

Barnet Refugee Service



ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

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Foreword from the Chair



Migration is a well-known fact of life and being an immigrant is mainly a voluntary act by people who are looking to improve their lives. On the other hand being a refugee is when a person is forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or atrocities. This is when the suffering starts!

The lack of control over one's life choices, being forced to flee one's own home, family and familiar surroundings. That is when Barnet Refugee Services (BRS) comes to The fore to support the broken hearts and souls of these individuals who have left all but their dreams behind.

Our organisation has been offering a holistic approach in embracing the needs of each individual client who has come to us for help. From supporting them with language skills, immigration and legal advice to looking after their wellbeing through the provision of echotherapy (gardening), women's and men's groups, homework clubs, social events and gatherings we do our best to make them feel included and welcome and this is what BRS does best!

This would not have been possible without the support of our trustees, committed volunteers and the dedicated team led by our Executive Director Nazee Akbari, all of whom work tirelessly to improve our offerings for our clients.

My gratitude also goes to our funders, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Big Lottery Fund, Lyon's

Charity, Muslim Hands and many other Foundations, Trusts, organisations and individuals who have been financially supporting BRS as well as our individual clients.

"...being a refugee is when a person is forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or atrocities. This is when the suffering starts!"

In going forward not only do we strive to provide the best of services to our local clients, we are also looking forward to sharing our experience and good practices at the national level. We are very ambitious and would like to disseminate our holistic approach to other charities, health and social care organisations in support of the full integration of refugees and asylum seekers in our communities.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Message from the Director



2016/17 has been an eventful year. I reflect back on the year with mixed emotions. Sadly, on the global level, the displacement crisis continues to grow, with an estimated over 65 million people now displaced worldwide, of which less than 1% are resettled each year. Within the UK, our government's policies regarding people seeking asylum have gone from bad to worse, leaving hundreds of men,

women and children languishing in uncertainty in acute mental health crisis. What we do know, however, is that when we work collectively we can achieve great things.

Throughout these challenging times, I am extremely proud of our work here at BRS in standing up for what is right and fair. In 2016-17, BRS has continued to grow, to increase its profile and most importantly, to support and promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, standing alongside them to help make sure that their voices are front and centre. BRS carries this philosophy through every aspect of its work. This year, our Holistic Model of Support continued to go from strength to strength. In particular our projects to respond to the needs of newly arrived Syrian refugees were the highlight of our work.

All of the work that you read about has been carried out by BRS's hard-working staff and over one hundred volunteers. Together with BRS volunteers, staff responded to a large number of enquiries and supported over 1200 clients within different projects. I am proud of the incredible care and commitment they all provide and wish to acknowledge them all for that enthusiasm and devotion.

On behalf of the team and all our clients, I would also like to express sincere thanks to all our funders who have enabled us to provide the services that we

set ourselves to do, including: NHS Barnet, The Big Lottery Fund, John Lyon's Charity Trust, Muslim Hands UK, and an anonymous donor who supported part of our advice work, and many others.

I would also like to thank all supporters and friends of the BRS who give donations and help us in achieving our aims. I particularly would like to express my gratitude to those who have asked their friends and family to donate to BRS for birthdays or other occasions.

“When we work collectively
we can achieve great things.”

My deep-felt appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees and in particular our Chair, Zoe Aslanpour and our Treasurer, Ponusamy Karunaharan, who all gave me and the team on-going guidance, support and motivation.

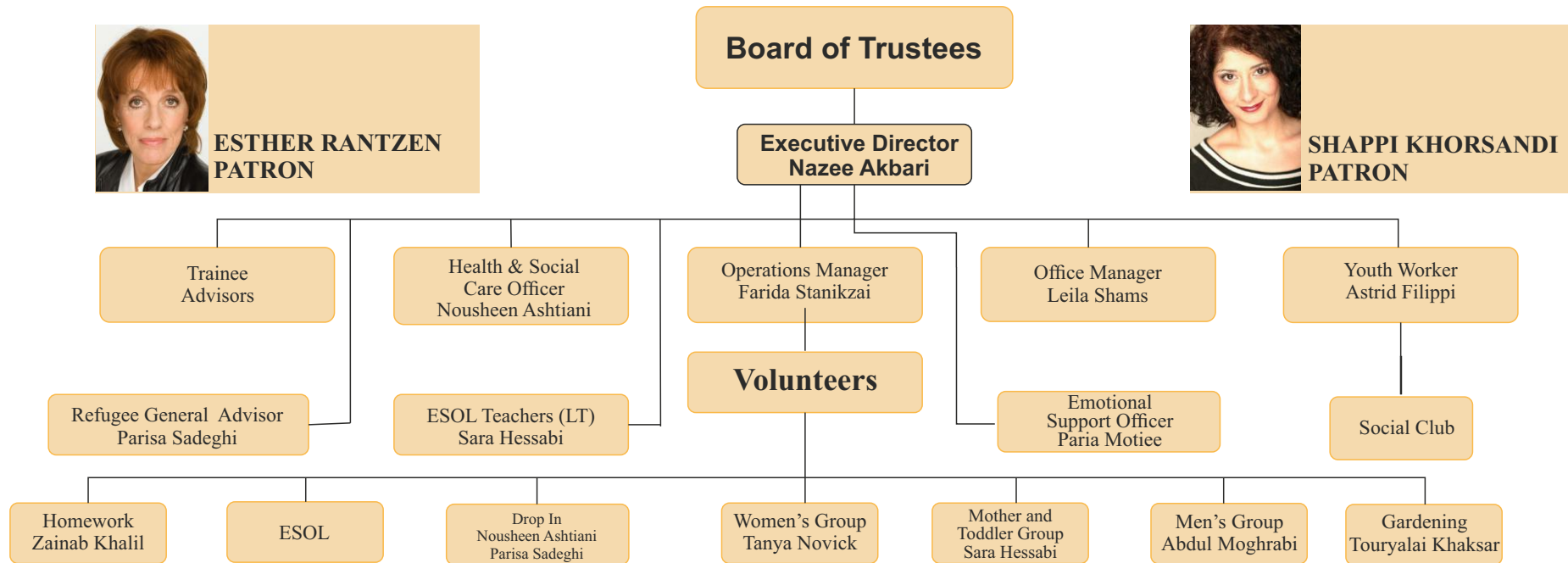
Despite the difficult political environment, we are more determined than ever to stand with the many UK citizens of all backgrounds who want our nation to respond with humanity and justice to people seeking protection from persecution.

Nazeem Akbari
Executive Director

Organisational Chart

Trustees Serving in 2016-2017

Zoe Aslanpour (Chair)
Ponusamy Karunaharan (Treasurer)
Miranda Levey (Secretary)
Roger Selby
Shubhi Raymond
Peter Salomon
Golnar Bokaei
Helal Atayee



Our Staff



Nazee Akbari
Executive Director



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager



Leila Shams
Office Manager



Nousheen Ashtiani
Health &
Social Care Advisor



Astrid Filippi
Refugee Youth Worker



Sara Hessabi
ESOL Teacher



Paria Motiee
Emotional Support
Coordinator



Parisa Sadeghi
Refugee General
Advisor



Abdul Moghrabi
Men's Group Coordinator



Tanya Novick
Women's Group
Coordinator



Touryalai Khaksar
Gardening Coordinator



Sira Inchusta Carrillo
International Intern



Nasir Ata
Visiting Solicitor

Director's Report

Annual Report for the year 2016/17

This document accompanies the Annual Accounts, copies of which are available on request.

Introduction

Barnet Refugee Service is situated at:

8th Floor

Hyde House

The Hyde

London NW9 6LH

Telephone 020 8905 9002

Fax 020 8905 9003

Email advice@b-r-s.org.uk

Website www.b-r-s.org.uk

Registered Charity: 1107965

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Incorporated as company September 2004

Our Memorandum and Articles of Association are available for inspection at our office.

Financial Statement

A summary of our audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016 can be found on page 32.

The Board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position as 31st March 2016 and considers that the charity is in a position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

It is the policy of the trustees that reserves to cover three months' operating costs plus potential redundancy liabilities should be built as soon as is practically possible. The minimum reserves will be

two months' operating costs.

Current Funding

Funds from the following funders were received during the year and have been utilised towards achieving our aims:

- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The Big Lottery Fund
- John Lyon's Charity
- The Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- London Catalyst
- Muslim Hands UK
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- Lush Charity Pot UK
- The Genesis Community Fund

Our History

Barnet Refugee Service is a charitable organisation formed by the merging of two projects established in 1997; the Refugee Health Access Project and Homeless Action in Barnet - Asylum Seekers Project. Barnet Refugee Service has been an independent charity since April 2005.

Our Ethos

BRS, an independent charity since April 2005, works in partnership with individuals and agencies to improve the quality of life and promote the physical, social and mental well-being of asylum seekers and refugees who live work or study in or near the London Borough of Barnet and

neighbouring boroughs. At the core of service delivery is its belief in the positive contribution refugees and asylum seekers can make within a culturally and ethnically diverse society. BRS is committed to involving asylum seekers and refugees in the planning, decision-making and activities of the charity, believing this is the best way to achieve its aims.

Statement of values

Barnet Refugee Service believes that everyone is born equal and that asylum is a fundamental human right. We recognise that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, immigration status, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or 'criminal' record.

