

The logo for Barnet Refugee Service, featuring a stylized white door icon to the left of the text. The text is arranged in three lines: "BARNET" on the top line, "REFUGEE" on the middle line, and "SERVICE" on the bottom line. All text is in a white, serif font with a black outline.

BARNET
REFUGEE
SERVICE

The background of the entire page is a photograph of multiple strands of barbed wire. The wires are arranged in a complex, overlapping pattern that creates a sense of depth and restriction. The sky behind the wires is a mix of light and dark clouds, with a warm, golden light suggesting either sunrise or sunset. In the center of the sky, a large flock of birds is seen in flight, their silhouettes scattered across the clouds.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19
Barnet Refugee Service

Our Major Funders For 2018/19

- **NHS Barnet (CCG)**
- **National Lottery Community Fund**
formerly known as The Big Lottery Fund
- **The European Fund (AMIF)**
- **The City Bridge Trust**
- **The Lloyd Foundation**
- **John Lyon's Charity**
- **The One to One Children's Fund**
- **AB Charitable Trust**
- **The Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund**
- **The Zakat Foundation**
- **The Catholic Women's League**
- **London Catalyst**
- **The Beacon Lodge Charitable Trust**
- **The Beatrice Laing Trust**
- **London Sport**
- **Awards for All**
- **Muslim Hands**
- **The Clothworkers' Foundation**
- **Barnet Council**
- **London Churches Refugee Fund**

Barnet Refugee Service

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

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

Telephone: 020 8905 9002

Email: info@b-r-s.org.uk

Fax: 020 8905 9003

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

Charity Number: 1107965

Co Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Index

Foreword from the Chair	2	Multilingual Wellbeing Service (MWS)	15	Social Club	30
Message From The Director	3	Drop In for Destitute Asylum Seekers	15	Heritage and Culture	30
Organisational Chart	4	European Placement Network	16	Self-development and New Skills	31
Our Staff	5	Case Study 1	16	Creativity and Art	31
Director's Report	6	Celebrating World Mental Health Day	16	Socialising and Fun	31
Introduction	6	Sowing Seeds Gardening Project	17	Photography Workshops	31
Financial Statement	6	Partnership Work	17	Music Workshops	32
Current Funding	6	Mothers and Toddlers Group	18	Summer Activities	32
Our History	6	Violence Against Women and Girls	18	Sport and Physical Health	32
Our Ethos	6	End of Year Gift Distribution	19	Christmas Party Fundraising Event	32
Statement of Values	7	Celebrate Nowruz Spring Festival	19	The Northern Ireland Education Authority	32
Our Vision	7	BRS Talks Programme	20	Youth Christmas Party	33
Our Objectives	7	Case Study 2	20	Emotional and Mental Support	33
Fundraising Strategy	8	Visiting Job Centres	21	Outreach and Advocacy work	33
Donations	8	Improving Mental health	21	VPR Programme (Syrians)	33
Small Grants for Individuals	8	Sagitter Training Visit	21	Football club	34
Advice	9	Volunteering Project	22	Youth Counselling Service	34
Outreach Advice Clinics	9	Training for Volunteers	22	Jasmine Women's Group	35
Legal Advice Surgery	9	Our Volunteers	23	Job Club	36
Advice for Unaccompanied Minors	9	Volunteers Party 2018	24	Hotel School Hospitality Course	36
Health and Wellbeing	10	Counselling and Emotional Support Project	25	Case Study 5	37
Our Achievements at a Glance	11	Case Study 3	25	Case Study 6	37
Journey to Integration Project	11	Homework Club	26	Farewell Mr. Chairman!	38
Customer Satisfaction Survey and Charts	12	IAPT Psycho-Educational Workshops	27	Case Study 7	38
ESOL Classes	13	Befriending and Peer Support	27	Case Study 8	39
Trinity Exam	13	Residential Retreat	28	Case Study 9	39
Mindfulness Workshops	14	Presentation for Barnet Labour Party	29	London Legal Support Sponsored Walk	39
Art Therapy Workshops	14	Case Study 4	29	Financial Information	40
Ceramic Art Workshops	14	An Overview of Inclusion Health	29	Partnership Organisations	41
Peer to Peer Support	15	Refugee Youth Wellbeing	30		

Foreword from the Chair



This has been my fifth year as Chair and I am pleased to report that it has been yet another very productive and successful year for Barnet Refugee Service.

When I walk into Barnet Refugee Service, I have a strong sense of an organisation passionately seeking to help its clients rebuild their lives, a desire to share knowledge and to help people achieve what they can for themselves. This is how to help people achieve genuine empowerment – the sort that comes from within. This is why the intercultural aspect of our charity's work is so important. Our work is based on a strong human rights framework and reflects our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After fourteen years of operation as an independent charity, I can confidently say that BRS is much more than a place of hope and care for refugees and is by now a leading organisation providing a unique Holistic Model of Support and has established a firm reputation for integrity. This has not been achieved on our own and over the years we have managed to create and maintain links and cooperation with several like-minded people, organisations, charities and academic institutions who share our values and hopes and We are ever grateful to all of them.

I am proud to announce that during the past year, despite all the financial strains and challenges within the sector, we managed to double the size of our organisation and offices by securing further funding which guarantees BRS's sustainability for another 3 years. We thank all our funders and donors for their confidence in our work.

Our achievements wouldn't have been possible without the hard work, passion, and commitment of our staff and volunteers under the excellent

leadership of Nazee Akbari, our Executive Director. Words fail me to express my gratitude to all of them and my deep admiration for their continued motivation to carry out their work.

I would also like to express my immense gratitude to my fellow Trustees who have served the charity throughout this year, providing invaluable support and good governance, ensuring compliance with our organisational constitution and charitable regulations.

We look forward with confidence to another year of success and prosperity for our charity. Most importantly, with the expansion of our therapeutic activities, we look forward to being able to continue to offer our clients space and freedom to explore the meaning of some of their experiences in safety and with respect.

Our work for BRS gives us much joy, in the firm conviction that the world can be a better place and we all can contribute to change.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Our work for BRS gives us much joy, in the firm conviction that the world can be a better place and we all can contribute to change.

Message from the Director



I am immensely proud to present our Annual Report 2018-19 which reveals the hard work of our dedicated colleagues and volunteers, who make a real difference to the lives of many refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

The year 2018-19 delivered little relief to the world's forcibly displaced people. According to UNHCR, during the past year another 2.3 million people fled their homes, bringing the total number of displaced people to 70.8 million. For the 29.4 million refugees and asylum seekers among that number, the opportunities for resettlement, social integration, and access to education and livelihoods shrank even as needs increased, with many countries opting to close borders and narrow pathways for viable and dignified movement. For these very reasons, Barnet Refugee Service worked even harder to double the activities under our Holistic Model of Support for the well-being of clients.

This report provides a look back at BRS's efforts to shine a light on the critical challenges faced by those who have been forced from their homes, and to promote solutions. It's not just the services right at the sharp end that matter. I'm hugely proud of the work BRS does to engage refugees and asylum seekers and local communities in arts, sports, gardening, and cultural activities. These provide vital opportunities for people to come together to do the things that make us all human; to express ourselves, to have fun and to learn from each other as equals. This is vital to help the host community understand the refugee experience and to enable refugees to rebuild their lives hence a positive integration.

Despite the challenges, much of what our team dealt with over the years gave us hope. I am proud to say that over the last year, we managed to secure more funding and expanded our team and activities. We

have learned a lot and continue to learn more as we focus on defending the rights of people moving through the UK's asylum process. This report sets out our activities for the year and highlights our key successes and achievements. It also highlights the work of our dedicated and hard-working volunteers and staff to whom I am ever grateful.

I am greatly indebted to our funders and commissionaires who recognised and shared our assessment of needs enabling us to grow and fulfil our aims. In particular, I would like to thank the National Lottery Communities Fund, the European Fund, The Lloyd Foundation and the City Bridge Trust who played an important role in the expansion of services and in securing our future for another 3 years.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, donors and those who have supported us for the past few years. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to those who have asked their friends and family to donate to BRS for birthdays or other occasions.

My special gratitude goes to our Chair, Dr. Zoe Aslanpour, and our Treasurer, Ponusamy Karunaharan, for their ongoing support. And last, but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to the Board of Trustees for their continued practical, intellectual and emotional support, upon which the BRS's well-being depends.

I am proud of the work of everyone in the BRS family. Together we have achieved so much only because of our common values, passion and how we work together.

Nazee Akbari
Executive Director

Organisational Chart

Trustees Serving in 2018-2019

Zoe Aslanpour (Chair)
 Ponusamy Karunaharan (Treasurer)
 Roger Selby (Secretary)
 Golnar Bokaei
 Helal Atayee
 Ammar Bajboj
 Ahmad Hashemi
 Conor Doyle

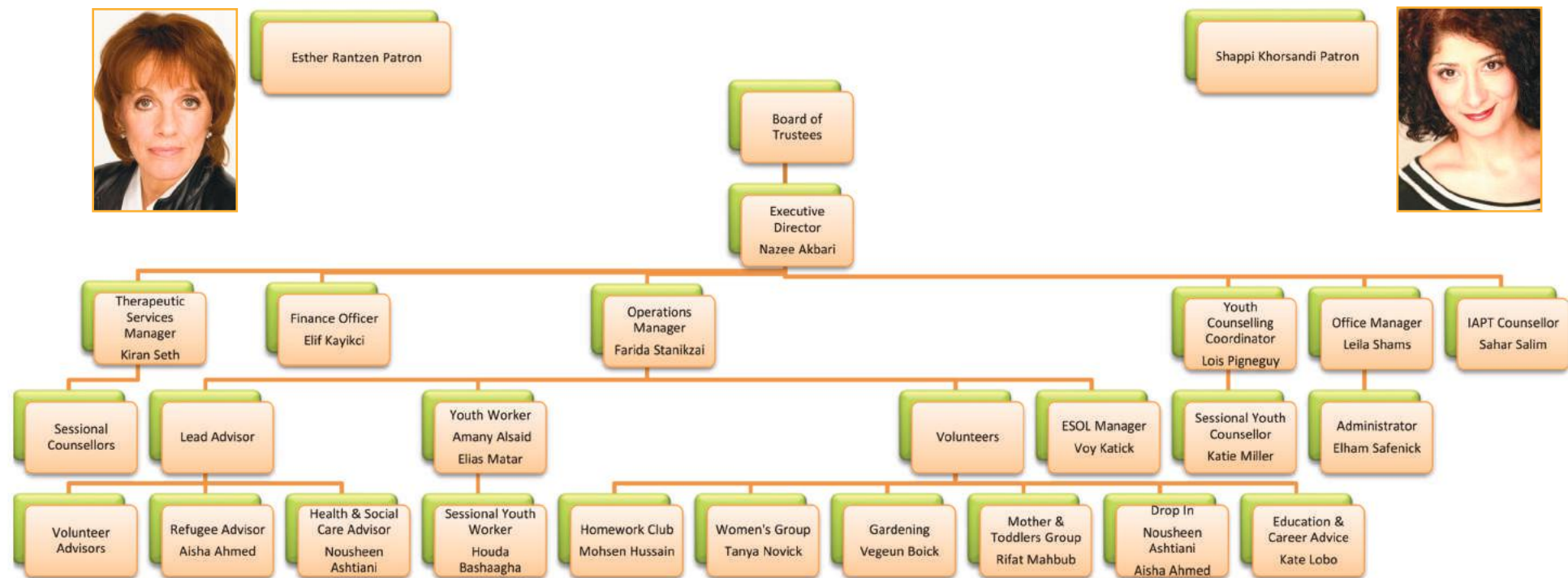


In the picture:
 From left sitting: Golnar Bokaei, Ammar Bajboj, Zoe Aslanpour
 From left standing: Conor Doyle, Roger Selby, Ponusamy Karunaharan, Helal Atayee, Ahmad Hashemi



