquiries: new asylum applications, failed asylum applications and 5 year leave to remain visa renewals.
- **Top three** general casework enquiries: Health/Medical, Education/school, Welfare Benefits.
- RRSG’s casework support services responded to **511 contacts** totalling over 1920 hours case work. *Office of Immigration Services Commissioner

Where are refugees coming from? Top 7 countries.
Sudan
Pakistan
Syria
Kenya
Iran
Afghanistan
Sri Lanka

Drop in Centre

- We held **102** (98) Drop In Centre sessions with English conversational classes and job clubs.
- There were 760 (2019) attendances.

Volunteering

- At a conservative estimate over **70** people regularly volunteered for RRSG, donating over **7110 hours** of time at a value of over **£102,683***

Food Parcels

- Working partnership with Readifood, we distributed over **884** food parcels.

Reading City of Sanctuary Pop Up English Classes

- We have provided in the region of **560** hours of one-to-one support to clients over the past year supported by over **20** volunteers

User Involvement

- We held **0** user forums due to Covid this year but managed to conduct **2** user feedback surveys and **1** annual Mental Health Wellbeing Survey.

Diversity

- **3** trustees have **lived refugee experience**.
- **62%** of the staff team belong to BAMER* communities . **46%** are male & **53%** female. **1** senior manager has **lived refugee experience**.

*<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc376/index.html>

*Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee



In February 2020 RRSG registered as a licenced user of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (WEMWBS) and undertook our first baseline survey across our service user community. We will repeat this survey on an annual basis to help ensure our policies and services are reflecting the support needs across our service user community.

2021 (2020) Results

Levels of wellbeing amongst the RRSG client group have, unsurprisingly, reduced over the last year, when the world was in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic.

52.6% (43.68%) RRSG service users were found to be below the **UK average for wellbeing**—an increase of 9% from last year.

17.9% (13.38%) of RRSG service users were found to be below the score of 40 for the **NHS low wellbeing** threshold—an increase of 4.5%.

The national picture also reflects this. Mind’s survey <https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you/coronavirus-research/> shows a 60% decrease in mental health during 2020. Office for National Statistics shows that wellbeing decreased and anxiety increased (7.5% and 12.5% respectively)

Satisfaction with RRSG support during Covid-19 increased significantly by 17.4%. This is a positive finding and a mark of the continued work, provided in different ways, that was very much appreciated by the client group. The usual ongoing support was seen as less good – down 6.3%. Overall this survey suggests that whilst people have personally been negatively affected in terms of their wellbeing, they have been appreciative of the overall support offered by RRSG.

Where RRSG can improve

There have been issues in terms of making contact and speaking to people, which has been a difficulty for many working remotely. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has complicated day to day operations, RRSG will strive to ensure it regains the full confidence of its service users.

RRSG have become increasingly aware of the lack of mental health support for dispersed asylum seekers being accommodated in hotels. Last year many people spent up to 10 months during lockdown trapped and isolated.

With the support of the High Sheriff of Berkshire Mary Riall, Reading Bourgh Council and Berks West CCG , RRSG extended our National Lottery funded mental wellbeing programme to cover people in the Hotel, run by Anne-Marie Gowen from Unlock your Wellbeing .



COVID-19 turned all our lives upside-down, and its impact on our Fundraising was no different.

While our clients needed more support than ever before, funding our services became very tough. We quickly saw the year's calendar of fundraising events cancelled, with races, challenge events, charity football matches and our Gospel Carol Service, losing us an estimated £30,000 that would have funded the services which were under increasing pressure.

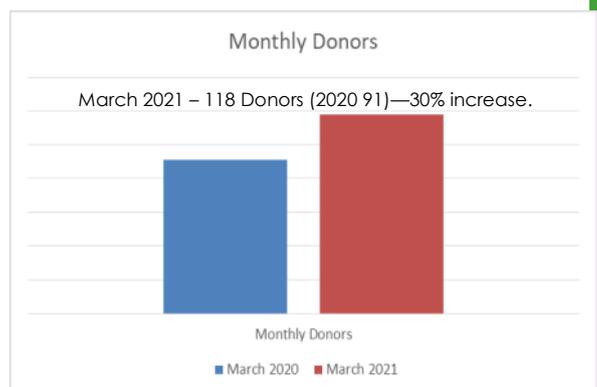
It wasn't all doom and gloom however. We were able to deliver our flagship Refugee Week film event entirely online, thanks to support from Deloitte, selling a record 192 tickets to 'For Sama'. With last-minute changes we were also able to deliver a socially distanced Reading Legal Walk in September 2020, raising over £6,000 with a record 26 walkers taking part.