Barnet Refugee Service will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

Barnet Refugee Service aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences and sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

Our Vision:

Through its work BRS envisages:

1. A future where refugees and asylum seekers recognize themselves and are recognized by others as human beings of equal status in society.
2. A greater understanding and positive image in the wider community of the contribution made by refugees and asylum seekers and the issues which they have to deal with.
3. Quicker and greater integration of refugees and asylum seekers through access to improved services particularly in health, housing, education and employment.
4. Greater understanding among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and responsibilities.
5. A well established and accessible Barnet Refugee Service, working impartially in partnership with other relevant organisations to identify and meet the changing needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
6. Enabling a fuller contribution of refugees to civic life through the promotion of social cohesion.
7. Local policies and services which reflect the needs of diverse asylum seeker and refugee communities.
8. A more powerful voice for refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet and neighbouring boroughs.

Our Objectives

1. To provide information, advice and support services to asylum seekers and refugees
2. To help promote equality of access to health care, social care, housing, legal representation, education and training for asylum seekers and refugees.
3. To provide and enhance educational and employment opportunities available for asylum seekers and refugees.
4. To increase awareness of the needs, rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and refugees in relation to health, social care, housing, training, education and employment.
5. To act as an information resource for statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and the wider community.
6. To ensure that service providers deliver culturally sensitive and appropriate services to asylum seekers and refugees.
7. To assist destitute and/or homeless refugees and asylum seekers to access emergency food and support.
8. To help refugees and asylum seekers overcome isolation and regain their confidence and self-esteem through emotional support, eco-therapy, social activities and structured projects, thus enabling them to integrate into society.
9. To significantly influence local and national strategies and policies with regard to refugees and asylum seekers.

10. To provide volunteering opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers (including young people) to develop their skills and help them to access higher education and employment.
11. To provide emotional and social activities to young refugees and asylum seekers to develop their confidence and skills.
12. To provide emotional support, counselling and ecotherapy with the aim of improving the mental and physical wellbeing of our clients through doing outdoor activities in a natural environment.

Fundraising Strategy

The Board of Trustees have established a Funding and Finance Strategy Committee who develop and monitor the progress of their fundraising strategy. It is the aim of BRS to meet its funding needs through several funding bodies. Our community fundraising committee works hard to maintain the funding stream through donations from members, local businesses and organizations and the general public.



Director's Report

Donations

We received over £50000 IN donations from many individuals, organisations and faith groups. Our special thanks go to one of our supporters who made a generous anonymous donation of £20000 towards the costs of a part-time advisor. In addition we also would like to thank Mrs. Jodi Mishcon who raised £4000, for our Syrian refugees through a Facebook appeal. A cash donation of £20000 was received from Mr & Mrs. Demashkieh to support our newly-arrived Syrian refugees, and on behalf of our clients we are thankful for their generous donation. The Sarum Hall School also raised £1500 to support BRS in a fundraising event and we sincerely thank them for their ongoing support. We must also thank our dedicated volunteer walkers for their hard work in raising nearly £3000 through the London Legal Support Trust (LLST) Sponsored Walk.

We cannot name the countless individuals and organisations who have given their generous support in so many ways. Without their goodwill we would be unable to provide our vital emergency support. We would particularly like to thank all schools and faith groups for their ongoing support.

During the year food was donated from numerous churches, temples and synagogues and schools for Harvest Collections which enabled us to give out food parcels to destitute asylum seekers. In particular we would like to thank Mrs. Jodi Mishcon, who set up the Big Shop Appeal for BRS and managed to get 52 sponsors to spend £100 each for a weekly shop for our destitute clients. Jodi also accepted the responsibility for doing the shopping on regular basis and organising delivery to our office. For our end of year party we received donations of many gifts from various sources including faith groups and local schools and members of the public and we thank them all.

In addition to the above, our special thanks go to the following faith groups, local businesses, and individuals who supported us either by

cash or donation in kind: Harrow Food Bank, Khavatin Muslim Ladies, The Catholic Women's League, London Churches Refugee Fund, Ruth Hyman Trust, The Sacred Heart Church, St. Michael and All Angels in Mill hill, St Mary at Finchley Parish Church, Trinity Church in Colindale, Pakistan Ladies Group, The Sarum Hall School, First Give through, Trinity Church in North Finchley, Gail's Artisan Bakery, Daniel's Bakery, the Pret a Manger and Lola's Cup Cakes at Brent Cross, Hendon Sainsbury's and Tesco'.

It was not practical to value these vital in-kind donations but we believe the retail value to be in excess of £15000.

Small Grants for individuals

Refugees and asylum seekers and in particular destitute asylum seekers are the most vulnerable members of society. Some of them are not entitled to any support and for those who are, they might be living below the poverty line. We are delighted that we managed to raise over £15000 cash support for desperate individuals and their families who had nowhere to go and had given up hope. This was only possible with the support of The National Zakat Foundation, Al-Mizan Charitable Trust, The Catholic Women's League, Khawateen Muslim Ladies, Pakistan Ladies Group, The Churches Together and many individual donors. On behalf of our clients we thank them all for their on-going support. The small grants covered the costs of education and training, household items, emergency shelter for Domestic Violence victims, medical supplies and mobility aids, IT equipment and subsistence.

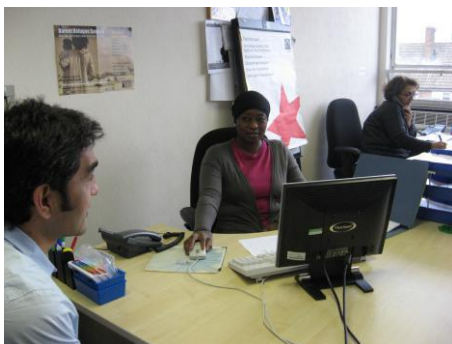
Director's Report

Advice

We provide advice, information and support to refugees and asylum seekers on a variety of issues, promoting equal access to services, particularly health. During the past year we have seen 697 clients for advice which includes over 410 new clients and handled over 7000 enquiries including 2804 cases during the last year. (Please see charts on page 13).

Outreach Advice Clinics

Our team of advice workers offered outreach clinics at the Advice and Information Centre, Edgware Community Hospital on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and assisted over 500 clients with various issues.



Legal Advice Surgery

As part of the UK legal aid system free legal services used to be available for refugees pursuing their rights under UK and international law to seek asylum or to be reunited with their families. The rights of refugees to access legal aid was, however,

scrapped in April 2013, leaving many of those



seeking refuge or humanitarian protection in the UK with the prospect of permanent or, at the very least, prolonged separation from their loved ones. Without expert help, refugees are often unable to navigate the long and complex process they are required to follow to be in with a chance of being reunited with their families, a scenario that has become increasingly common since their access to legal aid was scrapped. The provision of legal advice and support to those who need it the most, yet who are often least able to afford it, is at the very heart of our visiting solicitors' pro bono philosophy. They believe that they can use their legal expertise to 'give something back' to their local communities. For the past few years we have had the privilege of having a team of pro bono solicitors from different firms of solicitors who provide legal advice every fortnight at our main office.

Our special thanks must go to Ata & Co Solicitors, who provided free legal immigration advice to 132 of our clients free legal immigration advice during the past year by seeing them every other Wednesday of the month at Hyde House.

Advice for Unaccompanied Minors

Young refugees and asylum seekers and in particular unaccompanied minors are one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. Their needs are largely unmet by existing services. These young refugees and asylum seekers need support with a number of issues. Most are new arrivals who arrived here alone with few resources and do not understand the system in the UK. Some are in care; others are living with an elder sibling or relatives who are themselves traumatised.

In partnership with the Refugee Council, we started a weekly drop-in advice project in December 2016, where an advisor from the Refugee Council visits our office to provide advice to unaccompanied asylum seekers.

The adviser works directly with separated children seeking asylum, helping them through the asylum system and ensuring that they get the help and advice they need. The adviser also offers advice and information to carers and other professionals working with children and young people.

Our special thanks must go to Refugee Council who served 35 of our young clients seeing them every Thursday for a full day at Hyde House.



Director's Report

Health and Wellbeing

Much of our work is directly health focused such as the advice work where we saw clients with over 1500 health related enquiries. During the 2016/17 our health-focused activities included:

- Health access and Health promotion workshops for our clients
- Development of our “Holistic Model of Support” which targets the better mental wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers
- Mental health support project supporting young refugees
- Mothers & Toddlers Group to promote a Healthy Life Style by means of health promotion workshops
- Production of an illustrated handbook for a Maternity Dept by our ESOL teachers for mothers with limited or no English
- Running ESOL classes with emphasis on vocabulary for visiting the doctor and health-related subjects
- Active partnership with the Multilingual Wellbeing Service, in partnership with 2 other organisations and NHS Barnet focusing on the better wellbeing of ethnic minorities in Barnet.
- 2 outreach surgeries based at Edgware Hospital.
- An active planning group member for organizing the Barnet Mental Health Event

- Policy work with NHS: Focusing on our client group our views and opinions will help NHS North Central London deliver equitable commissioning and help to meet our public sector equality duties.
- Developing Ecotherapy activities i.e. gardening to support those with mental health issues in a green environment and providing workshops on food and nutrition for our clients
- Residential retreat for those with mental health problems
- Providing one-one emotional support and group work
- Series of therapeutic weekly activities for refugee women with mental health problems, victims of domestic violence , torture and rape. In partnership with artsdepot through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, art & craft, poetry, dance etc.
- Series of therapeutic weekly activities for refugee men with mental health problems encouraging social interactions and tackling isolation
- Close partnership work with researchers i.e. Hertfordshire University, UCL and Anglia Ruskin University for example we supported a paediatric junior registrar, doing Masters in child community health at UCL: The research was a qualitative analysis on the healthcare

experience of accompanied children seeking asylum in the UK. We also worked with a student from the Department of Psychology & Sports Science of Hertfordshire University on Negotiating Motherhood as a Refugee. The article was published in the European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling.