Esther Rantzen Patron

Shappi Khorsandi Patron



Our Staff



Naze Akbari
Executive Director



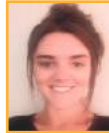
Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager



Leila Shams
Office Manager



Voy Katick
ESOL Manager
(Joined Jan 2019)



Lois Pigneguy
Youth Counselling Coordinator



Syed Hussain
Homework Club Coordinator



Elif Kayikci
Finance Officer
(Joined Jan 2019)



Sara Hessabi
ESOL Teacher



Sahar Salim
Emotional Support Officer



Katie Miller
Youth Art Therapist



Nousheen Ashtiani
Health & Social Care Advisor



Aisha Ahmed
Refugee General Advisor



Amany Alsaïd
Youth Worker (left Sept 2018)



Elias Matter
Youth Worker/Drama Therapist
(Joined Sept 2018)



Hoda Bashaagha
Sessional Youth Worker



Ellie Safe
Administrator



Tanya Novick
Women's Group Coordinator
(Volunteer)



Kiran Seth
Clinical Supervisor



Fiona Forrester
International Intern



Charlotte Palmer
Trainee Social Worker



Monica O Agyemang
Trainee Social Worker



Nasir Ata
Visiting Solicitor
(Volunteer)



Mojgan Rabiee
Sessional Nursery Nurse



Refat Mahbub
Sessional ESOL Teacher

Director's Report

Annual Report for the year 2018-19

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 externally examined accounts for the year ending 31st March 2019 can be found on page 40.

The Board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2019 and consider 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 to 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 (CCG)**
- **National Lottery Community Fund**
formerly known as The Big Lottery Fund
- **The European Fund (AMIF)**
- **The City Bridge Trust**
- **The Lloyd Foundation**
- **John Lyon's Charity**
- **One to One Children's Fund**
- **AB Charitable Trust**
- **The Leathesellers' Company Charitable Fund**
- **The Zakat Foundation**
- **The Catholic Women's League**
- **London Catalyst**
- **The Beacon Lodge Charitable Trust**
- **The Beatrice Laing Trust**
- **London Sport**
- **Awards for All**
- **Muslim Hands**
- **The Clothworkers Foundation**
- **Barnet Council**
- **London Churches Refugee 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.

Director's Report

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 ac-

cess 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.

Director's Report

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 eco-therapy with the aim of improving the mental and physical wellbeing of our clients through doing outdoor activities in nature.

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.

Donations

We received around £45,000 donations from many individuals, organisations and faith groups. Our special thanks go to one of our supporters who made a generous anonymous donation of £8,500. Once again a cash donation of £10,000 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.

We must also thank our dedicated volunteer walkers for their hard work in raising over £600 through the 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 on-going 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 continued supporting 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 to doing the shopping on a regular basis and get it delivered to our office. For our end of year party we were donated 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, National Zakat Foundation, Claremont High School, Sufra NW London, London Churches Refugee Fund, The Sacred Heart Church, The Lush Shop(Oxford Street), St. Michael and All Angels in Mill Hill, St Mary at Finchley Parish Church, Trinity Church in Colindale, Pakistan Ladies Group, Goods for Good, Friends in Need- Happy Knitters, Trinity Church in North Finchley, London Catalyst Samaritan Grant, Gail's Artisan Bakery, Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue, Daniel's Bakery, Kew Gardens Community Membership Scheme the Pret a Manger and Lola's Cake at Brent Cross, Hendon Sainsbury's and Tesco', the Santander bank, The Betty Messenger Foundation and UCS Parents Guild.

It was not practical to value the vital in kind donations but we believe the retail value to be in excess of £25,000.

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 around £22,592.50 in cash and £4818 (in vouchers) financial support for desperate individuals and their families whom had nowhere to go and had given up hope. This was only possible with the support of The National Zakat Foundation, The Catholic Women's League, Khavatin Muslim Ladies, Pakistan Ladies Group, Churches Together and many individual donors. The small grants covered the costs of education and training, household items, emergency shelter for DV victims, medical and mobility, IT equipment and subsistence. On behalf of our clients we thank them all for their on-going support.

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. We have seen 855 clients for advice, which includes over 370 new clients, and handled over 8203 enquiries including 3905 cases during the past year. (Please see charts on page 12).

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, dealing with over 600 enquiries on various issues.

Legal Advice Surgery

Free legal services as part of the UK legal aid system 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 of 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 with Ata & Co Solicitors who provided 151 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 the Refugee Council who served 138 of our young clients seeing them every Thursday for the full day at Hyde House.



Director's Report

Health and Wellbeing

As a member of Barnet Wellbeing Hub much of our work is directly health focused, such as the advice work where we saw clients with over 2000 health related enquiries. During 2018/19 our health focused activities included:

- Health access and Health promotion workshops for our clients
- Expanding on our "Holistic Model of Support" targeting the better mental wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers
- Mental health support project supporting young refugees
- Mothers & Toddlers Group to promote Healthy Life Style by health promotion workshops
- Production of an illustrated handbook for Maternity Dept by our ESOL teachers for mothers with limited or no English
- Running ESOL classes with an 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 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.

- 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/counselling and group work
- Psycho-educational workshops through IAPT provision
- Series of therapeutic weekly activities to refugee women with mental health problems, victims of DV, torture and rape. In partnership with artsdepot through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, yoga, mindfulness, art & craft, poetry, dance etc.
- Close partnership work with researchers i.e. Hertfordshire University, UCL and Anglia Ruskin University
- Participation in a project with Cambridge University and the Police where a randomised control trial (RCT) was developed to test whether out of court disposals, as opposed to a court appearance, have an impact on future reoffending rates.
- Active participation in supporting the Barnet Wellbeing Hub.
- Sharing our "Holistic Model of Support" with professionals through 2 Health Care conferences organised by The Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust

In addition to the above BRS has been actively in-

involved with NHS Barnet's different activities to promote better health within the community i.e. Health Watch, World Mental Health Day event.

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. In the past we used to provide training for service providers on refugee health issues but this year, due to cuts and shortage of staff we did not feel the demand was there. Instead we redesigned our training program and attended different network meetings and used the opportunity to talk about our clients and their needs. We provided several 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.

"BRS helped me to find my health again"

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:

- **1953** Clients accessing all our services with 408 new clients
- **8203** Advice/general enquiries
- **493** Clients accessed our service through outreach surgeries
- **650** Client visits to emergency support drop in services
- **138** Clients attended our Immigration Drop in with visiting solicitors
- **138** Health promotion workshops
- **12** Workshops on accessing health, housing and welfare benefits
- **8** Mindfulness and Art therapy sessions with 81 attendees
- **21** Yoga and relaxation sessions with 130 attendees
- **61** Sessions of gardening with 30-35 active attendees on a weekly basis
- **69** Clients received one to one counselling
- **8** Young clients received one to one counselling
- **20** Clients attended our Residential Retreat
- **92** Active volunteers supported BRS within dif-

ferent activities

- **10** Training courses provided to volunteers with 53 attendees
- **52** clients and volunteers were assisted with cv writing, volunteering opportunities, online job search
- **63** Clients and 3 volunteers managed to get into paid employment
- **156** Students attended 11 Successful ESOL classes 2 sessions per week
- **15** Mental health awareness/ Psycho-educational workshops
- **12** Women registered with our successful Mothers & Toddlers Group with 14 children
- **197** Young people involved with our successful youth activities
- **48** Skills for Life English Classes with 192 attendees
- **60** Women registered with our Jasmine Women's Group
- **50** Refugee children had 33 tuition, sessions (KS1-KS4 - 99 hours Maths and English)
- **9** Vulnerable clients received befriending support

Journey to Integration Project

During the past year in partnership with Refugee Women's Association (RWA) we managed to secure two-year funding from the European Fund (Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund - AMIF) and started the project in January 2019. The aim of this project is to increase integration and address isolation through intensive support. The activities within this project complement other BRS activities and includes: Volunteering, Mentoring, ESOL, Citizenship Activities, Information, Advice and guidance, and Homework Club for young refugees.

Our special thanks go to the European Fund for supporting this project financially.

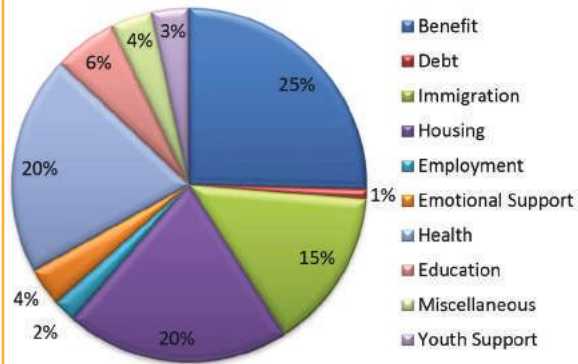


"This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union."

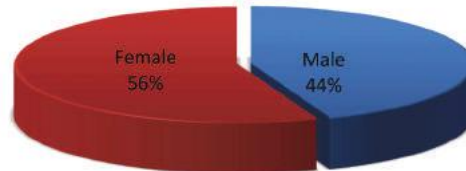
"BRS helped me to find my lost life and supported me to rebuild my life"

Director's Report

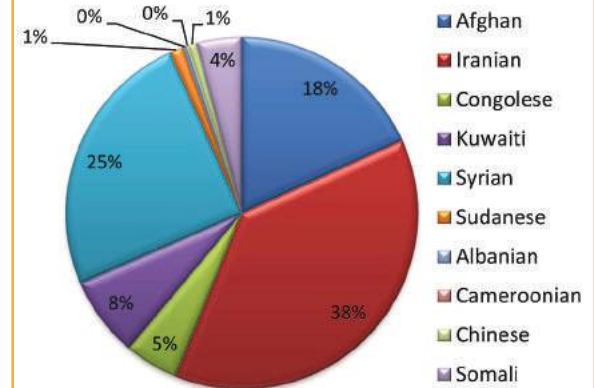
Enquiry Areas 2018-19



Clients by Gender



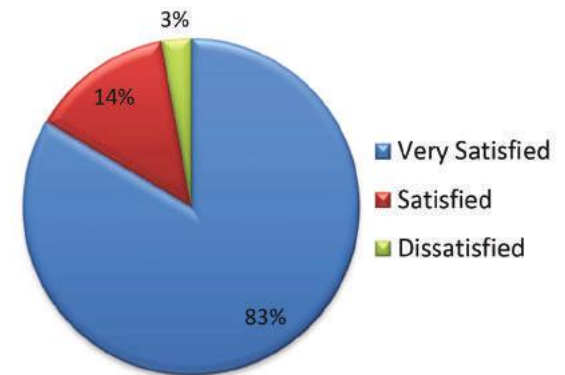
Where Our Clients Come from?