We launched our first crowdfunding campaign in September to fund our Drop Ins and to guarantee a safe space for refugees in Berkshire. It was a massive success, receiving celebrity endorsements from Michael Rosen, Sanjeev Baskar and Alf Dubs, and raising £25,096 from 200+ donations.

In December we launched our first match-funding campaign with The Big Give Christmas Challenge, raising £8,200 in seven days to fund our Advice Service which experienced a 400% increase in demand due to COVID-19.

We launched our Legacy Fundraising Programme during the autumn. Following training, peer research and depth interviews with supporters, we worked with a local designer Aiden Barefoot to produce a Legacy Information Pack for anyone wanting to leave us a gift in their Will, available to download now: <https://rrsg.org.uk/legacies/>

Our main Fundraising priority is increasing monthly regular giving and we have been successful increasing regular giving by 36% this year.



We are incredibly grateful to have received funding from Heineken, Berkshire Community Foundation, SEGRO Centenary Fund, Reading Place of Culture, Migration Exchange, The National Lottery, Lloyds Foundation, Lloyds DCMS Fund, RVA and Berkshire West CCG.

Thank you to everyone who has supported RRSG this year. You have made a difference.

Jonjo Warrick Fundraising and Communications Manager



**PARTNERS &
SUPPORTERS**



Our three year partnership with Deloitte Reading launched this year and it's been a huge success, with enthusiastic volunteers, pro-bono services and numerous fundraising events raising an incredible **£10,684** and this was during 2 lockdowns!

This was the second year of our Corporate Partnership. We have worked on developing a professional annual impact report. Though COVID cancelled lots of plans we were incredibly grateful for their support throughout the year. Their technical support rescued our Refugee Week film event, they provided volunteers for our new Befriending service, they donated laptops for isolated families, as well as fundraising and donating money.

Special thanks to our partnership managers Charlene McNeil, Dan Barlow, Rosie Woodall, Maria Batsalova, James Beale, Claire Butler, as well as Lucy Baston and Alicia Balraj.

Reading Rotary Club

Rotary in partnership with the St Laurence Trust provided funding for our Emergency Accommodation Fund. We offered safety and accommodation to 2 people this year who would have otherwise had to sleep rough.

Care4Calais and Red Kitchen

Both volunteer led organisations have stepped up support for asylum seekers living in dispersed accommodation offering food, clothes and support over the year. This was especially impressive given the challenges Covid put in front of them. Amazing work, guys!

Readifood

Always there, rarely thanked. Readifood have been providing food parcels for those in need across Reading for years. A big thank you to Alison and her team for all the support they give our service users.

Reading Quakers

Quietly but consistently supportive of refugees and asylum seekers, and of enormous support to RRSB in many areas.

Carnation Trust

Our fundraising capacity is enhanced and strengthened as a result of your support.

WBAR—West Berks Action for Refugees

Invaluable befriending and support from a fantastic bunch of volunteers in West Berkshire.

Thank you



This year has been challenging for all of us and a good reminder of the importance of coming together and supporting the most vulnerable people in the community. This year we supported 19 families across three Local Authorities: Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire.

This was a challenging year for the families. As for most of the vulnerable people in the UK, especially those who struggle with not speaking English, it was much more difficult to adjust to the changes and to remain up to date with government regulations on CV19. Lockdown has setback families becoming independence, as English lessons for parents were interrupted, as was the social aspect and engagement of normal life.

The staff had to adapt quickly to respond to families needs and the manner in which they were supporting them during this difficult time. Everything was moved online. In some cases the families didn't have IT equipment or sufficiently understanding how to use what they did have, for example in opening and navigating email accounts. As a lot of information about school was sent by email, the team helped parents where they could.

The team kept the families updated on the current government CV19 regulation and how they could keep safe as well the importance of vaccination and helping with booking to get vaccinated, complicated by the fact GPs were not able to provide interpreters during this time. Again our team stepped in and ensured clients could access their GP.