- Active participation in supporting the Barnet Wellbeing Hub.

In addition to the above BRS has been actively involved with NHS Barnet's different activities to promote better health within the community i.e. Stop Smoking or Flu jab etc.

We are a resource to be drawn upon by health professionals to support them to support this client group and understand their needs better. We were closely involved in policy work around provision of counselling and psychotherapy services for refugees and asylum seekers including young refugees.

We have been liaising and worked with service providers, in particular health professionals, statutory and voluntary sector staff to raise awareness about the physical and mental health needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

We provided 4 refugee awareness talks to our local schools in their assemblies, attended leaving care team meetings and had one to one meetings with those who were willing to know more about refugee issues.

Director's Report

Our Achievements at a glance:

Through the provision of our Holistic Model of Support, we have met or exceeded all of the targets agreed with our funders which include:

- 1410 Clients accessing all our services with 408 new clients
- 7056 Advice/general enquiries
- 514 Clients accessed our service through outreach surgeries
- 495 Client visits to emergency support drop in services
- 132 Clients attended our Immigration Drop in with visiting solicitors
- 12 Health promotion workshops
- 14 Workshops on accessing health, housing and welfare benefits
- 7 Mindfulness and Art therapy sessions with 31 attendees
- 12 Parenting Skills Workshops with 44 attendees
- 6 Yoga and relaxation sessions with 72 attendees
- 72 Sessions of gardening with 15-20 active attendees on a weekly basis
- 12 Drop in mental health support sessions with 61 attendees
- 52 Clients received one to one counselling
- 19 Clients attended our Residential Retreat
- 81 Volunteers supported BRS within different activities
- 7 Training courses provided to volunteers with 29 attendees
- 9 Clients/volunteers managed to get into paid employment

- 160 Young people involved with our successful youth activities
- 12 Skills for Life English Classes with 23 attendees
- 10 Successful ESOL provision including 40 health related Lessons – around 128 students
- 18 Women registered with our successful Mothers & Toddlers Group in partnership with the Hyde Children Centre
- 12 Men registered with our successful Men's Group (2 ESOL classes)
- 50 Women registered with our Jasmine Women's Group
- 9 Vulnerable clients received befriending support

Health Promotion Workshops

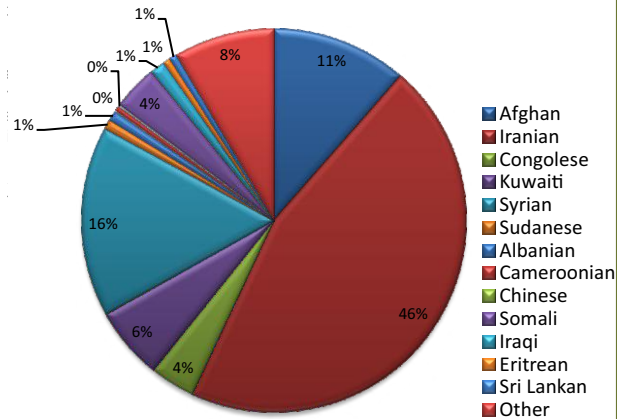
During the past year, 12 Health Promotion workshops have been delivered to members of our Women's Group, ESOL students, Volunteers, Men's group and our Mothers and toddlers Group and our Gardening Project participants. The topics covered included Healthy Eating, Mindfulness, Assertiveness, Parenting Teenagers, Women's and Children's health, Relaxation, Shopping on a tight budget, How to keep children's teeth healthy, Nutrition workshops, Top tips for making food last, Measuring health, Yoga sessions, children's development, First Aid, Making our favourite meals healthier, Fire Safety, Healthy Mind Healthy Body, etc.

A total number of 144 people benefited from these sessions. We also provided health-focused workshops for our young people at our social club including Drug and Alcohol, Domestic Violence amongst young people, Gang Violence and Knife Crime, CEPO/ Safer use of internet, Sexual Health, Healthy eating and Cooking sessions, Personal Hygiene and Pampering and Self-defence - Martial Arts.

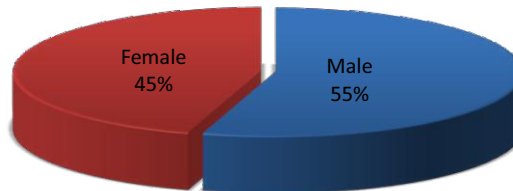


Director's Report

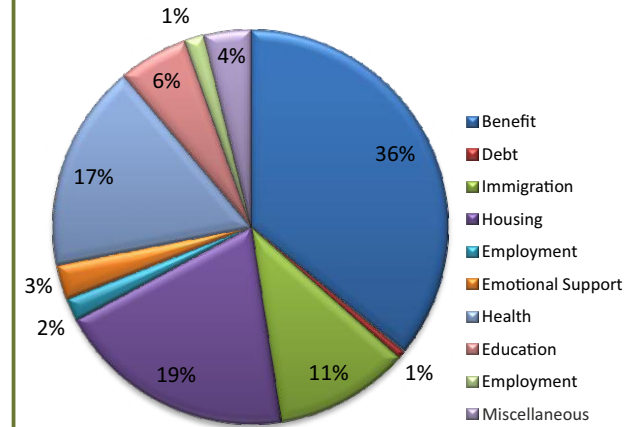
Where Our Clients Come From?



Gender



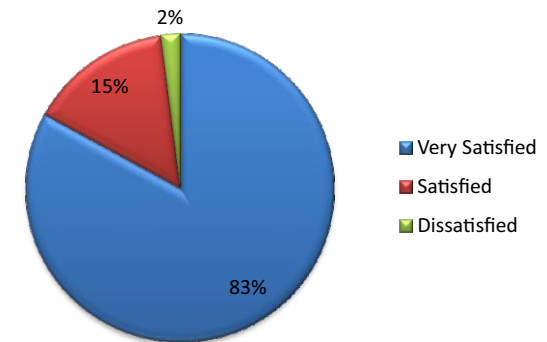
Enquiry Areas 2016-17



Customer Satisfaction Survey

In order to retain our Advice Quality Standard of the Community Legal Service (CLS) as well as making sure we provide the highest standard of service to our clients according to their needs, it is essential to have in place a feedback process for the clients we see.

Throughout 2016/17 we randomly selected clients who had used our services and gave them questionnaires. Over all 150 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 126 were returned. Our response therefore was a healthy 84%. Out of the 150 questionnaires returned 83% felt 'very satisfied' with our services and 15% 'Satisfied' and 2% felt "we should improve in some areas". Overall 78% felt the service they received improved the quality of their life.



ESOL Classes



The Consultation Paper on the Integration of Recognised Refugees in the UK (Home Office, 1999) states that language is the key to integration and that 'identification of the different language needs of individuals, groups or age ranges will help in planning responses to actual needs'. In a broader European perspective, the provision of adequate language training is regarded as one of the touchstones of effective integration policy (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2000). Full economic and social participation of refugees in the UK depends partly on familiarity with the English language. It is crucial therefore for the integration of refugees into local labour markets and communities in the UK that the provision of ESOL is adequate and appropriate. Despite all these factors 55 per cent cuts to funding for English language classes since 2008/09 mean that refugees are struggling to access the classes they need to help rebuild their lives.

Due to the high demand for ESOL classes and as part of our Holistic Model of Support we expanded

our ESOL classes. During the past year we provided 9 classes to 123 students. Most of these students struggle to integrate and feel socially isolated. They come from different backgrounds, some have high level academic qualifications gained in their home country and others have never had the opportunity to attend school and are completely illiterate. Despite these differences what seems to bring these classes together is a genuine motivation to learn,



ESOL Team from right: Farida Stanikzai (Operations Manager), Orna Almagor, Sima Rutherford, Elsa Roche (Intern), Elizabeth Morrell, Elizabeth Perrot, Ros Staines, Helen Syani, Vivien Chappell, Rosemary Biseo, Helen Stone, Jill Joseph

Not in the picture: Hawa Bibi, Muhammad, Sue Engelbert, Rachel Winton, Amy Lin, Rahim Rahmati, Annisa Pryor, Polly Rockberger, Rahela Amiry, Naima Aminuddin, Katharine Sathe, Fabiha Haq, Madeline Ioannidis, Josephine Cuttell, Linda Carey, Rachel Winton, Ruth Kitching, Belqis Sadat, Towyn Mason, David Levey, Javid Moghamy, Wahideh Majeedi



and students are passionate not only to learn to improve their English but also to restore their self-esteem.

There are 14 volunteer English teachers and 9 volunteer teachers' assistants. Some of these class assistants are mentored by our British born ESOL teachers to enable them get experience and find employment.

We feel we have had another successful year and our special thanks must go to our donors and our dedicated teaching team. Our special thanks also go to Farida Stanikzai, our Operations Manager, for the excellent job she has been doing to coordinate ESOL provision.



ESOL Classes

'Life in the UK' English Classes

The Life in the UK Citizen Test has become an integral part of British immigration policy. It is a computer-based test which is a compulsory requirement for anyone seeking Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK or for anyone seeking naturalisation as a British Citizen.

There was a high demand for this class from our client group. For the second time running we managed to run a 12 weeks course where 23 regular students successfully completed it. We are pleased to announce that 6 of the participants managed to pass their test.