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 2018/19 we randomly selected clients who had used our services and gave them questionnaires. Over all 175 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 139 were returned. Our response therefore was a healthy 79%. Out of the 139 questionnaires returned 83% felt 'very satisfied' with our services and 14% 'satisfied' and 3% felt "we should improve in some areas". Overall 89% felt the service they received improved the quality of their life.



ESOL Classes

The Casey Review (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016) states that good English skills are 'fundamental' to integrated communities. However, cuts of around 60% to ESOL funding over the past decade means many asylum seekers and refugees cannot access the ESOL education they so desperately need. Poor language skills exacerbate isolation, particularly for women in certain communities.

Barnet Refugee Service is proud to support refugees and asylum seekers in their efforts to learn English through 7 classes delivered twice a week totalling 21 hours of provision. In the year 2018-2019, 154 learners were enrolled on our informal ESOL classes. The majority of students tend to be women and a wide range of nationalities were represented, including Afghan, Iranian, Kuwaiti, Bangladeshi, Syrian, Somali, Turkish, Sudanese, Albanian, Eritrean and DR Congo among others. Many of the students have been with us for several years and the ESOL classes fulfil much more than an educational function in their lives, as they gain access to other BRS services and derive emotional support from their teachers and classmates.

The classes concentrate on practical topics such as Health (50% of the content on average), Shop-



ping, Life in the UK and Food. However, higher levels also discuss subjects such as women's issues, climate change and Brexit! The qualified and experienced teachers cover a mixture of grammar, vocabulary and functional language.

This year in response to an identified need by teachers of the lower level classes, a Literacy class was opened. This was to support learners who struggled with writing but had speaking skills of Entry 1 and above. The class was taught by a qualified Literacy teacher.

BRS's ESOL team comprises of 15 volunteer ESOL teachers and 7 ESOL assistants in the classroom; 5 of these volunteers were ex-clients of BRS and hopefully the skills they learn will help them progress to employment or further study. We feel we have had another successful year and our special thanks must go to our donors and our dedicated teaching team.

Trinity Exam

BRS became an accredited centre for Trinity College ESOL in 2017. Trinity College is a highly regarded International Exam Board for English Language and ESOL Skills for Life qualifications

and its qualifications are well recognised and highly valued. The class continues to go from strength to strength, 26 students benefiting from the programme between April 2018 and March 2019. The first course took place from Feb 2018 to July 2018. 14 students attended the class, all sat for the exam and 13 passed Entry 1 or Entry 2 reading and writing. Supported by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the second course took place from 7 January to 3 April 2019, 12 students attended, 11 out of 12 sat for the exam and 10 of them passed Entry 1 or Entry 2 reading and writing.

Our special thanks must go to our funders, tutors and volunteers for making this a fruitful project.

From right to left

Sue Engelbert, Helen Stone, Orna Almagor, Josephine Cuttell, Helen Forbes, Sara Hessabi, Elisabeth Perrot, Rachel Winton, Ros Staines, Vivien Chappell, Rosemary Biseo, Farida Stanikzai and Rahela Amiry

Not in the picture

Elizabeth Morrel, Helen Syani, Sima Rutherford, Annisa Pryor, Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi, Fakhumisa Khairandesh, Ruth Kitching, Linda Carey, Fanta Sherrif, Rifat Mahbub, Eva Chrysostomou,



Director's Report

Mindfulness Workshops

Following on from the enthusiastic feedback about the mindfulness workshop sessions during the summer retreat, BRS offered three mindfulness workshops spread over the autumn months which took place both in the local park and in the premises of BRS and were facilitated by Anna Jezuita, a qualified Counsellor and Mindfulness Trainer. 21 clients participated in the workshops and the feedback was very positive.



The first session was scheduled in the park to combine an opportunity to practise mindful movement and walking with enjoying a communal meal. These sessions proved to be a popular activity within BRS. The sessions allowed for more intimate sharing and included the most relevant and hardest subject for everyone – missing the loved ones left behind in their countries. We learnt how to embrace the sadness and use it to practise developing compassion and loving-kindness to ourselves and to those we miss. All the group members valued what they had learnt in the workshops, and how this learning could be applied in their daily lives. Most of



all they cherished the closeness and connections that the workshops created, and the friendships that developed alongside the activities.

Art Therapy Workshops

This year BRS ran 6 Art therapy workshops which were facilitated by 2 qualified Art psychotherapists with 60 clients attending the workshops. The aim of these workshops was to introduce the participants to Art Therapy processes and art making techniques



in a group context. The art psychotherapists used art media not as a diagnostic tool but as a primary model of expression and communication to address emotional issues.

The collage, hanging mobiles, and printmaking process workshops focused on introducing and exploring the idea of Art Therapy with the participants, and helping them to express themselves creatively by forming their own collection of images and words with a personal meaning to them. The participants also made model of animals or imaginary creatures, created an environment or somewhere for their animals to live and talked with their partners about what they had made and how their animal felt in the environment/home.

Throughout the workshops the participants created their own unique entity that reflected their inner world and helped them slow down stress responses and emotional or physiological dysregulation.

These group work sessions proved to have a positive effect in promoting wellbeing within mental health and successfully facilitated greater levels of

interaction and symptom relief than verbally orientated groups.

Ceramic Art Workshops

The art of pottery is oftentimes described as therapeutic and relaxing. While spinning clay, your mind and body are in natural synergy, wrapped around your creative ambitions and goals. This thoughtful, artistic activity can open up the mind and relieve people of outside worries. During the past year in partnership with the Playtime London Studio we ran 2 ceramic workshops for our youth group with 12 children attending as well as with our Women's group where 18 adults attended. The Ceramic workshops included pottery throwing, sculpting, clay modelling, glazing and firing techniques.

The positive feedback from the participants confirms that it was a rare opportunity for them to use their hands, making beautiful creative objects out of clay and they found the workshops calm, therapeutic and mindful.



Director's Report

Peer to Peer Support

Another big achievement at BRS has been the Peer Support network that has developed between our clients. One of the key benefits of Peer Support is the greater perceived empathy and respect that peer supporters are seen to have for each other, increasing levels of self-esteem, confidence and positive feelings that they are doing good. During our various social and psycho-educational workshops our clients talk and get to know one another, forming friendships that extend beyond the sessions they attend. These friendships, particularly between experienced asylum seekers or refugees and new arrivals, help bring people out of isolation. They help accompany each other to different appointments and invite each other to each other's social activities. This has helped our clients to better cope with their mental health problems, which helps the health system as a whole as it can lead to a decrease in hospital admissions for those taking part.



Multilingual Wellbeing Service (MWS)

Multilingual Wellbeing Services 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 helping MWS to achieve its aims and objectives. The aim of this project is to improve the mental health of BMER communities in Barnet by increasing their knowledge and confidence in accessing support, supporting BMER mental health services to provide support to others suffering mental distress in their community. We are pleased to announce that this project is continues to flourish, providing mental health promotion workshops and providing counselling services. MWS is an active partner with Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust is delivering Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) in Barnet.

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 and we had more than 650 clients who collected more than 2,000 food parcels. Our Drop In is currently providing emergency food to destitute asylum seekers and refugees while they are in the transition period. This service has been funded by kind donations by individuals, schools, Harrow Food Bank and local faith groups. During the year food and toiletries or supermarket vouchers were donated from numerous schools, individuals, groups, churches, temples and synagogues

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 to do the shopping on a regular basis and getting it delivered to our office. Our sincere appreciation goes to Jodi and the team of donors to the Big Shop Appeal.



"I am failed asylum seeker. BRS helped me with food and clothes vouchers"

Director's Report

European Placement Network Erasmus+ Project

In the 6th year of running our successful partnership with Erasmus+, BRS once again hosted another intern and provided a three-month internship with the advice team.

The Erasmus Programme (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is a European Union student exchange programme established in 1987. It is a programme combining all the EU's current schemes for education, training, youth and sport.

During past year we hosted our sixth intern, Fiona Forrester, who was studying Politics & International Affairs at Wake Forest University.

Fiona is an enthusiastic young lady who has extensive experience of helping those in need; she has worked as a judicial intern and a Congressional intern. Fiona is very passionate about helping others and has an exceptional work ethic coupled with advanced organisational skills.

She was an excellent asset to our organisation and her contribution was highly valued.



Case Study 1

Fiona Forrester International Intern

For three months, from September to December of 2018, I was fortunate to intern with Barnet Refugee Service during my study abroad semester in London. As a student of Politics and International Relations, I am very interested in human rights and the international refugee crisis, so receiving the opportunity to work with and learn from the staff at BRS was incredible. I had the privilege to work closely with Farida Stanikzai, who oversees the multitude of programs and assistance that BRS provides to hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers.

Through this experience, I have learned the importance of the comprehensive support that BRS provides. BRS not only provides advice and emergency relief, but English classes, support groups, youth activities, peer-to-peer mentorship, and more. By addressing their clients holistically and meeting all of their needs, they empower refugees and asylum seekers to succeed and integrate into British society. This experience also allowed me to learn about current laws regarding refugees and asylum seekers and the problems that exist within these policies. I hope to one day work in policy development and work towards the same goals as BRS: creating a society in which refugees and asylum seekers are viewed as an asset and granted the respect they deserve.

Farida and all the other dedicated BRS staff members have inspired me greatly to pursue a career in which I also make a difference in the world. I felt incredibly welcomed and accepted at BRS, and I will carry the knowledge I gained there with me for the rest of my life.

Celebrating World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year. The overall objective is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health.

Through the Barnet Wellbeing Hub, BRS contributed to the planning of the 2018 World Mental Health Day event that took place on October 10th at the Meritage Centre, Church End, Hendon, NW4 4JT. On the day, many supporters came together to celebrate this annual awareness programme which draws attention to mental illness and its major effect on peoples' lives worldwide

The day provided an opportunity for BRS to showcase the services we provide in the area of mental and emotional wellbeing, and to highlight the support BRS gives to refugees and asylum seekers dealing with mental health problems, so as to ensure that they can live better lives with dignity.