For every challenge the clients faced the team worked together to overcome them and provide support. The team continue to work with the families helping them to gain confidence in their abilities in becoming more independence. Despite all the difficulties we have discovered new ways of supporting clients digitally which has been valuable for us and our clients. as they have been able to learn about using technology, which provides them with a useful skill they can use in the future.

Family x – This family arrived in the UK 2.5 years ago, now the daughter 18 years old is doing very well with her education, she is studying Child Care Level 2 course in college. When she arrived, she did not speak English but she was keen to study and wanted to become a nurse. The caseworker supported her through the years, attending parent meeting, discussing with teaches support plans that would maximise her ability. The caseworker explored all option that were available and encouraged her not to give up and to keep trying to reach her gaol to be a nurse. Now she is happy with the course and is looking forward and hoping one day she will become a nurse.



Our advice service

deals with a wide range of queries ranging from support with immigration status changes and understanding of the processes, dealing with immediate risk of destitution, accommodation issues and ongoing challenges with mental health. Our casework team is led by Mahmuna Hasnath, supported by

Hussam Allahham. Over the last academic year we have greatly benefitted from recruiting three Pro Bono Law students from the University of Law (Reading and Guildford), one Law student from the University of Reading and a recently qualified Para Legal. The students received training, shadowed our Solicitor during triage and booked appointments and provided remote help during the early stages of lockdown. Thank you to Kaylie, Bronte and Oscar. It has been a pleasure to have you with us.

There is a growing trend in clients needing support with applying for indefinite leave to remain as well as an increase in clients require advice and support in applying for fee waivers and extended leave to remain.

39% female 61% male
111 new clients accessed our support services
532 different enquiries.

We have had an influx of set protection applications for indefinite leave to remain; this is in relation to families under the Syrian resettlement scheme. Several of the families shared the same date of expiry of leave to remain which has required substantial casework time

Top three OISC casework support enquiries:
· failed asylum applications
· indefinite leave to remain applications
· further leave to remain applications.

collating and preparing these cases.

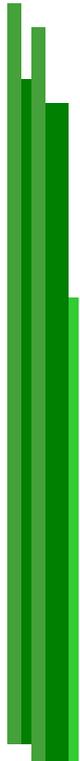
increase in the numbers of clients requiring support in fee waiver applications and immigration applications based under article 8. We have also seen a growing trend of no recourse to public fund restrictions being imposed by the Home Office and have successfully lifted several of the same.

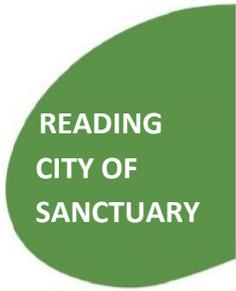
With the closing down of other local organisations we have seen a steep

Future developments at RRSg

We will be providing a new service which is in collaboration with the Home Office, the Home Office navigator scheme. This service will allow so many service users to have a direct dialogue with the Home Office and our clients will be able to find out the options best available to them, from the perspective of the Home Office, with no pressure to move forward with anything discussed in the meeting.

Mahmuna Hasnath OISC Casework Team Manager





RRSG helped set up Reading City



of Sanctuary (RCoS). Reading gained City of Sanctuary status in 2017. This is a small snap shot of what has been achieved this year.

Befriending Programme

The purpose of the Befriending programme is first and foremost to facilitate interaction between sanctuary seekers and the local community in line with the national 'City of Sanctuary' vision. It is a 'welcoming' activity which promotes awareness raising of sanctuary issues among established communities.

The One-to-one Befriending programme involves informal English language sessions between volunteer befrienders and sanctuary seekers, set in the community environment, or online. Though the primary goal is to improve the language and soft skills of refugees, the initiative also strives to reduce isolation and loneliness, promote social integration and to build practical and employment skills.

The headline for the befriending programme is that over the past year just under 2000 hrs of one-to-one sessions have been delivered by our growing number of trained befrienders. At the start of the pandemic, the befriending programme had 12 active pairs so the growth during what has been a very challenging time is a great achievement.