They started out with insufficient knowledge of English to understand the basic training book for UK citizenship. BRS helped them by teaching every chapter clearly and concisely. The teacher prepared every lesson as a diagram with colorful markers to simplify the topic and thereby make it more interesting for the students. The book proved to be an enormous success. We feel that this project has been very successful and wish to attract more



funding to continue running it. Our special thanks must go to our anonymous donor without whom it would have not been possible to run this pilot project.

“Now, I can make appointments with my GP”

Lifting the Bar Project ESOL

This structured ESOL course is being led and delivered by our partner organisation, Refugee Women's Association (RWA). This course runs in term time only and provides ESOL lessons to 38 students. It is for the participants to learn English and develop skills for life preparing them to sit for an exam at the end which will help them in their future applications for citizenship. All students get an assessment to measure their level of English. During the past year students attended the sessions twice a week and their travelling expenses were paid. Students sat for an exam at the end of the course and almost 100% of them passed their exam. Evaluation of this activity confirmed that this service is also a real value to the participants who attended it, and that find it extremely useful.

Our special thanks go to the Big Lottery Fund for supporting this project financially and to RWA for the excellent service delivery.

Case Study 1



Helen Syani Volunteer ESOL Teacher

When I looked at working as a volunteer I came across BRS and having had a look at their values and goals, it was a no-brainer to use my experience teaching here. The students were varied and two years later, it is still true. In ESOL there is a belief that there is no such thing as a true beginner – wrong! It is quite uncommon to find beginners with no literacy in their own language as well and it is quite humbling to have seen the students initial struggles and then start to understand. I have even got my sister involved as she is a qualified experienced Literacy teacher and it has been a rewarding experience for her too.

We all take our education for granted and it is eye-opening that in the 21st century there are still cultures excluding many, mostly women, from education. It's wonderful to see our (mostly) female class start to recognise words and try to read. Not all of it is easy for them (or us) but with perseverance the students are making progress.

Teaching at BRS has and is very satisfying and we have got to know the students very well so there is a lot of laughter in class and it's never boring, that's for sure! BRS operate on a family basis and the feeling of co-operation and goodwill is always palpable in and around the office. We look forward to teaching at BRS for a long while yet.

Youth Activities

Astrid Filippi



Young people matter today and are our future, so our youth work activities are a vital and very successful part of our organisation.

Young refugees and asylum seekers are amongst the

most vulnerable and challenging members of the society. Being new in the country a lot of them have poor social skills and struggle with basics. Through our activities, we enable young people to develop their voice, influence, build confidence and place in the society while reaching their full potential.

With the financial support of John Lyon's Charity, throughout 2016/17 we provided a range of recreational and psycho-social activities. During the year we provided one to one and group advice, support, group activities and ultimately helping young refugees' emotional and social development in an informal setting but through educational processes, mostly in the borough of Barnet and neighbouring boroughs as well.

Our aim is to provide an opportunity for learning which complements that of formal education, also preparing young refugees to tackle a whole spectrum of issues, and through group work (activities) help them develop supportive relationships with other young people, and opening their eyes to new experiences, confidence building, ambitions and empathy.



Weekly Social Club

For the tenth year running we continued our activities within our Youth Social Club but with limited activities due to the financial strain. This is a mixed group (majority boys) aged 12-18 years old that meets every Friday at the Northwest Centre in Grahame Park Way. An average of 8 young people met every week and participated in different activities. These young people come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities such as Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Albania, Somalia and Libya.

At the Youth Club, our young people regularly enjoyed football table, table tennis and pool. We also played football outdoors when the weather was good. We organised basketball sessions in partnership with the SHAPE programme within Barnet Council Community Sport Team, and our young people were offered the opportunity of attending basketball sessions free of charge.

We provided a series of workshops to our young

people including photography sessions, boxing workshops, taekwondo workshops, English through Art, Art workshops and dance and movement workshops. Our special thanks must go to the Genesis for their financial support.

Cooking Sessions

We organised cooking sessions during which young people explored themes such as healthy eating and cooking healthy meals with a low budget. We tried new and exotic meals including Italian and Brazilian dishes! Everyone was encouraged to participate in the preparation, including young people with disabilities. We also focused on ground rules, and young people were prompted to give their input about those rules, which we created all together.



Youth Activities

Photography Trips

Following the Graffiti Festival, we organised a trip to an area of London called Hackney Wick, close to the canal at the Olympic Park in Stratford. Hackney Wick is famous among urban artists because of its graffiti, so we went there with our volunteer photographer Alessandro who introduced the group to the history of the place and encouraged the young people to take pictures of objects and graffiti



which they found unusual and interesting. We did a photography trip to Kew Gardens. Most of our young people had never been to a botanical garden, so they enjoyed it very much. Young people were matched in pairs and assigned photographic tasks, which gave them the chance to learn basic principles of photography while becoming more aware of the nature around them.

Our third photography trip was a tour started from Primrose Hill (where young people had the chance to admire the skyline of London



from the top of the hill!), continuing along the Regent's Park canal (where we also took a boat!) and ending in Camden Town Market. The young people really loved Camden Market and were particularly attracted by the variety of the surroundings and by the fusion between different cultures.

Our BRS Youth Group attended a music and photography session at the Wren Academy, organised by NCS The Challenge. Young people from BRS met the young people from The Challenge and enjoyed playing drums as well as some other small instruments. The group learned how to work on their coordination skills and had the chance to socialise with youth from other cultural backgrounds.



Recreational Activities

During the past year we organised several outdoor activities and trips. Our young people participated in a Graffiti Festival organised by the Red Gallery in Old Street during which they learnt more about the so called “street art” and had a chance to make some graffiti on panels which had been set up specifically for this purpose and under the supervision of the graffiti artists. We organised two joint trips with



another refugee organisation called “Young Roots” operating in the Borough of Brent. We went to the Science Museum, and young people from BRS had the chance to meet and socialise with the group of young people from Young Roots. For the second activity, we went to Wembley Football Pitch and our young people played against the football team from Young Roots. The Moat Mount Camping site trip was a highlight for our young people. They engaged in fun team building games and tried archery for the first time!

Director's Report

Film Project with Community Focus

Barnet Refugee Service has agreed to work on a joint video project with Community Focus, an inclusive multi-arts centre based in Barnet which also offers activities to young people. Our Youth Group had a chance to make a short film about one of our young people from Syria and his journey to the UK. Our young people were supervised by a professional filmmaker and they all learnt how to edit the material as well.

**“I don't feel lonely
any more
I have lots of friends now”**

Visit to RAF Museum

We organised a session with the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force Museum) where young people did some art & craft while learning about the history of pilots who participated in the Second World War, some of whom also came from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our Young People had the chance to wear some original outfits from that historical period which were part of the R.A.F. Museum heritage.

Supporting Children of Calais

Around 200 unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children have been given sanctuary in the UK under the Dubs Scheme, which offers vulnerable child refugees in Europe protection in the UK.

Since November 2016 BRS has been working closely with Citizens UK, Safe Passage and the Refugee Council, providing ongoing support to these children. We assist them with their asylum process, find good immigration solicitors, with advocate on their behalf, advise them on their welfare rights, register them at school or college, and with a GP. Our volunteers accompany them to their appointments. BRS also assisted some of these children to apply for some grants to meet their essential needs and provided them with £50 Primark vouchers (in total £3000) to buy warm clothes and school uniform.

These children are actively involved in our youth activities, including sports activities and benefit from the range of other services BRS provides including the provision of ESOL classes.



Coffee Mornings at Cheryl's



One of our volunteers, Cheryl Skylan, who is a professional psychotherapist and trainer,

took the initiative to run twice-monthly coffee mornings and talking therapy sessions for our clients at her house. 12-14 women participate and the main theme is stress, so the women have a chance to do some stress-reducing exercises.

The feedback from clients is very positive and they really enjoy the sessions.

Participants have felt able to raise social and mental health issues within a safe, comfortable and supportive environment. The women mentioned that, although they have been in the UK for a few years, this has been their first opportunity to go to an English person's house and have tea, coffee and a chat, thereby bridging the gap between their own cultures and the host culture.

Cheryl successfully managed to raise funding from her Synagogue to pay the travel expenses for the women as some of them do not receive any support from the government. Our special thanks go to her for her ongoing support and dedication.

Director's Report

Case Study 2



Sahr Yillia
Service User

I am an international Motivational Speaker, Entrepreneur, Child, Youth, Gender and Disability

Inclusion Activist who was born in West Africa.

As an asylum seeker/refugee in the UK with disabilities especially at a time when I had totally lost my 75% sight during an eye surgery at the York Teaching Hospital in the UK without any family, it was actually a difficult moment for me socially and economically.

The shock of this unexpected situation especially when I became totally blind without any form of vision to aid my daily personal mobility and independent living in doing the things that am best known for in the world, I got depressed to the extent that my anti-depressant drugs from the GP were increased from 50MG to 100MG with other mental health conditions beyond my control especially as I am living alone at home.

It was at this stage that I came across the Barnet Refugee Services (BRS) whose timely and impactful interventions led to the rehabilitation of my life and career again in the world.

Upon hearing my case, the (BRS) first provided me one of their Volunteer befrienders “Valarie Davis” a retired GP who started providing Psychosocial and other emotional supports on daily basis as well as

accompanying me to hospital appointments. Considering my lack of financial supports from the Home Office as an Asylum Seeker awaiting decisions from them, the voucher supports given to me by the Croydon Council is actually inadequate to meet my basic daily social needs which further compounded my problems. This included my inability to acquire rehabilitation skills in computer as well as getting the specialized gadgets/devices as a blind person.