Sowing Seeds Gardening Project

BRS offers gardening sessions to socially marginalised asylum seekers and refugees who have been traumatised by their experiences and suffer from conditions such as anxiety, depression, stress and social isolation. This unique project provides an opportunity for these vulnerable and often isolated people to come out of their homes and to get involved in gardening in a therapeutic way. This facility brings together people from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds providing a source of recreation, social interaction and integration and an opportunity to practise speaking English. Overall, this activity boosts their confidence, improves social skills and helps to improve their physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

The Sowing Seeds Project has been operating since 2015 with the financial support of London Catalyst and the Big Lottery Fund. For the last four years, the Sowing Seeds participants have had the opportunity to enjoy nature and green spaces at the BRS allotment and to learn about gardening and nutrition. This helps them to reduce anxiety, improve health and wellbeing, build social and communication skills, boost their confidence and improve their spoken English.

Last year more than 36 refugees and asylum seekers were regularly involved with this project and more than 90 clients from other BRS projects visited the allotment and held their sessions there, including art workshops.

We provided a series of training courses for the clients at the allotment including food nutrition sessions run by a volunteer nutritionist

Like many other BRS activities, this is a volunteer-led project. For the last four years, we have managed to create 11 volunteer placements. Currently, we have 4 refugee volunteers who are managing the project.

Partnership Work

We partner with a variety of organisations who both join in our allotment activities and also provide opportunities outside the allotment. During the past year Groundwork and Capital Growth provided us with in-kind support and advice. We also had two training sessions provided by the Royal Horticultural Society's Community Outreach Advisor on planning when, where and how the crops should be planted in the allotment. Groups of 10 volunteers from Santander Bank "Discovery team" now regularly volunteer at our allotment implementing improvements to the allotment using £250 of donations per visit. In 2018, we bought a greenhouse with their donation and the Santander volunteers spent a day with our client group and set up/ assembled the greenhouse that we needed for the garden. On other occasions, they have installed fencing, a kitchenette and undertaken painting.

In October 2018, the Sowing Seeds Project was invited by the Director of the London Parks & Gardens Trust (LPGT) to visit Kenwood House in Hampstead. Seventeen of our clients attended the event and enjoyed a guided walk around Kenwood grounds led by Kenwood Estate's head gardener, followed by lunch.

The BRS Sowing Seeds Project was partnered with Refugee Women and Hopscotch to run a plot in Russel Square, Central London under the Gardens Trust programme. This is the first refugee group in the history of Russell Square to be involved in the gardens.

Like many other BRS activities, this is a volunteer-led project. We have 4 refugees volunteers who are managing the project. Our special thanks must go to all those who made this project a success.



Director's Report

Mothers and Toddlers Group

As well as running on-site classes, Barnet Refugee service also works in partnership with the nearby Hyde Children's Centre to provide ESOL classes to mothers with pre-school aged children. This successful project is in its 9th year and this year 12-14 mothers and 10 children have attended regularly.

Many of the mothers with childcare responsibilities find it very difficult to attend classes. We are so proud that with the support of the Hyde Children's Centre we have managed to continue this project.

The mothers who attend the class have a strong drive and desire to learn English as part of building their lives in the UK. While they learn ESOL from a qualified teacher, the children are looked after next door by a qualified nursery nurse and two volunteers. The children benefit from a wide range of child-centred activities including a fantastic soft play room and a sensory room which helps the kids to stimulate senses such as hand and eye coordination.

Our nursery nurse follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, promoting children's early learning through a variety of fun play opportunities such as storytelling, craft sessions, singing and sensory play.

For the last 15 minutes of the session, the mums join their children for the get-together circle time to sing Nursery Rhymes or play games in English, so everyone benefits!



Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls Awareness Conference

As more victims and survivors come forward to report domestic abuse and violence, there is a need to ensure that they get the support they need and that our services reduce the impact on children and families who witness incidents.

To tackle these issues BRS is partnering with other organisations and is committed to work together with them to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) including domestic violence and abuse (DVA). During the past year six members of BRS staff and volunteers attended the Barnet Violence Against Women and Girls Awareness Conference which took place at the Sangam Centre on 27th November 2018.

It was a great event which focused on identifying, understanding, challenging and eliminating harmful practices as well as how to support clients to increase their confidence to report to specialist services.

This was an opportunity for BRS to network and by having a stall to showcase its activities.



Director's Report

End of Year Gift Distribution

In December 2018 as the holiday season commenced, 155 gifts were distributed to our clients' children by Father Christmas at an event that was hosted at our office. These gifts were provided by generous donations from churches, schools, community organisations, and other individuals. For many of these newly arrived children, it was the first time they had received gifts. This has made such a difference in the lives of these children. Although some of these families do not celebrate Christmas, this allows the children to feel more welcomed and included in the community, particularly in school.

We are so grateful to all the people who were thinking of our refugee and asylum seeking children and made donations to make this happen.



Celebrate Nowruz Spring Festival

As spring arrives in the Northern Hemisphere, so does Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Nowruz, which means "new day" in Persian, has been celebrated for more than 3000 years. The holiday has roots in the Zoroastrian religion and marks the first day of spring as a new birth of nature. Countries which celebrate Nowruz include Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Albania.

On Sunday 10th March 2019, CommUNITY Barnet and Middlesex University facilitated a Nowruz Spring Festival 2019 where so many local organisations took part and made it a success. As a planning group member, Barnet Refugee Service participated in this event, organised two dance and singing performances as well as providing 15 volunteers to support the event. More than 4000 people attended the festival throughout the day and enjoyed traditional food, crafts and stalls, music and dance.

The main aim of this festival was to promote values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighbourliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and different communities.



Director's Report

BRS Talks Programme

One of the aims of BRS is to run an informative talks programme to schools, statutory and non-statutory organisations and faith groups to raise awareness of the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers and their contribution to their host communities. The volunteers, who themselves have gone through the same experience talk about the asylum process, the reasons people make the journey to the UK, and the challenges and issues facing them once they arrive.

Last year BRS ran a few talks. One of them took place on 9th December at Trinity Church North Finchley at their annual Toy Service which was centred around a collection of gifts for the children of families who come into the care of BRS.

Ayan Farah, one of our ex-service users who volunteers at BRS, spoke about her personal experiences and the difficulties she had in establishing her life in the UK as a single mother with five children, and the support she received from BRS. BRS would like to thank Trinity Church which every year organises an annual Toy collection to provide gifts for refugee children at Christmas.



"I am writing on behalf of all the congregation of Trinity church, North Finchley, to express our appreciation to the BRS Operations Manager for coming to speak to us on Sunday. It was a privilege to hear about the extensive range of services that BRS provides to refugees and asylum seekers in our community who need support of every sort and who so often feel alone and isolated.

A huge thank you to your tireless energy and to all BRS staff, both paid and voluntary who make BRS possible. We also pass on to Farah our gratitude for speaking about her personal situation, which was very distressing. Several people told me that what she had to say was very moving and just right. We hope that her situation may be satisfactorily resolved very soon. Thank you again and we hope to see you next year. With very best wishes, Sue, Stewart"



Case Study 2

Ayan Farah BRS Service User

I arrived in the United Kingdom in 1990 and sought asylum. Since then, I have had seven children, who were all born here. Six of my children have citizenship status, but due to complications with my asylum case, myself and my oldest child, who is over 18, are still awaiting decisions regarding our citizenship.

Although six of my children are British Citizens, because my case is still pending, I am not eligible to apply for any mainstream welfare benefits. To support myself and my seven children, the only government benefit I receive is child benefit. Currently, I am living with a friend who graciously provides accommodation for me and my children. We share one room, the living room, which we use for eating, sleeping, and everything in between. Due to this and my separation from my husband, I face a severe financial burden.

Thankfully, BRS has provided immense support to me and my children. We receive vouchers and a weekly food parcel to offset the costs of necessities. My children attend the Youth Club and the Tuition classes every week. Additionally, at BRS I feel comfortable to talk about my struggles, and I know that the staff understand and empathise with me. They always invite me when they have any social events.

I am extremely grateful to BRS for their referral to an immigration advice solicitor from the National Zakat Foundation. I had no access to legal aid, and through this free service, I was advised that my children who had British birth certificates were entitled to apply for UK citizenship, leading to six of my children becoming UK citizens. In turn, this strengthened my eldest child's and my cases for status as well.

I am so grateful that my children with citizenship are now able to attend school trips because they have a passport. Overall, this has given me renewed hope and I am very thankful.

Director's Report

Visiting Job Centres

Barnet Refugee Service is working in collaboration with statutory and non-statutory organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers.

We work closely with the job centres and receive referrals to support those refugees who need extra support, such as writing CVs, registering with online job portals, job applications, interview techniques, finding volunteering opportunities.

Last year we were invited by Hendon Job Centre to showcase the services BRS provides to refugees and asylum seekers and to raise awareness about our client group. It was a really good opportunity for us to share our experiences, to set up a referral system and find ways to support each other towards refugee integration in the UK.



Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees - National Conference



National Conferences on Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees are organised by the Tavistock and Health Care Conferences UK a few times a year all over England.

Due to the success of our Holistic Model of Support,

during the past few years the Director of BRS and our Operations Manager have been invited to these conferences as guest speakers sharing our experiences and best practice with other mental health professionals.

During the past year we attended two conferences in May and November 2018 and delivered a presentation about an introduction to the psychosocial framework used to support refugees and develop strategies for providing peer and community support and thinking differently to support refugees to thrive and adapt to UK systems.

Sagitter Training Visit

As BRS is always interested in widening the scope of its networking, each year we have visitors from Europe.

This year Sagitter Training which is the European market leader for organizing and managing work experience and the only company certified by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in the UK, visited BRS.

At their request in May 2018 we delivered a presentation for 16 employees of the Council of Veneto about the asylum system in the UK and the services BRS provides for refugees and asylum seekers.



Director's Report

Volunteering Project

BRS started in 2005 as a small charity with only five volunteers. Over the years the organisation has grown rapidly due to the immeasurable contribution of many of our volunteers. They have undoubtedly played an invaluable role in the growth of the organisation, to the extent that from the pool of 124 volunteers, our charity now comprises over 90 active volunteers. They support our cause through different projects which enable the most vulnerable and marginalised group of refugees and asylum seekers alike to integrate into UK society.



BRS has successfully managed to create an inclusive environment for its dedicated volunteers and relies on their support to maintain its vital work. Our volunteers bring diverse skills and life experience to complement our work.

Our volunteers are involved in advice, ESOL, the Mother and Toddler Group, the Women's Group, peer support/befriending, the Youth Group, counselling, gardening, office administration, interpreting, the Homework Club, the Job Club, and more.