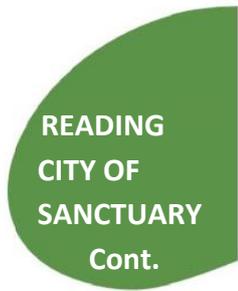
Testimonies

Volunteer 1: I'm very much enjoying my one-to-one Zoom calls with my client. Our conversations tend to go in a variety of mutually interesting directions; his English is advanced enough to generate its own subject matter, and we usually talk for 90 minutes or so! [8 March 2021]

Volunteer 2: he is just so confident compared to how he was a year ago! The new job has worked out really well for him, he is clearly very happy indeed to be in full time employment and he's looking really fit on it! [15 July 2021].

Sanctuary Work

In addition to 'welcoming' activities, Reading City of Sanctuary seeks to work with key local mainstream organisations to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to people of sanctuary-seeking background. This work is defined as 'Stream Work' and uses a strategic framework known as 'Sanctuary Awards' which employs the 'Learn, Embed and Share' principles of institutional change.



Cafes of Sanctuary

We have been very pleased to have reached a total of 6 cafes of sanctuary, all participating in the Coffee Bank scheme, where people of sanctuary-seeking background are able to access a free coffee and a snack. [The Map of current coffee banks is here:](#)



Reading University of Sanctuary

In the last year the university have re-affirmed their commitment to pursuing the University of Sanctuary Award. They have created a dedicated website page and convened a Sanctuary Working group on which we as staff members sit. They have 6 ongoing sanctuary initiatives, the most notable one being the 12 annual Sanctuary Scholarships. We are developing a list of prospective scholarship recipients.

Arts Stream

We were delighted to work with University of Reading and Ultra Red on I CARE art project based on sound. We had more than 10 online sessions. The sessions were lead by Anne Kontopoulou. The project was presented to public on Reading Assembly and in Refugee week. The Rising Sun has made an initial commitment to progress towards an Award.

Gardens of Sanctuary

Though there are several organisations interested in the award, Hempen Farm have made significant progress via their 'Growing Solidarity' project. We have recently received their award application which is waiting to be assessed.

Library of Sanctuary

The Central library has expressed initial commitment to become recognised as a library of Sanctuary but work has stalled as a result of Covid. Despite this the library staff have presented to our befrienders and responded when we have asked for access for people in the hotel.

Reading Borough Council

Reading Borough Council are already recognised as a 'Council of Sanctuary', however the process for award changed in December of 2020, meaning that the RBC will have to reapply to continue to be recognised as a 'Council of Sanctuary'. Two sessions have been held with key councillors to explain the process and the work of the National City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network and the response has been encouraging.

Maggie Filipova-Rivers RCoS Co-ordinator

DROP IN
CENTRE

Due to several lockdowns,

the Monday and Wednesday drop ins were held online until August 21 this year when face to face service resumed very Monday from 10:30am – 1:00pm, with Covid regulations in place.—face coverings are for staff and volunteers and attendees are encouraged.

The objective of the Drop-In is to provide refugees and asylum seekers with a person centred and efficient service. As well as it being a social hub and a place to access support or speak to case workers. The Drop -In is also a place for clients to improve their language skills with the help of our fantastic volunteers.

The Drop-In Coordinator and dedicated volunteers provide a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for clients and help them to feel like part of a community, promoting integration and hopefully ease the loneliness and isolation that some if not most refugees and asylum seekers no doubt experience.

We were delighted that so many people joined us on line, and in between locks downs, for our walk talk and tea sessions: our covid friendly response to getting out and about, improving English and enjoying being in each others company! Our thanks to Monty's Café who provided the tea, outdoors of course.

Monty's is one of our fantastic Sanctuary Cafes. If you buy a coffee, you can pay for 2 and leave one in the 'coffee bank' for a refugee to enjoy.



41 Addington Rd,
Reading
RG1 5PZ

Jude Haste Drop-In Co-ordinator

For the year ending 31st March 2020

	2021	2020
	£	£
Income Resources		
Fee income	115,899	216,163
Grants, donations	287,700	144,290
Legacies	25,000	0
Other Income	18,383	16,290
Total Income	446,982	376,743
Expenditure		
Wages and salaries	258,171	213,571
Freelance and consultancy	8,496	12,303
Cost of delivering services	36,631	35,067
Administration costs	10,391	9,314
Staff training and development	2,665	4,290
Travel and subsistence	2,502	8,367
Publicity and marketing	411	3,936
Meetings and events	35	9,614
Office equipment	2,439	0
Membership and subscriptions	1,230	3,161
Professional fees	634	2,929
Premises	13,674	36,716
Depreciation expense	819	328
Volunteer costs	443	538
Total Expenditure	338,540	340,133
Net income / (expenditure)	108,442	36,610

SPECIAL THANKS

Grants and significant Donations

Statutory Partners

- Reading Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

As always, whilst we have tried our best to include an acknowledgment to everyone who supports us, we are so sorry if we have inadvertently missed someone. Please do let us know and we will correct the situation immediately.