In line with the above, the (BRS) paid for my specialized computer training with sound screen reader for blind and low vision persons which was successfully completed.

Upon my graduation, they purchased a new Laptop for me in order to support my daily use of the newly acquired computer skills like using Word processor, browsing the internet and other necessary services like any other sighted person using the computer/laptop. Also, £700 was secured for my additional support for 7 months particularly for the purchasing of body wears since I was without some already.

Added to this were some voucher supports after the 7-month period.

The (BRS's) rehabilitation of my life was only not limited to material supports but as well extended to the promotion of my inclusive participation into some of their programmed regularly.

For instance, I was among a group of their clients who had a one day working meeting with officials

of the Home Office last year where we had some fruitful discussions about the relationships between asylum Seekers/Refugees and their personnel's.

In conclusion, I am grateful of the fact that their timely intervention and supports have successfully rehabilitated my life and career to the extend that I have won two successive international awards in the UK for 2016/2017 for the promotion of sustainable developments in the field of Social Activism especially for those issues that am passionate about in the world despite my personal challenges.

Above it all, their supports kept me hopeful up to this moment that I have again been able to regain my sight through another eye surgery at the Moor field Eye Hospital June 2017 bringing my three years total blindness to an end.

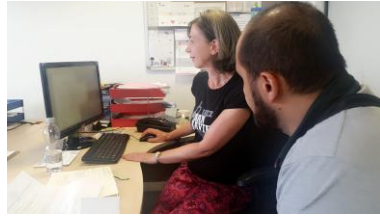
On this note, I would like to use this opportunity to extend my profound gratitude and appreciations to all staff, volunteers and supporters of the (BRS) for these supports as you all have a special place in my heart and may God Almighty richly bless you all.

Also, I hereby reaffirm my commitments in serving (BRS) through my skills and career voluntarily at all times because “meeting more people means solving more problems”.

Director's Report

JOB CLUB

Through our day to day work with refugees we recognise how essential it is to secure employment when people are in the process of rebuilding their lives in an unfamiliar country. We also understand how difficult and confusing the process of finding a job in the UK can be. Our Job Club provides crucial 1-2-1 support to our clients to empower them to make their first steps into employment. We work with our clients to explore ways removing individual barriers to employment and help to find ways in which their skills and qualifications can be recognised in the UK. Our volunteers meet with clients on a 1-2-1 basis to provide support in CV writing, online job search, registration with online job portals, applying for jobs, completing application forms, mock interviews, UK culture and body language, and how to respond to a job offer. We also provide opportunities for training in making personal decisions and how to manage their expectations. During the past year our volunteer education and employment adviser assisted sixteen refugees with job-seeking skills. In addition, she has made direct contact with hiring companies and organisations in both the voluntary and private sector. We are proud to say that nine people including both volunteers and clients found employment. She also helped a few clients with registration at colleges, helped them to find suitable courses and volunteering jobs.



Case Study 3

Kate Lobo

Volunteer Employment and Education Advisor

After 20 years' working as a director of a multilingual recruitment agency in the City of London I was ready for a change. I decided that I wanted to give something back to society by working with refugees in my local area. Google came to the rescue! I entered the words "Volunteer" "Refugee" and "Barnet" and BRS came up. I got in touch with Farida and she gave me the opportunity to advise some of our clients to find training or work.



I love the variety of clients that I meet each week. They have done such a wide variety of jobs in their home countries including teaching, running their own business and even a sports coach for an Olympic team. It takes time to get to know each client and to help them to take their first steps to a rewarding career in the UK. I am fortunate that I can see each person on a one-on-one basis and usually over several weeks so in the end, we develop a close relationship. The work I do is highly rewarding. I have to think laterally to give them the best chance of success. To give an example, one of my clients had worked as a car paint sprayer in Iran. I telephoned Car Giant (a large, local company which specialises in selling used cars) and enquired about current vacancies. They immediately interviewed my client over the phone, invited him for interview the next day and offered him a permanent role. Other clients have found work as customer care assistants, case workers and dental product makers. Although my role is fairly autonomous, Farida and my other colleagues always provide guidance and support when I need it and make me feel like I'm part of the BRS family. The office environment is always friendly, welcoming and has a very positive vibe!

Women's Group (Jasmine)



For the 10th year running, the Jasmine Women's Group had another fruitful year. The group continues meeting every week on Fridays at the Sacred Heart Church in Mill Hill. The aim of this project is to support isolated BMER women and specifically supporting those with mental health issues through psycho-social activities. The attendance has been an average of about 20 participants each week from 11 different countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, the Congo, Eritrea, Turkey (Kurdish,) Zimbabwe, Kosovo. Newcomers have come via friends from within the group, but referrals are also received from outside agencies such as social services, women's refuges, GPs, IAPT and refugee organisations. Jasmine is an important venue for women, most of whom are isolated and lonely. We provide a safe place to socialise, meet and make new friends and to acclimatise. In some instances an outing to the Jasmine group session is the only thing they attend outside their homes. We reimburse participants' bus fares. This is a necessity to enable those women

without recourse to public funds who are destitute to attend. In the sessions, we continue to concentrate on English, spoken and written. We have had sessions on energy-saving, academic research on refugees, First Aid instruction from the St John's Ambulance, an outing to Kew Gardens, regular yoga and relaxation sessions, visits to the BRS allotment. Thanks to our professional volunteer fashion designer Melissa Sabeti, jeweller, Monica Shackman, and Knitter, Rochelle Bloom who by delivering workshops on hat making, jewelry making and knitting added to the creativity and enjoyment of the group. We have had Health workshops on different aspects of mental and physical health e.g. stress management, depression, Domestic Violence, healthy eating, sexual health, breast cancer, diabetes, dementia. We feel we have had another flourishing year. Our special thanks must go to our donors, our dedicated volunteers and in particular our women's group co-ordinator Tanya Novick. We are also grateful for the support of the Church of Sacred Heart, Mill Hill in providing us with the venue free of charge and with volunteers. We also thank Yummies of Mill Hill who supply bread & cakes to help the sessions go well.



“This group is like my family”



Director's Report

Men's Group



We are pleased to report the success of our Men's Group for the 6th year running. The club provides a healthy breakfast and creates a friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the North West Community Centre to refugee and asylum seeking men. The participants are able to take part in psycho-social activities i.e. yoga classes, English improvement sessions, educational board games and outings. They will also have opportunity to enjoy breakfast, read a newspaper and socialise in a friendly atmosphere. In addition we run health promotion workshops for them and attend to any problems that the participants may be experiencing.

We are deeply grateful for the support of Prêt à Manger, Gails & Lola Cakes for their supplies of food and to the North West Community Centre for providing us with free venue.

We are also very thankful to our committed volunteers, without whom the club could not exist.

Mothers and Toddlers Group

Our Mums' and Toddlers' Group continues to thrive. And we are pleased to report on this successful project for the 7th time. This project is in partnership with the Hyde Children's Centre where every Tuesday morning an average of 12 refugee women come along with their babies and pre-school



toddlers. Sessions are held in cheerful, modern surroundings, in a room well-stocked with toys, games and art materials, which also has access to its own outdoor play area. There is always a minimum of two volunteers on hand to share the tasks of occupying the children while their mothers are learning English. Lessons are geared to Pre-Entry level, as many of the mums speak little or no English. Taught by a qualified ESOL teacher, lessons are health focussed, on practical vocabulary - parts of the body, food, safety in the house, and conversation practice involves talking about, for instance, daily routines, going shopping, and going to the doctor. The group is relaxed, very sociable and extremely willing to help one another, and to join in singing games and action songs with their children. During the past year a series of health focussed workshops was delivered to this group i.e. healthy eating, oral hygiene for the kids, fire safety, breast awareness etc. This project is well-integrated with the Children's Center. Our special thanks must go to the Hyde Children's Center for accommodating this group and their staff. The feedback from the attendees confirms that this is a well – placed partnership which maximises the support the mothers are getting. Our special gratitude goes to



an anonymous donor who has been financially supporting this group.

“I feel less isolated, my child is very happy!”

Gardening Project

Sowing Seeds Gardening Project

In April 2015, under our Eco-therapy program, we established a new project called “Sowing Seeds Therapy”/Allotment Project to promote good mental and physical wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers through outdoor activity in a green environment (Eco-therapy), tackling social isolation, encouraging integration and improving community cohesion with emphasis on those with mental health issues. Having secured an allotment site in Barnet (Pointalls Allotments) we managed to attract a one year seed grant from London Catalyst to run this project.

The sessions run twice a week on Mondays & Fridays from 10am to 2pm. The Majority of attendees experience isolation and depression as a result of their immigration and of the asylum system. Being outdoors, learning new skills and socialising with other clients as well as members of the allotment site proved to be beneficial to all of them. With the support of a professional volunteer



gardener the clients have an opportunity to plant a variety of British vegetables as well as seed from their countries of origin. We also have weekly cookery sessions at the allotment where clients prepare dishes from around the world using seasonal vegetables and share them with all. During the past year we provided 72 gardening sessions with 15-20 attendees per week.

The BRS allotment is also registered with the Capital Growth which also includes the Edible Open Gardens and Big Dug days schemes. They provide us with discounted training on how to grow organic vegetable and how to save seeds.

We are proud to announce that our allotment was awarded The Ted Green Memorial Cup at the Barnet by the Barnet Allotment Federation. The award was presented by Cllr Brian Salinger, who praised our project and the health benefit it gives to the most vulnerable residents of Barnet.