One of the aims of BRS is to involve refugees and asylum seekers with the volunteer programme. Currently 49% of our volunteers are from ethnic communities, who work closely with clients and other

native speaker volunteers.

We strongly encourage volunteers from a refugee and asylum-seeking background to be involved in the organisation. Many of them have a huge wealth of experience and offer vital support in welcoming refugees to their new communities. Volunteering enables them to maintain their existing skills and develop new skills, to increase their confidence, improve their communication skills, and motivates them to keep active and engaged. Volunteering also helps them reduce isolation and stress, keeps them mentally stimulated and provides a sense of purpose, language skills, and a positive path to integration.

Every year in line with our quality assurance policy and to improve our volunteering activity we carry out a survey to get feedback from our volunteers. The result of the 2018-19 survey confirms that they came from all walks of life, variety of nationalities and background, including, Afghanistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Bangladesh, Burundi, Albania, Pakistan, Syria, Algeria, China and Kurdistan, as well as native-born British. 88.50% of volunteers reported on their experience with BRS as "excellent" and 11.5% as "very good".



Training for Volunteers

Our volunteers are the true assets of the organisation. BRS is totally committed to creating opportunities for its volunteers to perform their roles effectively, and to increase their productivity and efficiency by providing them with comprehensive and professional training. Throughout the past year 53 of our volunteers attended various training sessions and workshops which included: Hospitality, Coffee Academy, an Overview of Asylum System, Employability Skills, Resilient Families/ Parent Zone, GDPR Awareness, Gardening, Nutrition, and Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence: Level 1 and Level 2 training. We are proud to announce that last year, with BRS's help and support, three of our volunteers managed to get into paid employment.

We would like to thank our funder The Big Lottery Fund as well as the European Fund (AMIF) 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

Golnar Bokaei
Helal Attayee
Ponusamy Karunaharan
Ammar Bajboj
Zoe Aslanpour
Roger Selby
Ahmad Nabil Hashemy
Conor Doyle

Volunteer Advisers

Jawhara Albakri
Nasrin Sayed

Event Volunteers

Razieh Niromand
Zohreh Shahrabi
Shalina Khanom

Admin and Office Support

Farzana Saqib
Freshta Khandahari
Meraf Ayalew

ESOL Team

Elizabeth Morrell
Elisabeth Perrot
Ros Staines
Rosemary Biseo
Helen Stone
Helen Syani
Helen Forbes
Eva Chrysostomou
Rachel Winton
Orna Almagor
Sima Rutherford
Linda Carey
Annisa Pryor
Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi

Rahela Amiry
Farrukhulnesah Khairandesh
Sawsan Kofi
Fauzia Arouche
Kathleen Hayes
Katharine Sathe
Sue Engelbelt
Sara Jacob
Teresa Gore
Josephine Cuttell
Ruth Kitching
Vivien Chappell
Shafiqah Valizada
Massoud Tahmassebi
Fanta Sheriff
Hawabibi Muhammad
Anne Sultoon

Finance and Book Keeping

Fahimeh Afshinrad

Women's Group

Tanya Novick
Elsa Shamash
Mahtab Azizi
Hannah Cass Simpson
Jane Clegge
Kgnggh Fay
Moluk Vakili
Kathy Lichman
Kitty Quinn
Margaret Macken
Rose Lester
Razieh Riazati

Counselling & Emotional Support

Chinyelu Esomeju
Claire J. Muller Suhre
Katie Rose

Nahid Karamali
Salma Bi
Laila Al Attar

Mothers & Toddlers group

Gulafshan Karami
Fanta Sheriff
Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi
Fauzia Arouche
Shalina Khanom
Shogofa Nowrozi

Youth Work

Maria Jimenez
Manna Shamshiri
Rahime Rahmati
Maria Jimenez
Emily Howley-Wells
Hisham Kanan
Houda Bashaagha
Payam Sattari

Interpreters

Moluk Vakili
Houda Bashaagha
Patricia Peiris
Ammar Bajboj
Adila Badri
Ahmed Aissouf
Sadete Cakiqi
Alaa Alibrahim
Fathi Eldeeb
Rahila Amiry
Turaia Elmayar
Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi
Moussa Diab
Thoraya Dujaili

Advocate/Befrienders

Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi
Nancy Brenner
Valarie Davies
Rahila Amiry

Employment & Education

Kate Lobo Ferguson
Gardening
Vegeun Boick
Fariba Rafie
Shafiqah Valizada
Zeba Dendar
Mohammad Bahmaninejad
Chris E Young

Community Liasion

Michael Mugishangyezi

International Intern

Fiona Forrester

Trainee Social Workers

Charlotte Emily Palmer
Monica Opoku Agyemang

Design/ IT Support

Hamed Khabazsahami
Rana Aliakbar
Saleh Bokharaei

Emergency Food Support

Massoud Tahmassebi
Michael Hahn
Daniela Harris
Rahila Amiry

Therapeutic Workshop Facilitators

Anna Jezuita
Debby Klin

Volunteers Party 2018



**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!!!**

Director's Report

Counselling and 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.

During 2018/19 using bilingual therapists, we provided one to one counselling and emotional support to 69 clients who sought this service in different languages and received emotional support in a culturally appropriate manner.

Our special thanks should go to all our counsellors and clinical supervisors for making this vital project a success.



Case Study 3

Katie Rose
Volunteer Counsellor

It's been a privilege to work as an Emotional Support Officer at BRS this year. As part of my training to be a Therapeutic Counsellor, I had the opportunity to volunteer at BRS and work with clients as a Therapist.

Access to low cost or free therapy is very limited, and for BRS clients, who have faced so many challenges, the opportunity to express themselves and process events and feelings in a safe and confidential environment can be very helpful. Along the way, we have shared laughter as well as tears and I've learned as much from the clients I've worked with as they have hopefully learned about themselves, through our work together.

I was as surprised by the commonality of clients' concerns as much as by the difference and diversity - whilst their immigration status might be the reason that many clients use the services at BRS, the issues that people face, around family and relationships, the challenges around change, concerns around the past and hope for the future are problems that everyone can relate to, regardless of their nationality, background or experiences.

The team in the office have been so kind, welcoming and helpful towards me, and the way that they support clients has been inspirational.

I'm grateful to BRS for giving me the opportunity to volunteer as part of my studies, and I hope that I'll have the opportunity to return one day, as a qualified counsellor.

Director's Report

Homework Club Promoting Education amongst Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children

Refugee and asylum-seeking children face long delays accessing education after arriving in the UK, in many cases because schools are reluctant to offer them a place over fears they will lower GCSE results and affect school league tables. As well as this the children of refugees face the challenges of disturbed education and cultural confusion. Most of these children and young people have no one to help them with their schoolwork. Some of their parents do not understand the English education system or the curriculum and some are unable to speak, read or write enough English to help their children. For these young people to face this pressure they need the right support, which the BRS tuition club provides.



The aim of this project is not only to increase the participants' level of education and command of the English language but also to increase their social confidence, feeling of belonging and the building of relationships with others.



With the financial support of the Beacon Lodge Trust and the European Fund (AMIF) 50 students (KS1 to KS4) attended formal tuition classes every Sunday which were taught by qualified school teachers. Students from year 1 to year 11 were taught and prepared for embarking on their school journey. We helped students focus on SATs practice and GCSE. The teachers prepared 21 high school students for their GCSE exams. Also working with new arrivals, we had to create a new English language programme to develop their basic English skills.

The teachers created a structure for helping develop the foundation skills of the students attending

the classes by using the national curriculum as their guideline, and devised plans for students to progress in areas where they were struggling. They also set up "Feedback /Self-Monitoring System", a tracking sheet which allowed parents to review what



was covered in the lessons.

Our special thanks must go to our funders and our Tuition Project Coordinator, Syed Hussain and to the team of tutors and volunteers for their dedication and support.

"Today we received a letter from my daughter's teacher. She mentioned that she had improved from average to the one of the best in maths. Thank you Farida and BRS for all your support to our children,"

Director's Report

IAPT Psycho-Educational Workshops

As part of our service level agreement with Barnet Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), on January 2019 we started IAPT Psycho-Educational Workshops for our clients in English, Farsi and Arabic.

The goal of these workshops is to help our clients better understand (or become accustomed to living with) mental health conditions. It is generally known that those who have a thorough understanding of the challenges they are facing as well as knowledge of personal coping ability, internal and external resources, and their own areas of strength are often better able to address difficulties, feel more in control of the condition(s), and have a greater internal capacity to work toward mental and emotional well-being.

Run by an IAPT therapist, up to the end of March 2019 we provide 22 workshops on various topics, e.g. Depression, Anxiety Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and sleeping problems, which proved to be very useful to our clients.



Befriending and Peer Support

The BRS Befriending/Peer Support project began in 2016 to enable vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers who are socially isolated to feel more settled in and to become part of the community.

This project plays an important role in the lives of our client group, has created opportunities for them to have someone to talk to, enable them to find their way around, to make links with their community and services, rebuild confidence and overcome practical problems, gain a better understanding of UK culture, and reduce their loneliness and isolation.

Last year we matched 9 clients with befrienders. Our befrienders meet with the clients every week for a minimum three hours for six months, and if there is a need, it can be extended for another 3 months. The volunteers report each time they visit the client and have regular supervision with the Operations Manager.

Due to the needs of the scheme and the high demand, we are working closely with Host Nation, a London-based introductory service connecting residents to newcomers in the city, and refer our clients to match them with a befriender. We are grateful for this partnership that allows our programme to grow and meet the needs of our destitute clients. Our special thanks must also go to our dedicated befrienders who made this project a success.



"You are so kind, thank you and Farida to visit me in my place a month ago and gave me some money to buy food and top up my oyster to go to the hospital for my appointments. I am battling with my severe health problem, taking chemo is not easy. Sometimes I can't move from my bed. I am alone, do not have any one in this country, you are the one who give me hope to live. Thanks for taking me to my appointments and helping me to go back to my country as I want to die there."
"a Korean asylum seeker"

Director's Report

Residential Retreat

For the 3rd year running, in August 2018 BRS held a weekend residential retreat at Bore Place Farm in Kent.

20 refugees and asylum seekers spent time in natural surroundings, bonded over food and dance, attended music, mindfulness and art workshops, and baked bread together in the lovely farm kitchen.

It was a brave idea as there were many obstacles to overcome: no common language, as the participants were from different countries such as Sri Lanka, Algeria, Bangladesh, Iran and Afghanistan; ages ranged from twenty to seventy; and between them - an amount of suffering that could fill a small ocean.

The mindfulness workshops broke down divisions and language barriers. The trainer used the mindfulness techniques created by Thich Nhat Hanh, a refugee from Vietnam who created a retreat centre and community in France. He used these techniques to teach other refugees how to create Home Inside when our real home is lost. When we are able to find



peace with each breath, we find peace with ourselves and the world. We are able to enjoy the present moment – the here and now. When our internal home is spacious and safe, we can face anything in the world when we come back into the outside world.