Grants

Heineken

Berkshire Community Foundation and SEGRO Centenary Fund

Reading Place of Culture

Migration Exchange

The National Lottery

Lloyds Foundation

DCMS

RVA. / Berks West CCG (Mental Health Community Grant)

London Legal Support Trust

Donations

Adam Moss AKM Geoconsulting

Barrett & Co. Solicitors

Daneshill Prep School

Deloitte Reading and Deloitte 5 Million Futures Team

Fellowship Educational Society

Geotechnical – James and Shaun (Laptop Donations)

**PARTNERS
& FUNDERS**

Continued....

Ian Korner

Keith Jerome

Mary Riall High Sheriff of Berkshire

Monday Charitable Trust (The Big Give)

Nick Caiger-Smith

Peter and Liz Driver

Petr Sadilek

Practical Solutions Intl

Rapid 7

Reading Catenian Circle

Reading Quakers

Reading Rotary Club and St Laurence Trust

Reading Trades Union Council

St James & St William of York Churches

St John's Church

Tannery Trust (The Big Give)

The Big Give

The Carnation Trust

Unite Reading (Abbey Gardens)

University of Reading Marketing,
Communications and Engagement Team

Legacies

In memory of Anne Marie Goodwin

In memory of Edward Hyslop Milligan

Special Thanks

Julie Williams and Lighting Fires

Rank and File

City of Sanctuary UK

Reading Healthwatch

Connect Reading

RVA

RAN

RISC

Fiona Talkington

Reading Fringe

The Oracle

The Quakers

The Dialogue Society

Education Fellowship

Reading Muslim Council

Berkshire Muslim Council

CommiCare

As always, whilst we tried our best to include an acknowledgment to everyone who supports us, we are so sorry if we have inadvertently missed someone. Please do let us know and we will correct the situation

Our Volunteers and Supporters are the unsung heroes at RRSB. We wouldn't be able to run RRSB without the incredible support of our volunteers, supporters and friends. Thank you for standing by RRSB during this difficult year.

Thank you all.

Drop-In and Admin

Naomi	Lottie	Marina	Mo	Margaret	Merry
Margaret	Frances	Ricky	Francis	Michael	Louisa
Cecilia	Stephen	Mike	Colin	Tomson	John
Adrian	Cristina				

Fundraising and Events

Peter and Liz Alice C.
Driver

Casework Team

Kaylie Bronte Oscar Caitlin

RCoS Advisory Group

Martin Sulayman Victor Alice C Lorraine Nick

RCoS v Pop Ups & Befriending

Lucy	Zhiying	Nida	Daniel	Colin	Hana
Molly	Jasmin	Abigail	Samantha	Oliver	Graham
Matthew	Sophia	Marc	Sharifah	Peter	Hilary
Hannah	Sally	Hilary	Amy	Edward	James
Hazel	Rhian	Barakah	Humaira	Nilufer	Rosie
Ian	Michael	Florraine	Mulan	Fatou	Naomi
Martin	Hazel	Alysia	Saskia		

STAFF TEAM

2020-2021

**Goodbye, good
luck and
thank you!**

Samera	Abbas Majid	
Hussam	Allahham	
Bernard	Amoh	
Cristina	Barba	30/07/2020
Izi	Coley	30/07/2020
Tony	Cornwell	
Magdelane	Filipova-Rivers	
Isabella	Fleitas Fermin	01/05/2020
Anne Marie	Garwen	
Soha	Hafez	
Shady	Hagag	
Nick	Harborne	
Mahmuna	Hasnath	
Jude	Haste	
Adrian	Lawson	
Claire	Mitchell Harris	30/09/2020
Flora	Roshi	
Hadil	Tamin	
Jonjo	Warwick	

Thank you to a fantastic staff team who all go above and beyond what is expected of them to help people, often in quite a challenging environment. RRSB would be no where without the loyalty, dedication and compassion of staff and volunteers, past and present.