Our special thanks must go to our donors and in particular the London Catalyst and the Big Lottery Fund. We also thank our dedicated volunteers and in particular our Gardening Project lead, Turyalai Khaksar, who tirelessly worked so hard to transform our allotment into a beautiful garden.

Multilingual Wellbeing Service (MWS)

MWS is a consortium of Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee community organisations in Barnet with an expertise in mental health and wellbeing. The consortium was set up in June 2010 as a separate legal entity and got registered as a Charity in 2012. The partner organisations are Barnet Refugee Service, Chinese Mental Health Association and Farsophone Association. As a board member and an active member of this consortium during the past year BRS has been supporting MWS to achieve its aims and objectives. The aim of this project is to improve the mental health of BMER communities in Barnet. We are pleased to announce that this project is flourishing continuously, providing mental health promotion workshops and providing counselling services. MWS is an active partner with Surrey & Boarder Partnership Foundation NHS Trust is delivering Improvement Access to Psychological services (IAPT) in Barnet.

MWS
Multilingual Wellbeing Services

Director's Report

Emotional Support Project

Global events like wars and natural disasters have led to the refugee population reaching numbers not seen since the Second World War. Attitudes to asylum have hardened, with the potential to compromise the mental health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. The challenges in providing mental healthcare for asylum seekers and refugees include working with the uncertainties of immigration status and cultural differences. Asylum seekers are at particular risk of developing mental illness, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. A major challenge for mental health workers is understanding how different cultural groups communicate psychological distress. Lack of knowledge could lead to some patients receiving inappropriate psychiatric diagnoses, and normal human responses to extremely traumatic life events could be inappropriately pathologised.

Under the umbrella of our Holistic Model of Support we developed our Emotional Support Project which attends to client's emotional needs in a culturally appropriate manner. Using bilingual therapists, we provided one to one counselling and emotional support to 52 clients who sought this service in different languages.

To measure the impact of our emotional support on individuals we provided them with a pre- post CORE form which indicated and measured the soft outcome of the activities. Analysis of the CORE forms confirmed a majority of initial scores in the severe category (57%) and the final Severity Score demonstrated the high proportion of categorical change in clients with only around one-quarter showing no overall change in category score. The data through CORE reports an overall clinical and/or reliable change rate of 74% which would benchmark strongly with published academic CORE papers. This would be particularly true given the high proportion of clients with initial CORE scores in the 'severe' category. Indeed, the average initial score of 2.45 is higher than published studies for NHS Primary Care (1.74) and NHS secondary care (2.2)



suggesting a more severe and complex client population.

Our special thanks should go to our Emotional Support Worker, Paria Motiee, and the team of volunteer counsellors who make this vital project a success

Emotional Support Drop-In

Our emotional support workers and volunteers run a monthly Drop-In session on the last Friday of each month, to support refugees and asylum seekers through life's transitions and times of crisis. We do so by providing cultural familiarity when people need it most, offering a space for open dialogue and expression, and support in accessing professional health and wellbeing services.

During the past year we provided 12 Drop-In sessions serving 66 clients with variety of issues. The feedback from our clients confirms that this project was of great value for them as they felt they had a place to turn to when they felt they were in need of support emotionally and could not wait to go in the system to be seen. Our special thanks goes to our funder, the Big Lottery Fund for their financial support.

Director's Report

Residential Retreat

Under the umbrella of our Emotional Support Project we took 19 of our clients to a residential retreat at Bore Place Farm in Kent for a weekend in September 2016. This green and eco-friendly venue is centred in 500 acres of organic farmland.

A retreat is an opportunity to step back from our routines and evaluate our true self and mental wellbeing. This is an opportunity for participants to take part in group activities and reflect on the bigger questions in their hearts. During this residential we provided guidance in meditation, yoga, movement therapy, relaxation, and the development of spiritual wisdom. To encourage integration the participants visited local allotments and picked the produce followed by cooking and baking sessions with the locals. Sessions were led by our experienced qualified therapists. In between sessions, there were times to rest, relax and explore the beautiful surrounding green countryside of Kent.

This was a truly successful psycho-social activity which was valued by all.



“Had a lovely experience, enjoyed all workshops especially the Yoga sessions singing and dancing together”



Director's Report

Mindfulness and Art Therapy Workshops

Many of our clients who use our services have come from unstable social situations and have a high level of anxiety and emotional distress as a result of trauma of leaving their home country and their initial experience of the host country. This year BRS managed to provide 7 mindfulness workshops for stress reduction and the trauma relief to 31 refugee and asylum seeking women. Participants had an opportunity to express their feelings, explore any issues they had, and work out their problems using art and different mindfulness techniques. The workshops covered introduction to mindfulness, body scan meditation, sounds and thoughts meditation and relapse prevention in mindfulness.



Parenting Skills Training

(Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities)

We all know that being a parent can be both rewarding and challenging but it is more challenging when you are new to a country with a different culture and you do not understand the system which may result in your inability to support your children fully. During the past year we provided 59 parents who are involved in bringing up children between the ages of 3-18 years with 12 parenting skills workshops run by the CommUNITY Parenting Consortium and a bilingual counsellor and psychotherapist. The main aim of the workshops was for the parents to have a better understanding of child development, to learn about positive discipline techniques and how to encourage children to feel positive about

themselves. Strategies for promoting children's social skills, self-esteem and self-discipline, improving communication and building positive relationships were also covered.

“When I practice mindfulness, I am more aware of things that help me to be calm and happy”



Director's Report

World Mental Health Day In Barnet 2016



In England mental ill health is very common, and at least 1 in 6 people will be affected by it at some point in their lives. World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is held every year on 10th October to raise awareness, support prevention and lobby for more funding for mental health related issues. As in previous years the WMHD planning group felt it was important to localise mental health activities by joining festivals and cultural events in the Borough and developing a holistic approach to enable a wide spectrum of Barnet residents to have equal access to local services, including those presently hindered from engaging with services due to cultural barriers, stigma or a lack of knowledge of where to find mental health services.

Once again BRS as planning group member alongside many other organisations marked the World Mental Health Day. Its purpose was to de-stigmatise mental illness within local communities and give people the opportunity to talk about mental illness in a more positive way. The celebration event was held at Barnet wellbeing Hub at Meritage Centre, Church End, Hendon, London NW4 4JT which was attended by more than 150 people. We believe that we were able to raise awareness and over 2500 people were reached throughout the year in Barnet.



Befriending Project

The volunteers under this scheme work with clients who need support in accessing health and/or social care services for a period of time. They visit and meet them on a regular basis,



befriend them and provide advocacy support whilst liaising with health care providers and statutory organisations. Our volunteer advocates have a significant impact on the isolation and loneliness of our clients. The volunteers have helped clients feel less lonely by offering a listening, caring ear - one of the most appreciated aspects of their work and the one that makes the most difference.

During the past year our befrienders actively supported 9 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in accessing NHS and other services. This involved liaising with GPs, hospitals, other health service providers as well as housing, social services and welfare benefits. They accompanied clients to medical appointments and to Job Centre interviews and helped them to open bank accounts.

Director's Report

Case Study 4



Zainab Khalil
Homework Club Teacher

Our journey into teaching the refugee children has been one of learning and reflection. It has been challenging, at times, but exceptionally rewarding too which, for us, is what being a teacher is, to serve, to learn and to teach. We want to work with young people, particularly refugees, and enhance their natural desire to learn.

Having completed the course and reflecting upon the lessons, it has truly been remarkable and inspiring to witness the students' progress and enthusiasm continually grow. Not only did they develop their skills academically but it had a significant impact on their personal growth, particularly with regards to their confidence, social and communication skills. We were in awe of how excited students were to attend the classes and how eager they were to learn. There were some students who initially came with no knowledge of English and by the end of the course were able to communicate confidently at a basic level. Students enjoyed being challenged and demonstrated their knowledge in class and through the homework they were set. Moreover, this had a significant impact on their parents who were also really pleased with their child's progress and attitude towards their learning. It was also beneficial for the parents as we regularly communicated with them, giving them more insight and understanding into the school curriculum, expectations of their children and how to support them in the best possible ways at home to sustain the progress. We would like to thank Muslim Hands and the Barnet Refugee service for their hard work, support and wisdom. Special thanks to go to Farida for her continuous sustenance, dedication and motivation in supporting us to carry out this project. We would like to continue supporting refugee children to provide them with an inclusive, solid

educational platform from which they can excel and be able to access the school curriculum like the rest of their peers. We wish to continue serving a purpose that is helpful to others and rewarding for us.

Case Study 5



Turyalai Khaksar
Service User/Volunteer

Every refugee has their own journey, Every one has personal struggles, losses, hopes and achievement. For me the achievement is to volunteer at Barnet Refugee Service. Although, I am an asylum seeker and suffering from head and neck vascular malformation but still want

to be active and I am passionate to support other people like me and make friends with native speakers.

It is a great privilege to lead the BRS's Sowing Seeds Gardening Project for the last 12 months. I work closely with two other volunteers and a group of 15 refugees and asylum seekers. I live on my own and have no family here, In Afghanistan I worked with my father on the farm. I feel very happy when I go to the allotment. It reminds me of my small village.

I enjoy working with refugees and asylum seekers and have some food together. We enjoy growing different vegetables and some flowers. I no longer feel lonely.

Since I came to the UK I thought that I couldn't be part of the community but now I feel I regained myself esteem, meeting new people and feel like I am part of the community.

BRS is a great organisation and helped me a lot. They supported me in every aspects of my life. As long as my physical health allows me, I will continue to support BRS with all my heart.

Director's Report

Syrians Support Project

At the start of the Syrian crisis, the then Government's policy was to be generous with humanitarian aid to Syria's neighbours rather than to accept fleeing Syrians for resettlement in the UK. However, in early 2014 it established the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (VPRP) in order to provide a route for selected Syrians to come to the UK. As part of this programme Barnet has accepted 50 Syrian refugees in the borough and we have been working closely with them to support those families. We have also been working closely with the Safe Passage charity which has helped to reunite around 200 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from France, Greece, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria and Syria with their relatives in the UK.

Our special thanks go to Mr & Mrs. Demashkieh and Mrs. Jodi Mishcon for their cash donations in support of this project.

As a result of the above, BRS started receiving many Syrians coming to us for help and support. Following consultation meetings with these clients we identified their most pressing needs and set up the following activities:

One to one Emotional Support

Many of the families and unaccompanied children

coming to the UK specifically those from Syria have been traumatised by their experiences and this has profoundly affected their physical and mental health. BRS managed to recruit a qualified Volunteer Arabic-speaking Counsellor who provides emotional support to the above clients on a weekly basis.

Mothers & Toddlers ESOL Classes

In partnership with Willesden Green Library BRS started a successful mums and toddlers group with the provision of an ESOL class every Tuesday at Willesden Library. A group of 8 Syrian mums with toddlers and babies attend these sessions and learn English while their children play and learn nursery rhymes.



Homework Club

This project is specifically focusing on Syrian refugees to support their children with homework. Some of these children struggle to get



their homework done as their parents don't speak much English and can't give their support.

Every Monday and Friday at the Willesden Library, 7 dedicated volunteers help the kids not only to do their homework and improve their English, learning skills and confidence but also to do some fun activities.

"I am a single mother of four children who came to the UK 10 years ago. I lost my husband as a result of conflict when he went to Syria two years ago. Due to the war in my country I did not have the chance to go to school. Therefore I can't help my children with their education. I was extremely depressed especially after the death of my husband that I could not help my kids with their homework. I am dependent on welfare benefits; I could not afford to pay for my kid's tuition. I am extremely happy that BRS helps my kids with their homework."

Director's Report

Syrian Refugee Visit to Universal Peace Federation (UPF)



BRS in collaboration with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) hosted a get together/party for Syrian Refugees at UPF headquarters in February 2017.

This was an amazing opportunity for us all to welcome 70 Syrian refugees from different backgrounds, ages and family circumstances. 70 Syrians attended the event. There was food and entertainment and at the end of the party all the attendees were presented with a small box of chocolates. Sheikh Ramzy from Oxford Islamic Centre and Mr. Khokhar of Muslim Aid also distributed some gifts to the children.

We are grateful to UPF for recognising BRS's contribution and presenting Nazeer Akbari, our Director, and Farida Stanikzai, our Operations Manager with an Ambassador for Peace Award for BRS's on-going tremendous support.



London Legal Support Sponsored Walk



The twelfth anniversary of the London Legal Walk took place on 16th May 2016 and with 600 registered teams and 10,500 walkers raised over £730,000, more than any other year. The evening turned out to be perfect for our team and all other walkers on the Legal Support Trust 10K Charity Walk.

Thanks to our dedicated 15 walkers who raised around £3000 in sponsorship, a really remarkable achievement. This is a brilliant achievement during a time when all talk was of spending cuts, higher taxes and general gloom. The funds raised by our walkers went directly to BRS and made a significant contribution to our vital advice service for our clients who have fled persecution and seek asylum and a chance to rebuild their shattered lives.

Our special thanks go to the walkers and most importantly all the sponsors who generously sponsored our walkers to raise fund for this important cause.

Director's Report

Cookery Workshops



During the past year three of our volunteers as well as a client attended an intensive Food Academy Plus cooking programme which lasted for 8 weeks (24 hours each week). This useful program was run by Al Sufra Charity. Participants learnt professional cooking skills, project management skills and customer service as well as numeracy, literacy and ICT.

As we had the above trained chefs, we organised a two cookery workshops in October 2016 and invited our native speaking volunteers and members of the public not only to learn how to cook and sample four delicious vegetarian dishes from Afghanistan, Iran and Morocco but also bring people of different cultures together and to raise fund for our Women's group. Our special thanks go to our chefs who raised around £200 towards our Women's Group, Jasmine.



Drop In for Destitute Asylum Seekers



Destitution is a huge problem amongst asylum seekers, one that pushes them to the brink of our society. Asylum seekers have to wait months or years for the outcome of their asylum claim, during which they are prohibited from working and only receive minimal or no financial support. As a result, asylum seekers are reliant on charities and their limited social networks to

make ends meet.

We have been running a Drop In to support destitute asylum seekers since 2006. This essential project has continued to flourish. During the past year we have 495 clients who collected more than 1500 food parcels. Our Drop In is currently providing emergency food and clothing to destitute asylum seekers and refugees while they are in the transition period. This service has been funded by kind donations from individuals, schools, Harrow Food Bank and local faith groups. During the year food and toiletries were donated by numerous schools, individuals, groups, churches, temples and synagogues. Linking with the National Zakat Foundation, Al-Mizan Charity, Churches Hardship Fund, Catholic Women's League and many other small funders, we managed to raise fund for individual destitute clients where they received the support in the form of cash or supermarket vouchers. Our special Thanks go to all those donors and to those who donated their harvest collection to BRS.

In particular we would like to thank Mrs. Jodi Mishcon, who set up the Big Shop Appeal for BRS and managed to get 52 sponsors to spend £100 each for a weekly shop for our destitute clients. Jodi also accepted the responsibility for doing the shopping on regular basis and organizing delivery to our office. Our sincere appreciation goes to Jodi and the team of donors to the Big Shop Appeal.

Director's Report

Homework Club

Promoting Education Amongst Refugees

The children of refugees face the challenges of disrupted education, cultural confusion, and lack of knowledge of English and of the UK education system plus parents who cannot provide homework support.

In November 2016 we set up this homework club in partnership with Muslim Hands. This course runs parallel with academic term time. Every Sunday 15 Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children, mainly newly arrived Syrians aged 8 to 11 benefit from this project. Thanks to our dedicated qualified tutors who tirelessly provide these young children with little ability to speak English, Mathematics and basic English language lessons in line with national curriculum. We strongly believe that this project is "much needed". It supports these young children with their studies, provides them with opportunities to succeed at school and encourages them to fully integrate as members of the wider community.

Our special thanks must go to our dedicated teaching team as well as our funder, The Muslim Hands, without whom this project would have not been formalised.



Case Study 6

"I am Syrian. I came to the UK with my wife and my daughter "Y.I" under the Syrian Resettlement Program last year. She is 8 years old and prior coming to the UK she did not attend school in Syria due to war and moving from one place to another place. When she came she had no knowledge of English and she didn't get a place in a local primary school for a few months after their arrival.

As my child did not have the chance in Syria to study due to conflict in our country and when she came here I and her mother were very worried about her education and how she would cope at school. Luckily I was so fortunate that my caseworker at Barnet Council informed me about the opportunity at BRS.

My daughter who started with no knowledge in English, she is now able to have a conversation using simple sentences and she is also pleased that she has been able to help her mother in her English. She is progressing equally well in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. In maths. She has made very good progress and based on feedback from her primary school teacher, she is now performing above the level for her age.

I am also volunteering for this project as teaching assistant. I have been mostly supporting a brother and sister Neither had any prior schooling and nor had their parents, in addition the children both have a speech impediment which makes it more difficult for them to communicate. In the beginning they were both shy and uncomfortable speaking in class. Together with the teacher we provided emotional support which has developed their confidence, enabling them to participate more fully in class. Whilst there has been visible progress with these children, their individual needs require more personalized long term support. Thank you very much BRS for setting up this worthwhile project."

Director's Report

End of Year Party 2016

Every year Barnet Refugee Service organises a party for our client families.

The party offers a rare opportunity to those seeking asylum or recently granted the right to settle here, to have a few hours recreation and socialising.

Father Christmas gives presents to all the children. For many of them these will be the first presents they have received in a long, long time.

Once again this year's party was organised in partnership and with the support of St Matthias Church. The party was held at St Matthias Community Centre, Colindale on Tuesday 22nd December 2016.

Around 250 clients attended at least half of whom were children. There was food, live music, entertainment including a children's club, an Indian group dance by Shri Academy of Dance, Drumming, as well as Santa Claus who handed out 150 presents to the kids. We were fortunate to have the help of over 25 volunteers without whose participation none of this would have been possible. The volunteers worked very hard and effectively together to facilitate the smooth running of the party. It was a great pleasure to have the participation of Barnet's Mayor, Cllr David Longstaff and the Mayoress, Ms Gillian Griffiths.

Our special thanks go to the local schools, faith groups and individual donors who provided us with cash and gifts for Santa's Grotto.



Director's Report

European Placement Network /Erasmus+ Project

For the 4th year running our successful partnership with Erasmus+ enabled us to support another one of their Interns by providing a six months Internship Program. Erasmus+ is an European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. They support Students in both higher education and vocational education and training to benefit from the opportunity to gain work experience in another country.

During the past year we hosted our fourth intern Sira Inchusta-Carrillo a Clinical Psychologist from Spain for fourteen weeks. She had a Master's Degree in Psychology and another in Clinical Psychopathology, medical psychology and psychotherapy. She was an incredibly passionate person who had extensive work experience working with children and disabled people and she is an active member of Amnesty International. She was a great asset to BRS who worked closely with her on different projects and her contribution was greatly appreciated.

" I couldn't communicate with my GP, there was a language barrier, and I had health problems. I always asked the GP surgery to provide me with an interpreter and they refused. The BRS volunteer who speaks my language accompanied me to my appointments and interpreted. He also challenged the GP surgery and asked them to provide me with an interpreter. Now whenever I have appointment, I call the surgery and they book me an interpreter" .



Case Study 7

Sira Inchusta Carrillo

International Intern

When I finished my Master degree in Clinical Psychology in France last September, I knew that I needed a new work experience abroad to improve my English skills and to learn more about social work done with vulnerable people in other countries. Last Christmas I received the confirmation to start an internship in a British charity called Barnet Refugee Service in London. Working and doing activism to help Refugee people was already part of my daily life, but I wanted to do some more direct action.

Coming to Barnet Refugee Service has been a stunning experience that taught me more than expected. This charity illustrates how people can help people in a thousand ways, always with a smile and a lovely word to those who needed the most. Working beside Farida Stanikzai is an expeditious and prompt experience where you learn about how a charity works, how projects get to be built and how passion makes things happen.

This experience has been really diversified and stimulating. I have had the opportunity to be involved almost all the activities that are run in BRS and to be part of the creation of new projects. Participating in the Mums and Tots group, helping filling individual funding applications or helping new volunteers were some of the tasks I was assigned to.

There are not enough words to describe how thankful I am to the staff and to all the people I have met in BRS. I felt as a part of the team and they always made me feel at home. The BRS family is "most do" charity to get involved with.

Today, I'm trying to do my PhD in how we could help refugee children and families facing trauma and how to prevent psychopathological troubles in the young refugee children. BRS helped me to observe and assess where the main problems are and where to start working on. My future step would be to create specialised centres to help refugee children and their family. But I will never forget the BRS' style of doing things.

Volunteering



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager

BRS has over 8 years of experience delivering volunteering programs. Our experience shows that volunteering opportunities help immigrants to gain confidence, self-discipline and is a positive way to integration. It will also be a path into employment which can affect people's mental health and confidence.

Volunteers are essential force in delivering our activities. They are integral to our work and their commitment, skills, and life experiences are an enormous asset to us.

“Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

Martin Luther Kings Jr

Volunteering, especially for people from a refugee background, can create an opportunity to try out new and different occupations in the new UK environment. This is particularly relevant in a context where many refugees experience a societal process of de-skilling through non-recognition of their qualifications. Our experience of running a successful volunteering program for over eight years confirms that volunteering can not only help refugees and asylum seekers develop new skills, improve their employability and support improving their language skills but also helps strengthen their integration with the local community and supports developing links with the

wider community. Nearly 50% of our volunteers have a refugee background some of whom are BRS ex- service users. They work closely with volunteers from British society which creates mutual understanding between individuals and communities.

Due to our ongoing expansion we are relying more on our volunteers who provide support in every aspect of the services we offer. Advice, ESOL, peer support, Mother and Toddler Group, Women's Group, men's group, Employment support through



our Job Club, Youth Social Club, befriending, workshops, counselling, gardening, outings, Men's Breakfast Club, outreach, homework club, interpreting and event organisation.

During the past year we provided a number of training sessions for our volunteers including First Tier Tribunal training, Food safety, No recourse public fund training, Basic counselling skills at work, Overview of asylum law, Telephone Skills and Understanding issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers. There has been ongoing support to the volunteers in various posts, including one-to-ones and supervisions. Some of our volunteers

have also managed to secure volunteer placements in other organisations. To support the local community we also take students from local schools for work placements to gain valuable work experience and an insight into charity work. We also managed to develop connections with the European Placement Network (European Traineeship) where we accepted volunteers for work placements internationally.

This year BRS has supported two volunteer advisers in gaining accreditation with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). We are proud to announce that through this successful program 9 of our volunteers managed to get into paid employment.

We would like to thank our funder The Big Lottery Fund for supporting this essential project. Also our special thanks go to our Operations Manager, Farida Stanikzai for her continuous passion, dedication and excellent work.

We make a living with what we get but we make a life by what we give! A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers!!!



Our Volunteers

Trustees

Ponusamy Karunaharan
Zoe Aslanpour
Miranda Levey
Roger Selby
Shubhi Raymond
Golnar Bokaei
Helal Atayee

Men's Group volunteers

Abdulwahab Moghrabi
Shakib Murshed
Begonia Aloy
Charles Posner
Ophelie Decuyper
David Brodie

Volunteer Advisers

Jawharah Albakri
Nima Mahdavian
Tirza Waisel

Events Volunteers

Razieh Noromand
Nima Mahdavian
Zohreh Shahrabi
Shalina Khanom

Admin and Office Volunteer

Fresha Khandahri

Women's Group

Tanya Novick
Elsa Shamash
Monica Shackman
Dalies Donato

Mahtab Azizi
Jane Clegge
Kgnggho Fay
Melissa Sabeti
Moluk Vakili

Design/ IT Support

Saleh Mohamed Abuewilly
Reza Izadi

ESOL volunteers

Elizabeth Perrot
Ros Staines
Rosemary Biseo
Helen Stone
Orna Almagor
Vivien Chappell
Annisa Pryor
Jill Joseph
Helen Syani
Sima Rutherford
Naima Aminuddin
Madeline Ioannidis
Katharine Sathe
Fabiha Haq
Hawa Bibi Muhammad
Polly Rockberger
Linda Carey
Rachel Winton
Amy Lin
Ruth Kitching
Josephine Cuttall
Belqis Sadat
Sue Engelbert
Rahimeh Rahmati
Elizabeth Morrell

Belqis Sadat
Towyn Mason
David Levey
Javid Moghamy
Wahideh Majeedi

Mother and Toddler Group

Hilai Tajuddin
Zahra Khanum
Patricia Peiris
Hannah Cass-Simpson
Noa Weinstein

Youth Work Volunteers

Leonard Spano Jaliff
Lauren McWilliams
Alessandro Filizzola

Interpreters

Rahela Amiry
Ahmed Aissouf
Adila Badri
Helal Attayee
Ammar Bajboj
Patricia Peiris
Muzhda Istanikzai
Kgnggho Fay
Sadete Cakigi
Alaa Alibrahim
Houda Bashaagha

Advocates/ Befrienders

Val Davies
Rahela Amiry
Ahmed Aissouf
Adila Badri
Ammar Bajboj

Cheryl Skyland

Emotional Support

Laila Al-Attar

Gardening

Fatemeh Yazdanian
Turyalai Khaksar
Vegeun Boick

Youth Work

Leonard Spano Jaliff
Lauren McWilliams
Alessandro Filizzola

Homework club

Noor Abedin
Louise Foddy
Mike Dwyer
Elisabeth Wardle

Community Liaison

Michael Mugishangyezi

Internation Intern

Sira Inchusta Carrillo

Employment and Education Adviser

Kate Lobo

Finance and Book Keeping

Fahimeh Afshinrad

Our Volunteers



Volunteers Party 2017

We make a living with what we get but we make a life by what we give! A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers!!!

Financial Information

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017

	2017 Unrestricted funds £	2017 Restricted funds £	2017 Total £	2017 Total £
income Resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income	28,239	5,856	34,095	46,401
Grants	0	29,000	29,000	31,735
Interest receivable	134	0	134	132
Other Incoming Resources	0	182,145	182,145	116,619
Total incoming resources	28,373	217,001	245,374	194,887
Resources Expended:-				
Cost of charitable activities	28,185	207,060	235,245	194,936
Governance Costs	925	4,350	5,275	3,620
Total resources expended	29,110	211,410	240,520	198,556
Net income/(outgoing) resources transfer between funds	(737)	5,591	4,854	(3,669)
Gross transfer between funds	0	0	0	0
Net movements in funds	(737)	5,591	4,854	(3,669)
Total funds at 1 April 2016	49,574	0	49,574	53,243
Total funds at 31st March 2016	48,837	5,591	54,428	49,574

Trustees Statement

The above statement has been extracted from the accounts prepared by Ashley Nathoo & co and were approved by the Trustees of Barnet Refugee Service on 16th November 2017. The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to the Companies House. Copies of full report can be obtained from the Director of Barnet Refugee Service.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Our Major Funders for 2016/17

-
- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The Big Lottery Fund
- The John Lyon's Charity
- The Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- The London Catalyst
- The Muslim Hands
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- The Lush Charity Pot UK
- The Genesis Community Fund

Barnet Refugee Service

8th Floor, Hyde House, The Hyde
London NW9 6LH

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

Tel: 020 8905 9002

Email advice@b-r-s.org.uk

Fax: 020 8905 9003

Website: www.b-r-s.org.uk

Registered Charity: 1107965

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Donations

We would be very grateful if you would consider supporting our work financially. If you wish to give us a Donation, please fill out the form below.

I enclose my donation to Barnet Refugee Service to help you provide vital support to destitute asylum seekers and refugees in Barnet.

Cheque (payable to Barnet Refugee Service) for
£_____ enclosed

Please complete the following Gift Aid Declaration as this allows us to claim tax back from the Inland Revenue on your donation without any extra cost to you.

Barnet Refugee Service

(Registered Charity No: 1107965)

Gift Aid Donation Form

Full Name

Address

Post Code

Declare that I want Barnet Refugee Service to reclaim tax on my Donation of £ and any future donation until I inform you otherwise.

Signed

Date : ___/___/___

Note: You must Pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your Donation currently 28p for every £1 you give.

**Please return this form with your donation to:
Barnet Refugee Service,
Hyde House
The Hyde, London NW9 6LH**

BARNET REFUGEE SERVICE

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control
[article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights].