During the retreat participants learnt and practised specific techniques for breathing, eating and walking. They enjoyed mindful walking and movement in the wonderful gardens, found natural objects to share with the group and later on used these to create a beautiful piece of collage.

The participants also harvested produce from the Bore Place allotment, prepared traditional dishes from different countries and shared them with the rest of the group.



"This retreat wouldn't be possible without two wonderful women who made the retreat possible: Nazee Akbari, the CEO of Barnet Refugee Service and Operations manager Farida Stanikzai, the heart and brain of the whole retreat. It was Farida's presence and translation that made connection possible - and unbelievable courage of these lovely participants to open their hearts to new challenges - breathing, eating and walking mindfully."

Anna Jezuita Counsellor, Mindfulness Trainer

"I wish I was taught those things fifty years ago, but now I will teach it to all my family, since I get invited to all the functions as the family elder, it was so lovely to celebrate our friendships and support created during the retreat."

A participant

Director's Report

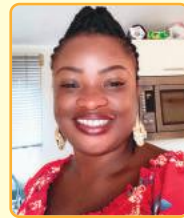
Presentation for Barnet Labour Party

BRS was invited by the Woodhouse branch of the Labour Party to speak about the work of BRS and the issue of immigration and asylum seekers on Wednesday 9th January 2019.

The main objective of our presentation was for Labour members to get to know about BRS and its holistic model of service provision and also to become aware of the impact of current immigration policies on people's lives, dealing with issues such as Legal Aid for asylum seekers, the Citizenship test, Health Access to failed asylum seekers, the right to reunite unaccompanied children with their parents and Home Office fees.



I wanted to thank you for an excellent presentation in our Labour branch meeting last week.



Case Study 4

Monica Opoku Agyemang
Trainee Social worker

My name is Monica Agyemang. I am a second-year student at Middlesex University. Barnet Refugee Service (BRS) was my first student placement. When offered this placement, I was a little bit apprehensive about what learning opportunities the organisation could offer me. However, after completing 70 days' placement with BRS, I am sincerely full of praise for the numerous learning opportunities I was exposed to, which included working with people from all walks of life and different cultures in an atmosphere of warmth and genuine support and kindness from the staff of this organisation. BRS offered me an opportunity to work with diverse communities such as people from Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Kuwait, Syria, China, Congo, to mention just a few. This exposure to working with people from various nations enriched my life and expanded my horizons in matters affecting the international community. I have also come to appreciate that our planet is just a global village which is beautified by different cultures working together as one people. As a Student Social Worker, I worked closely with two BRS Advisors to support and empower these service users to rebuild lives shattered by conflict, tribal wars, and poverty, and to enable them to integrate into British society.

My key role was to give general advice to service users. The use of the BRS assessment tool enabled me to provide the right support, such as signposting and referring service users to both internal and external services, including accessing welfare benefit, Housing, GP, school registration for children and adults and other related benefits. The BRS Advisors were very supportive and always made sure I was provided with appropriate support such as timely supervision, and directions in managing my caseload.

I have now become a more confident person and have overcome all prejudices through working with the vulnerable people BRS supports. I believe that BRS has prepared me to become a better and more well-informed social worker. I will always recommend BRS as a placement for all social work students because they do not only offer you knowledge of the services vulnerable people such as asylum seekers need, they also prepare you for life. And last but not least I wish BRS the best of luck with the holistic model of service provision and support that they provide for refugees and asylum seekers.

An Overview of Inclusion Health and Affected Communities

On Wednesday 13th February 2019, BRS participated in the Inclusion Health event which was organised by Hertfordshire County Council, Public Health and the University of Hertfordshire. The event focused on two areas: Homelessness, the statutory duty and those who fall through the gaps including: unaccompanied minors, people with learning disabilities and looked after children/care leavers/ and the experiences of pregnancy and birth in female prisoners and homeless women.

BRS raised their concerns regarding pregnant asylum-seeking women's poor health, lack of financial support, their mental health issues, inadequate antenatal care and provision of interpreting services for those who are facing a language barrier.

Director's Report

Refugee Youth Wellbeing

Our youth programme has been running since 2009 and provides specialist holistic emotional and psycho-social support and activities for young asylum seekers and refugees aged 13 to 21 years old. The youth programme is diverse and offers a weekly



youth club, football club, outreach and advocacy work, and therapy services. The programme is focused around a youth-empowerment model, whereby the activities are co-designed by the young people to ensure that they are needs-based and that young people have ownership over the programme. The programme aims to provide:

- Opportunities for young people to celebrate their own culture, while developing cross-cultural knowledge, and help in fostering a sense of belonging in their new environment
- Holistic support for young people who may be struggling with their mental health, such as PTSD, depression, stress and anxiety
- Diverse activities, to promote skill development and the sharing of knowledge across cultures

- Space for young people to have fun, develop supportive friendships with other young people, and to have a familiar experience of being a teenager living in London

Many of the young people that we work with are unaccompanied asylum-seekers who are and sup-



ported by the Local Authorities. These young people are separated from their families and claimed for asylum in the UK by themselves. Many of these young people live in semi-independent accommodation or with foster carers and live across the Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Harrow and Wembley. The majority of young people who participate in the youth program are aged between 13-17 years old. This year, we have increased the number of young people attending each session by approximately 50%. This year we have 193 new clients who have accessed our holistic services.

Social Club: Weekly Psychosocial Activities

Since the start of our partnership with Middlesex University in March 2018 we have had access to the

university's facilities and a designated room that we can use to run our youth club. The campus also allows us to use its sports facilities, such as basketball, ping pong, football and billiards, etc. Support is provided by our wonderful placement students at Middlesex University. The youth club is also open for collaboration with external organisations, projects and individuals to contribute.

With an average of 15 – 20 young people each week, different activities are planned and delivered for the club on Thursdays. We have been listening to our young people and they have been telling us the types of activities they would like to do, and we have been delivering diverse activities each week. Below is an overview of the various activities that we have held throughout the year. We have divided these into different themes:

Heritage and Culture

These activities aim to provide young people with the opportunity to celebrate and share their own culture with others, to learn about diverse cultures, and discuss themes such as belonging and integration in



Director's Report

the UK. During the past year we held Spanish, Arabian, and Indian nights where young people could enhance their knowledge of diverse cultures, languages, and food. We also held international dance evenings, where the young people shared and taught dances and music from their cultures. We also explored the theme of identity through a focused creative session. Furthermore, the Youth Club is a proud partner of the 3CS program, a cross-cultural exchange program with Northern Ireland. This year, we hosted two groups of 12 young people from Northern Ireland.

Self-development and New Skills

These activities aim to provide young people with the opportunity to find their voice, express their needs, and self-advocate. Activities have included workshops on topics such as how to navigate London transport, understanding the immigration procedures and age assessment, recognizing their rights as unaccompanied minors in the UK, and developing their awareness of sexual health.

Creativity and Art

Many of our young people are highly creative and enjoy expressing themselves through activities such as art, drama, and music. This year, within our social club setting, we offered many creative sessions such as origami, pottery, drawing, and playing new instruments where young people could learn and develop new skills. We have also held storytelling and drama sessions, which provide the opportunity for the young people to express themselves and tell their stories through creative outlets. This year, our community partners have also delivered sessions; stu-

dents from Middlesex University ran a photography workshop, and a facilitator from WAC Arts delivered a film making session.



Socialising and Fun

The main aim of these activities was to offer the young people the opportunity to laugh, have fun, make friends, and enjoy their childhood. We have hosted activities such as our popular Christmas and Eid parties; YouTube Evenings, where we shared our favourite clips

and laughed with each other; cosy winter nights, where we consumed lots of hot chocolate and cookies; movie nights; game evenings; trivia; and a professional BINGO night with an external volunteer. One of the most entertaining nights of the year was Youth Club's Got talent, where we all shared our amazing talents with each other! In addition, we also planned various outings throughout the year to museums, theatre plays, and musicals.

Photography Workshops

Photography is a process which people, often those who are disenfranchised and

have little voice in the world, can use to record the realities of their lives and share them with a wider public. Its great strength is the ability to communicate powerfully and effectively despite barriers of language, race, class, ethnicity, gender and culture.

During the past year we delivered a series of photography workshops in partnership with Photo Voice where two professional photographers taught our young people how to use the camera, visual literacy, editing and field work which included practical advice; ethical practice; consent and copyright; health and safety etc. Photo Voices is a participative photography initiative which is looking to work with groups of young people connected to areas of conflict in the Middle East and harness their creativity. From Syria to Lebanon to Palestine, also extending to refugees in the UK and other parts of Europe, the participants will be empowered to explore personal narratives and share unique experiences using stills photography.

Director's Report

Music Workshops

Our six weeks course was in partnership with Articulate Community Focus and was well received. 15 young people came along to enjoy this activity; for the majority of them it was a unique experience, as they had never had the chance to experience it before. Our professional music therapist used musical instruments as a tool of intervention to accomplish individualised goals within a therapeutic relationship. In this process the music therapist used music and all of its facets—physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic, and spiritual—to help our traumatised young people to improve their physical and mental health. At the end of the course all our young people were given a chance to go the West End and watch the musical “Dream Girls”.



Summer Activities

During the summer we offered a wide variety of activities to support and provide activities for young people during the summer holidays from school. These included full-day action packed activities such as kayaking and go-karting, outings across London, visiting museums and the chance to explore different cities.

Sport and Physical Health

Many young people enjoy staying active by participating in a wide variety of sports and physical activities. This year we hosted two football taster sessions with a qualified coach, a basketball evening, and a get fit session with a personal trainer. Our young people also had access to ping pong and a pool table where they enjoyed a friendly competition on a weekly basis.

Christmas Party Fundraising Event

On the 6th of December our young people as well as BRS volunteers, trainee students and staff had a stall at Middlesex University Christmas fair. It is an

annual event where student and external organisations sell their goods. We were very lucky to be able to sell some products produced by the Women's Group like jewellery, crocheted goods and some traditional food made by our volunteers. We used this opportunity to fundraise for our youth activities and managed to raise £207 pounds that was secured for youth club activities.



The Northern Ireland Education Authority

As part of the 3C's Leadership Development programme, as organized by the Education Authority of Northern Ireland, we were selected to host two groups of young people from Northern Ireland. We jointly organized psychosocial activities with our young people to enhance social cohesion, encourage friendships and learning, and to introduce the young people from Northern Ireland to young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. The visits were a great success; 40 young refugee and asylum seekers participated. The partnership is ongoing into the coming year where our young people will be visiting Northern Ireland hosted by 3C's Leadership Development programme.

Director's Report

Youth Christmas Party

This year our tradition of holding a Christmas party for young people continued. We organised a festive gathering that hosted up to 40 young people and guests. We started by decorating the room and playing party games, then we had dinner cooked by our volunteers. We hosted two young musicians who played their music. Three of the young people presented a dance they composed for the celebration. We finished the event with Father Christmas giving every guest a present. This was a



memorable event for our young people. Our special thanks go to all our staff and volunteers who made this event a success.

Emotional and Mental Support The One London Project

During the past year we formed a partnership with Wac Arts called the One London Project. Wac Arts is a registered charity which offers fully inclusive performing arts and media programmes to young people. Funded by the One to One Children's Fund, this partnership project provided our young people with one to one youth-centred, creative art therapy interventions. Four trained

creative arts therapists offered 10 sessions for 13 young individuals. The aim of the project was to provide trauma relief by offering young people the tools to help manage their own mental health, and gain enhanced awareness of their mental and emotional states, increase self-esteem, confidence, communication skills and the likelihood to take up other opportunities. This was a successful project and our special thanks must go to our funder, The One to One Children's Fund, for their financial support.



Outreach and Advocacy work

The youth programme offers customisable outreach workshops with young people and the wider community to introduce them to the topics of forced migration, asylum seeking, and the realities of being a refugee in the UK. This year we offered workshops with community groups across different organizations such as A Level students from Warren Academy, Kindertransport elderly, social housing companies, refugee workers and staff, and the Association of Jewish Refugees.

Vulnerable Person Resettlement (VPR) Programme (Syrians)

Since September 2016 BRS has been involved in supporting Syrian refugees who came to the UK under the VPR scheme and are settled in Barnet and Brent. The services we have provided for more than 90 of them includes welfare and housing advice, education and schooling, counselling and emotional support, ESOL classes, youth support, interpreting, and immigration and tuition sessions (Maths and English) for newly arrived Syrian children.

"I find that each youth worker has the best intentions for the young people"

"Through the youth club, I learned to be confident in sharing my thoughts with others"

Director's Report

Football club

Supported by Sports England Satellite we provided football sessions for vulnerable young people living in and around Barnet, on Friday afternoons from 6pm to 8pm at Capital City Academy. This project was so popular and well delivered that we managed to attract 4 years funding from the Leathersellers' Foundation. We found that it was more convenient to change the location of the sessions to a more local area to make it easier for the young people. So we moved the Football Club to Middlesex University.

On average each session attracts approximately 20 to 30 young people from a range of countries including Iran, Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia to name a few, with each and every one of them fully engaged and enjoying every session delivered. The sessions are run on a turn up, sign up and play basis, which keeps the atmosphere very relaxed and enjoyable. The coach supported by two volunteers delivers the sessions. They all are very down to earth, street-wise and are great at building positive relationships with each young person, which we believe encourages new and sustained engagement.

We believe that these sessions provide the young people with a safe haven, a place of belonging where they are able to come to freely express themselves whilst having fun. We also believe that the sessions have a positive effect on their mental, physical and social wellbeing, which will hopefully benefit them for the long term.



Youth Counselling Service

As a result of experiences pre-flight, flight, and in the UK, refugee and asylum-seeking young people experience unique and numerous challenges. Upon arrival in the UK, our young people may face ongoing challenges including mental health problems, family separation, fear of detention, anxiety about the outcome of their asylum claim, difficulties learning a new language and at school, discriminatory attitudes, and navigating the asylum system and social workers. Children and adolescents exposed to violence and upheaval of war and relocation are at high risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Rates of PTSD among refugee children may exceed 50%. Additional stresses encountered while adjusting to host cultures add another layer of difficulty. Most refugee children struggling with symptoms of PTSD or depression are never linked with appropriate mental health care resources. (McGuinness, 2015)

During the past year we managed to secure 6 months' funding from the One to One Children's Fund which complemented our holistic model of support youth provision.

This project supports asylum seeking and refugee children and young people living in London with up to 10 sessions of one to one counselling service for each individual aged 11-18. Our talking therapy service is designed to offer an integrative counselling and emotional support service for individuals in exile whose first language is not English.

Our proven record of providing counselling service and mental health support shows that a combination of one-to-one counselling and group/art therapy will improve beneficiaries' mental health by helping them to manage better their trauma symptoms and develop a sense of belonging in the UK. The project worked alongside BRS's other group/art therapy work as well as Wac Arts where beneficiaries were encouraged to participate in group/art therapy sessions to further explore their feelings. Our special thanks go to our funder the One to One Children's fund for their financial support.



Director's Report

Jasmine Women's Group



The Jasmine Women's group which has been running for the past 12 years, has had another successful year. The group meet every Friday from 10:30 to 1:00 at the Sacred Heart Church in Mill Hill. The aim of this group is to empower women who have sought asylum in the UK.

The project provides support to more than 60 isolated women from over eleven countries who are refugees and asylum seekers. Our clients are drawn from across London, most substantially from Barnet, Brent, Harrow, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Walthamstow. Some even come from as far away as Luton, Croydon, Dagenham and Northolt. Some are destitute and homeless and are an unwelcome burden on friends or relatives who host them.

Refugees and asylum seekers usually have small or non-existent social networks. Many of them suffer mental health problems both as a result of persecution in their country of origin and as a result of trying to adapt to life in the UK. Jasmine is an important venue



for these women. We provide a safe place to learn English, socialise, meet and make new friends and to learn about the British way of life. We also support those women who have mental health issues.

Regular ESOL (English as a Second Language) and literacy classes are held by professional volunteer ESOL teachers, and this helps the women to concentrate on improving both their written and spoken English.

This year, as in previous years, apart from ESOL classes we successfully ran a variety of different psychosocial therapeutic activities such as art, crochet, knitting, storytelling workshops as well as sessions on British values and outings such as visiting museums, Kew Garden and the BRS allotment to promote community cohesion and to help the women to improve their physical and mental health wellbeing. We also have had sessions on scam awareness how to look after their teeth, and free Osteopathic sessions for back, neck and joint pain and muscles tension by the British College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The most popular activity was the More than 20 yoga sessions run by a qualified trainer which was the most popular activity. The sessions are chair-based, enabling everyone to participate especially for those



who have mobility problems and the yoga sessions enable them to exercise in a safe manner.

Our women have the opportunity to celebrate different festivals such as Christmas and Eid. We commemorated International Women's Day with a party and discussions.



The Jasmine Women's Group is coordinated and facilitated by BRS volunteers and 3 volunteers from The Church of the Sacred Heart, Mill Hill which provides us with the venue free of charge. Our special thanks must go to them. We would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to Tanya Novick who has been coordinating this group since its birth in 2006.

"When miserable, like own family."

"Special day for us. Plan to get out of home."

"We are on our own, no-one to talk to. Here we talk with people and share ideas."

Director's Report

Job Club



Refugees wish to contribute to wider society, lead meaningful lives and ultimately become financially independent. However, they face huge challenges in entering the UK labour market. These include language and cultural barriers, the challenge of getting

their qualifications recognised in the UK and a lack of relevant experience. The role of our employment adviser is to help our clients overcome some of these obstacles through assistance with writing CVs, registering with online job portals, job applications, interview techniques, understanding the UK labour market, as well as with applications for education and training courses.

Over the past year, our employment adviser assisted 52 clients with CV writing, and found volunteering opportunities for 9 clients with various organisations such as the Sufra Food Bank, The Good Neighbour Scheme, All Aboard Charity shops, East Barnet Library and Finchley Toy Library.

In addition, 6 clients/volunteers graduated with AQA qualifications from Zoe's Hotel Academy; a further 3 gained AQA certificates in food hygiene while learning how to be coffee baristas at the Sufra Food Academy; and 18 took training courses in computer literacy, ESOL and functional skills at 5E Training.

We are also proud to say that last year with the employment adviser's support 3 volunteers and 3 clients got into paid employment.

Our volunteer employment adviser has managed to establish a network of contacts at local organisations (including training providers, charity shops, care homes, social enterprise projects and libraries). It continues to grow because these organisations value the individuals that we introduce to them. It is hoped that we can continue to expand this network of mutually beneficial relationships.

We thank Kate Ferguson, our volunteer employment advisor, for her excellent work and ongoing support and dedication.

Hotel School Hospitality Course

Hotel School teaches hospitality skills to refugees, matches them to sustainable employment, and supports them in their first steps into work. It is supported by London's Five Star hotel community, Westminster Kingsway catering school staff, and over 50 local businesses.

During the past year three BRS volunteers successfully completed the 10-week programme and received a nationally recognised certificate.

They were taught the key skills and knowledge for the main areas of service including: kitchen, housekeeping and reception. In addition, they learnt teamwork, were helped to grow in confidence, learnt about budgeting and nutrition, and were supported individually to become work ready.

Currently two of the volunteers after completing the course were referred by Hotel School to Change Please, an organisation which trains barista. They attended 2 weeks practical training, 1 to 3 months paid work as a barista followed by further employment opportunities with their partnering employers.





Case Study 5

FANTA SHERIFF
Volunteer ESOL Assistant

Barnet Refugee Service has become my family. They have not only supported me as a refugee but also given me the opportunity to embark on a journey as a volunteer to fulfil my desire to help others who are going through similar journeys as myself to help instil hope in their lives. Upon applying for a volunteer role at Barnet Refugee Service, Farida was very understanding as always. She was very keen to find out what suited me best before encouraging me to commit to whatever role I was being offered. I started off as a helper in the women's ESOL class and then I was given the opportunity to volunteer again in the moms and toddlers class. I loved the interaction so much as I felt relatable with every woman in the class. Such roles did not only help build my self confidence but also made me very appreciative of BRS for such an opportunity. As a service user, BRS always made sure to put my needs first. I cannot recall being rejected upon request on any difficulties I needed aid with. The growth I have acquired through BRS has also helped immensely with my law studies. I have been given the opportunity to be a part of the AMIF steering group. As someone who is not much of a public speaker, the group meetings have aided in helping me express my views and contributions at my own pace without any pressure or discrimination as I felt included in every part of the agenda during these sessions. In addition, Farida has occasionally requested I volunteer at the reception where she teaches me various forms of clerical work.

I am very grateful to the entire staff at BRS not only as a service user but also for the opportunity I have been given to take part through volunteering in various areas which have very much aided in my academic studies and proven very rewarding towards my mental health.



Case Study 6

Eva Chrysostomou
Volunteer ESOL Teacher

I have been volunteering as a teacher of English as a second language at Barnet Refugee Service since May 2019. When considering which organisation to apply to, BRS leapt out at me because of the emphasis not only on helping refugees and asylum seekers to live fulfilled lives in the UK but also on the enjoyment of their lives.

Naively, perhaps, I thought it would be relatively easy to teach my elementary class the verb "to be" in its simple form. Several weeks later and I still haven't managed to do it. This is not because either I or my students are incompetent but, rather, because most of them can't read or write in their own language and are unfamiliar with both the concept of grammar and with learning in general. It has been an interesting challenge to get back to basics and build up the learners' knowledge step by step.

Despite the challenging nature of the work I keep coming back because it is rewarding and fun. There is joy and satisfaction in the class when the students interact with me and each other and master something new. Their enthusiasm and hard work are admirable. It is delightful to see them gaining confidence in their use of English and building relationships with each other.

I'm really glad I applied to Barnet Refugee Service. There is a welcoming and positive attitude towards its users as well as the provision of holistic services which clearly benefit my students and lots of others.

Director's Report

Farewell Mr. Chairman!

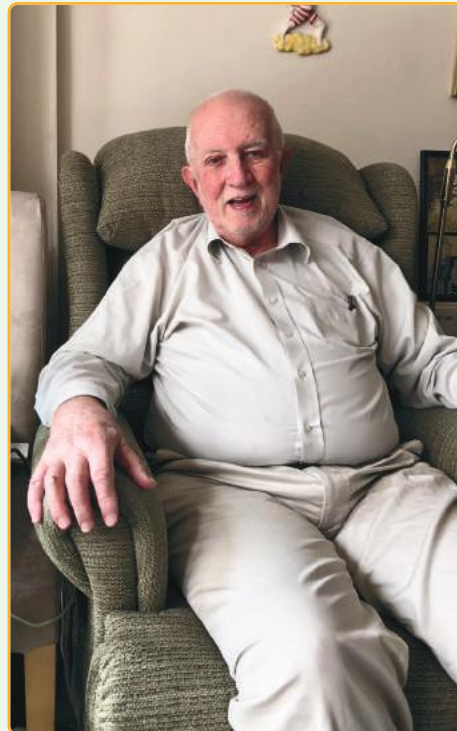
It is with deep sorrow that Barnet Refugee Service learned of the death of its first Chairman, David Howard, who passed away on 14th February 2019 at the age of 76.

David supported BRS from the beginning and served as Chair of the Board of Trustees when it was established in 2005. Seven years ago, David was honored at a Civic Awards ceremony where he was described as a passionate advocate for refugee issues and dedicated to helping 'vulnerable and marginalised' groups in society. He was a man who always put others first and was a great example of a true member of the community.

He was quoted as saying modestly, "I'm not a preacher or a teacher; it's about articulating people's problems and getting things done."

Our community lost a dedicated and tireless activist and he will be greatly missed by those who knew him, but here at BRS we promise him his legacy will live on in our passion to do whatever we can to help vulnerable and marginalised members of society.

...



Case Study 7

Houda Bbashaagha
Volunteer Youth Worker

I remember being new in the UK and going through that transitional phase where you begin making choices you feel will impact your life. I was always of the opinion that my career would be something I enjoy, and what I enjoyed most was helping people as I am a people person.

I am thankful to my friend who used to volunteer at BRS as a counsellor who introduced me to this organisation. I started volunteering as an Arabic interpreter to support newly arrived Syrian refugees. After a year I started my volunteering as a Youth Worker and after a few months I was offered a paid job as a Youth Sessional Worker at BRS. I continued as a sessional worker as well as a volunteer. I enjoyed every minute of my involvement at BRS and it gave me life satisfaction as it was an area I love and am passionate about. It is worth saying that I benefited a lot from the support I got from Kate the employment adviser and the training I attended at BRS.

With the support of BRS I managed to find a full time position at Heathrow Airport Duty Free. I owe BRS immensely for their support, especially for providing me with a good reference. ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU BRS AND KEEP UP YOUR GOOD WORK.

I never thought volunteering could give me so many options and lead to the career path I'm currently on.



Case Study 8 Charlotte Palmer Trainee Social Worker

My name is Charlotte, I am a second-year social work student from Middlesex University and was lucky enough to be able to complete my 70-day placement with Barnet Refugee Service.

Everyone at BRS made me feel welcome from my first day, and every member of the team from staff to volunteers are hardworking and dedicated to making positive change and treating everyone equally and with dignity and respect. It was a joy to see everyone's strengths come together to make a difference. During my placement I worked closely with the client advisors to support vulnerable service users with varying needs, together we aimed to give them the correct support and advice to make a positive difference in their lives. I supported one individual in particular from his first time visiting BRS and helped with many challenging situations he faced after coming to the UK. It was amazing to see his confidence grow in the short space of time I knew him and how he was able to build trusting relationships with everyone from the organisation. I was also given the chance to have an active role in attending Women's Group every week, I interacted with women from diverse cultural backgrounds and took part in workshops and activities with them. This alone was such a rewarding experience, being able to witness first hand just how important these groups are that BRS organise. They give the individuals the chance to socialise and provide them with a sense of belonging, it allows them to learn about British culture and how to access other services, I noticed how all of these things are important to help reintegrate into society and build a positive future.

My journey at BRS was challenging at times but overall a very eye-opening, rewarding and positive experience. I learnt a lot about myself and the impact seeking asylum can have on one's life by being given the opportunity to meet and interact with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures with different religions and beliefs. There is so much that can be learnt from asylum seekers and refugees and this experience has taught me a lot that I will carry with me not only through my career as a social worker but on a personal level too, and for that I will be forever grateful to BRS for giving me this opportunity and sharing their experience and knowledge with me.

London Legal Support Trust Sponsored Walk

The fourteenth anniversary of the London Legal Walk took place on 21st May 2018 with 750 registered teams and 13000 walkers. The evening turned out to be perfect for our team and all the other walkers on the Legal Support Trust 10K Charity Walk. Thanks to our dedicated 15 walkers who raised around £600 in sponsorship, a truly 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 funds for this important cause.



Case Study 9 Deeb Fathi Volunteer

I studied medicine in Libya and practised as a doctor for two years, then I moved to Malta because of the dire situation back home and worked as a GP assistant for one and a half years. In March 2018 I came to the UK. At first, it was very difficult for me as I didn't have anyone and was so desperate for guidance until I found BRS. I went there asking for some help and all the staff were amazingly helpful, especially Farida Stanikzai. Farida helped connect me to different organisations to get help regarding my profession.

Meanwhile, I started volunteering at BRS as an Arabic interpreter which I enjoyed very much. Farida also introduced me to Dr Azim and Partners' surgery where I started volunteering. I was really lucky that after a few weeks' volunteering and attending different training courses I was offered full-time paid employment as a Health Care Assistant at the surgery. It's more in my medical field and has allowed me to gain experience and more knowledge about how the NHS works. Currently, I am preparing myself to take the OET exam as well as PLAB 1 and 2 to practise as a doctor in the UK.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the BRS team for their assistance, and for helping me pursue my career and find my way in a foreign land.

Financial Information

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2019

Income Resources	2019 Unrestricted Funds £	2019 Restricted Funds £	2019 Total Funds £	2018 Total Funds £
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds				
Voluntary Income	83,726	7,848	91,574	75,609
Grants	0	76,765	76,765	46,060
Interest Receivable	193	0	193	160
Other incoming resources	0	296,413	296,413	187,000
Total incoming resources	83,919	381,026	464,945	308,829
Cost of Charitable Activities	83,143	364,730	447,873	295,521
Governance Costs	5,800	5,838	11,638	8,603
Total Resources Expended	88,943	370,568	459,511	304,124
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources - Before Transfers Between Funds	(5,024)	10,458	5,434	4,705
Gross Transfers Between Funds	0	0	0	0
Net Movement in Funds	(5,024)	10,458	5,434	4,705
Total Funds at 1 April 2018	45,802	13,331	59,133	54,428
Total Funds at 31 March 2019	40,778	23,789	64,567	59,133

Trustees' Statement

The above statement has been extracted from the accounts prepared by AVANT & Co and were approved by the Trustees of Barnet Refugee Service on 4th December 2019. The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to the Companies House. Copies of full report can be obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of Barnet Refugee Service.

Ponusamy Karunaharan
Treasurer

Partnership Organisations

- 1 Advice UK
- 2 Afghan Association Paiwand
- 3 Ashford Place
- 4 Association of Jewish Refugees
- 5 Atta & Co Solicitors
- 6 BAN Network
- 7 Barnet Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team
- 8 Barnet Healthwatch
- 9 Barnet Jobcentre Plus
- 10 Barnet Mencap
- 11 Barnet Recovery Centre
- 12 Barnet Social Services
- 13 Barnet Multi Faith Forum
- 14 Barnet Volunteering Centre
- 15 Barnet Wellbeing Hub
- 16 Bishop Douglas School
- 17 Barnet & Southgate College
- 18 Barnet Youth Foundation
- 19 Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust
- 20 Blenheim
- 21 Breaking Barriers
- 22 Brent Social Services
- 23 British Red Cross
- 24 Cambridge University
- 25 Community Focus (Articulate)
- 26 Child Poverty Action Group
- 27 Camden Social Services
- 28 Centre Point
- 29 Colindale Communities Trust
- 30 Community Barnet
- 31 Doctors of the World
- 32 Dahlia Project
- 33 Dr Azim and Partners
- 34 European Network
- 35 Education Authority –Belfast
- 36 European Placement Network
- 37 Good for Goods
- 38 Grahame Park One Stop Shop
- 39 Great Ormond Street Hospital
- 40 Helen Bamber Foundation
- 41 Hendon Jobcentre
- 42 Hendon School
- 43 Hestia
- 44 Host Nation
- 45 Hyde Children's Centre
- 46 Inclusion Barnet
- 47 Islington Law Centre
- 48 Job Centre Plus
- 49 Kew Gardens (Community Scheme)
- 50 Kingsbury High School
- 51 Let's Talk IAPT
- 52 Langstone Way Surgery
- 53 Metropolitan Police
- 54 Middlesex University
- 55 Migrant Help
- 56 Multilingual Wellbeing Service
- 57 North Locality Link Worker
- 58 North London Hospice
- 59 Onwards and Upwards (Leaving Care Team)
- 60 Pret a Manger
- 61 Project Seventeen
- 62 Refugees at Home
- 63 Refugee Action
- 64 Refugee Council
- 65 Refugee Women's Association
- 66 Royal Air Force Museum, London
- 67 Safe Passage
- 68 Sangam
- 69 Silver Birch Care
- 70 St Mungo's
- 71 The Network
- 72 The Church of the Sacred Heart Mill Hill
- 73 The Tavistock & Portman NHS
- 74 The Association of Jewish Refugees
- 75 Transitions Living
- 76 Trinity Church in North Finchley
- 77 Turning Point
- 78 University of Oxford
- 79 Victim Support
- 80 Wren Academy
- 81 Wake Forest University (USA)
- 82 Young Roots
- 83 5e

**To get involve or donate to BRS
Please visit our website on:**

www.b-r-s.org.uk

www.b-r-s.org.uk



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]

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REFUGEE
SERVICE**