Thank you.

TRUSTEES



Mr Mike Martin MBE (Chair)
Voluntary Sector Expertise



Mrs Ram Kosozi
Proposals & Contracts
Lived Experience



Ms Bet Tickner (Resigned 17/11/20)
Former RBC Councillor



Dr Mary Richardson (Vice Chair)
Education Lead



Mr Faraj Ali Alajeeli
Human Rights Lawyer
Lived Experience



Mrs Linda Stacey
Training, Careers & Development



Mrs Emily Lloyd
Corporate Fundraising



Mr Jon Linley (Treasurer)
Finance



Mr Richard Hanson-James
Business and Insurance.



Mrs Emma Broomfield
HR Lead



Mrs Charlene Wattle
Safeguarding Lead



Thabo Makuyana
Human Rights Activist
Lived Experience (joined Sept 20)



***“Try to be good to each other, all of you.
Be brave, and be the kindest
human beings you can be.”***

Alice Driver

13th December 1990 - June 6th 2019

Note:

All personal details of individuals mentioned in case studies have been changed to protect people's anonymity and confidentiality.,

We have consent to publish pictures from those who feature in them.

LEAVE A
LEGACY IN
YOUR WILL

Why Leave A Will

Writing a Will lays out exactly what you want to leave your friends and family - without one intestacy laws decide who gets what from your estate. Writing a Will is easier than you think, it ensures your loved ones are looked after and will make things simpler for them at a difficult time.

Leaving a will can also help the causes you hold dear to continue transforming lives long into the **future**.

<https://rrsg.org.uk/legacies/>

You Can Help The Next Generation Of Refugees

Remembering **Reading Refugee Support Group** in your Will can give hope to the **next generation** of refugees in Berkshire.

We've spent over 25 years helping refugees in Berkshire, and our aim is to be here for refugees long into the future. Every year, hundreds of men, women and children reach Berkshire having faced unimaginable horrors and escaped from war, violence and persecution. Many have been trafficked or were victims of modern slavery.

We offer them a safe space, practical support, education, and social activities to help them get back on their feet and rebuild their lives here in Berkshire.

By remembering **Reading Refugee Support Group** with a gift in your Will, no matter what size, you can help us give that **lifeline** to the men, women and children who need our **support** for years to come.

What Your Gift Can Mean

Each year **HUNDREDS** of refugees need our support in Berkshire, and that number continues to grow.

Leaving a gift in your will can help us continue successful programmes like our Drop In Centre that helps refugees to feel less isolated and improve their mental health. It could fund our football team that lets refugees make friends through sport, or our Homework Club that aids children to achieve their potential at school. A Legacy gift could even enable us to create new projects that will touch people's lives in new ways and help them to succeed.



Give the next generation of refugees
a lifeline with a gift in your Will

Reading Refugee Support Group





WE NEED YOUR HELP

The demand for vital casework support for refugees and asylum seekers is increasing day by day. Our waiting lists are getting longer. RRSg relies on public donations and support to fund this free service.

We are asking 1000 people in Berkshire to donate £3.00 a month.....
.....a cup of coffee a month!

This will allow RRSg to employ another Caseworker to provide vital and free advice and support for refugees and asylums seekers..

You can make a **MONTHLY** donation online at: www.rrsg.org.uk/donate.

If you are a taxpayer, gift aid will automatically be added to your donation.

You can also make a donation by direct transfer. cheque or cash. Please complete the Gift Aid form below if you are a taxpayer. **This allows us to claim an additional 25% of your donation back from the government, for example, if you donate £100, we receive £125!**

- Cheque (payable to Reading Refugee Support Group)
- Cash (enclosed)
- Bank Transfer to: Account: 50095528 Sort Code: 08-90-16

Amount
£

I enclose my donation to **Reading Refugee Support Group** Charity No 1098058 to help provide vital support to asylum seekers and refugees. **Please tick the correct box** below.

I declare that I am a UK tax payer and have paid income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax reclaim on my donation. I want RRSg to reclaim tax on this donation and any future donations until I inform RRSg otherwise.

I am not a tax payer and I am not eligible to reclaim gift aid.

giftaid it

Please return this form with your donation to: reception@rrsg.org.uk

Full Name

Address

Postcode:

Signed:

Date: