

A photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, gently holding each other. The hands are positioned over a field of small purple flowers and green moss. The background is a bright, sunlit outdoor setting with a bokeh effect of trees and foliage. The sun is visible between the hands, creating a lens flare effect.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20
Barnet Refugee Service

Our Major Funders For 2019/20

- **NHS Barnet (CCG)**
- **National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF)**
- **The European Fund (AMIF)**
- **The City Bridge Trust**
- **The Young Londoners Fund**
- **Children In Need**
- **The Lloyd Foundation**
- **The One to One Children's Fund**
- **The Letharsellers' Company Charitable Fund**
- **The Zakat Foundation**
- **The Catholic Women's League**
- **The London Catalyst**
- **London Churches Refugee Fund**

Barnet Refugee Service

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

8th Floor, Hyde House, The Hyde, London
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Email: info@b-r-s.org.uk

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

Charity Number: 1107965

Co Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

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Foreword from the Chair



2019 saw a significant increase in the global number of refugees displaced through persecution, conflict and violence. Although the number of asylum applications in the UK has not increased, the desperation and hardship of those seeking asylum is intensifying. Supporting these people through their early years of rebuilding their lives in the UK is critical to avoid marginalisation and isolation and to enable integration and participation in UK life.

Over the past year, BRS has continued to support refugees and asylum seekers across London. We are very grateful to our generous funders, who have continued to support BRS. We have seen an increasing need in areas of youth services, counselling and advice, and the new EU AMIF funding has enabled us to expand our services in these areas. Our holistic approach to serving clients means that we provided more comprehensive support to more clients than ever before.

I am constantly amazed at the extent and the quality of the service that the BRS Team manages to provide with the limited funding we have. This is a remarkable achievement by a very small team of personally committed staff who work tirelessly together to support the 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers we served over the last year. Their dedication and discipline is inspiring.

The organisation is also supported by a small army of over 100 volunteers whose work enables BRS to have the considerable social impact that it does. Special recognition is due to Dr Nazee Akbari who has led the growth and development of this organisation towards her vision for the future. We are truly lucky to have Nazee as our Executive Director. I would like to extend my thanks to Nazee and all of our staff and volunteers for all of their great work this year.

On the Board of Trustees, we have seen the retirement of Zoe Aslanpour (Chair) and Roger Selby (Secretary) as trustees this year. They have been shining stars who guided the organisation to this point. We thank them for their many years of stewardship and wish them well for the future. We had 3 openings for new trustees and are pleased to announce that Sanjiv Ahluwalia has joined the Board of Trustees. Sanjiv is currently the London Regional Postgraduate Dean at Health Education England and also a General Practitioner. We are delighted to have Sanjiv on board.

We are taking the opportunity with these changes on the board to review how the board operates and are exploring the adoption of The Charity Governance Code over the coming year.

It is clear that the coming year is going to be challenging, not least because of Covid-19 and the start of lockdown measures which we have already seen. Refugees and asylum seekers are at great risk of neglect and marginalisation and we foresee substantial changes in how our service will need to be delivered. We have a strong, committed and flexible team. They are organised and together, they are clear about the importance of their work. I am confident of this team's ability to adapt to and overcome any challenges that they may face.

Conor Doyle
Chair

“Supporting these people through their early years of rebuilding their lives in the UK is critical”

Message from the CEO



We are facing one of the most compelling challenges of our time: In 2019, there were more than 70 million people displaced by war, conflict, and persecution, and many millions more displaced annually by climate events worldwide. And instead of promoting practices and policies that collectively address these realities, many governments around the world closed their borders, clung to nativist policies, and employed rhetoric that dehumanised the displaced.

As I sit to write this message and reflect on the year gone by, I do so with mixed emotions. It is sobering to think that millions of people who have fled their homes still cannot access adequate protection, in the UK or elsewhere. On the other hand, what happened at BRS through the past 12 months gives me cause for hope and celebration.

Throughout these challenging times, I am extremely proud of our work here at BRS in standing up for what is right and fair. In 2019-20, BRS continued to grow, to increase its profile and most importantly, to support and promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers standing alongside them to help make sure that their voices are front and centre. BRS carries this philosophy through every aspect of its work. Once again, our successful Holistic Model of Support continued to go from strength to strength. In particular, our expanded youth activities to respond to the needs of refugee children and unaccompanied minors were the highlight of our work during the past year.

As the Director of BRS, I am extremely proud of the work our staff and volunteers have done this year. They have been unwavering in their commitment and passion for justice for refugees and people seeking asylum, and have thrown huge amounts of time, energy and creativity

“Despite the difficult political environment, we are more determined than ever to stand with our clients”

into their work. Although we still live in difficult times when it comes to the treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum, I feel reassured to know that we are surrounded by such dedicated people. I also feel heartened by our loyal network of supporters and individual donors and organisational members. Without you, we could not do what we do, and we are so grateful for your support.

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

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

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

Nazee Akbari
Chief Executive Officer

Organisational Chart

Trustees Serving in 2019-2020

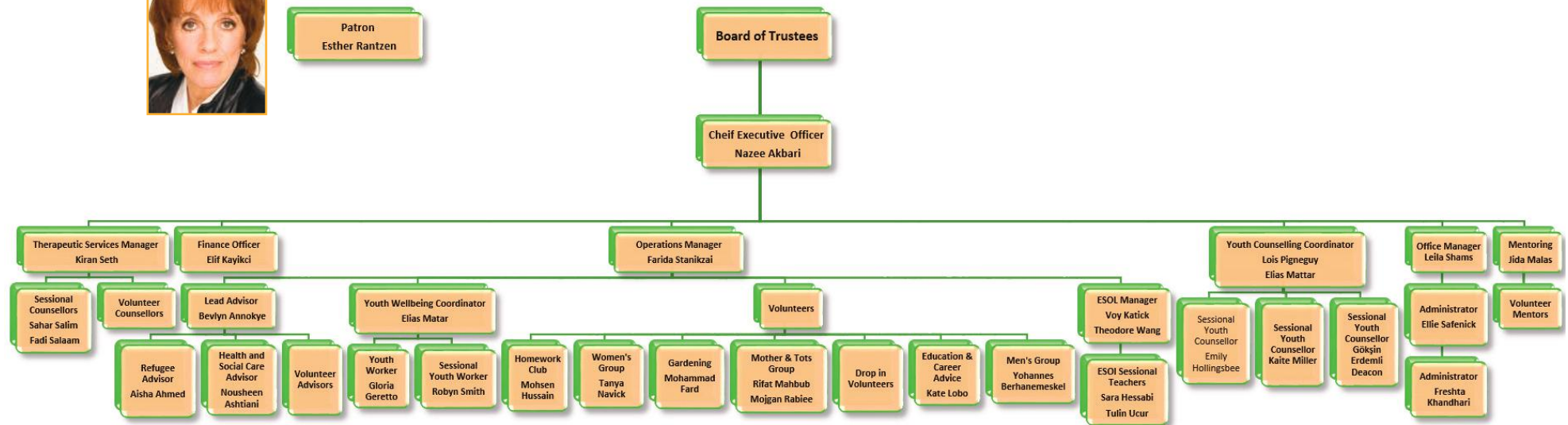
- Zoe Aslanpour (Chair) – resigned 15th October 2019
- Ponusamy Karunaharan (Treasurer)
- Roger Selby (Secretary) – resigned 4th Dec 2019
- Conor Doyle – (Appointed as the Chair from 6th Nov 2019)
- Golnar Bokaei
- Helal Atayee
- Ammar Bajboj
- Ahmad Hashemi – Appointment as Secretary from 5th Feb 2020
- Sanjiv Ahluwalia – (Joined 5th Feb 2020)



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



Patron
Esther Rantzen



Our Staff



Naze Akbari
Chief Executive Officer



Sahar Salim
IAPT Counsellor



Tanya Novick
Women's Group Coordinator
(Volunteer)



Mohammad Fard
Gardening Coordinator
(Volunteer)



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager



Katie Miller
Youth Art Therapist



Fadi Salaam
Sessional Counsellor



Chandler Marshall
International Intern



Leila Shams
Office Manager



Nousheen Ashtiani
Health & Social Care Advisor



Bevlyn Annokye
Senior Lead Advisor



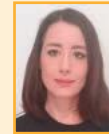
Megan Monroe
International Intern



Jida Malas
Mentoring Coordinator



Aisha Ahmed
Refugee General Advisor



Gloria Geretto
Youth Worker



Robyn Smith
Sessional Youth Worker



Theodore Wang
ESOL Manager



Emily Hollingsbee
Youth Art Therapist



**Yohannes Berhanemeskel
Kidanemariam**
Men's Group teacher



Rezwana Sultana
Trainee Social Worker



Syed Hussain
Homework Club Coordinator



Elias Matter
Youth Counselling Coordinator



Freshta Kandhari
Administrator



Nasir Ata
Visiting Solicitor
(Volunteer)



Elif Kayikci
Finance Officer



Kiran Seth
Therapeutic Manager
Clinical Supervisor



Mojgan Rabiee
Sessional Nursery Nurse



Tulin Ucur
Sessional ESOL Teacher



Sara Hessabi
Sessional ESOL Teacher



Ellie Safe
Administrator



Refat Mahbub
Sessional ESOL Teacher

CEO's Report

Annual Report for the year 2019-20

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 2020 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 2020 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 (NLCF)**
- **The European Fund (AMIF)**
- **The City Bridge Trust**
- **The Young Londoners Fund**
- **Children In Need**
- **The Lloyd Foundation**
- **The One to One Children's Fund**
- **The Lethearsellers' Company Charitable Fund**
- **The Zakat Foundation**
- **The Catholic Women's League**
- **The London Catalyst**
- **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.

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.

A summary of the objectives of the Charity as set out in its governing document:

Our charity's objects, as defined in the Memorandum of Association are:

1. To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of those who are seeking asylum or who are granted refugee status and their dependents living, working or studying (temporarily or permanently) in England and Wales (hereinafter, the 'Beneficiaries').
2. To advance the education and training of those persons defined in Object 1 as Beneficiaries.
3. To advance the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
4. The relief of financial hardship to those persons defined in Object 1 as Beneficiaries.

5. The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons defined in Object 1, who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances.

Our charity's aims including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities:

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 social activities and structured projects thus enabling them to integrate into society.
9. To significantly influence local and national strategies and policies with regard to refugees and asylum seekers.
10. To provide volunteering opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers (including young people) to develop their skills and help them to access higher education and employment.
11. To provide emotional support and social activities to young refugees and asylum seekers to develop their confidence and skills.

CEO's Report

12. To provide emotional support through psychosocial activities, counselling and ecotherapy with the aim of improving the mental and physical wellbeing of our clients through the provision of outdoor activities in nature surroundings.

Fundraising Strategy

The Board of Trustees has established a Finance 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 Finance Committee works hard to maintain the funding stream through donations and funding from trust funds, government bodies, members, local businesses and organizations and the general public.

Donations

We received around £ 18,000 donations from many individuals, organisations and faith groups. Our special thanks go to one of our supporters who made a generous anonymous donation of £3,500. once again a cash donation of £10,000 was received from Mr & Mrs. Demashkieh to support our youth activities and newly arrived Syrian refugees. on behalf of our clients we are thankful for their generous donation.

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

During the year food was donated by 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 the Big Shop Appeal for BRS and managed to get 52 sponsors to spend £100 each for a weekly shopping for our destitute clients. Jodi also accepted the responsibility for doing the shopping and regular basis, and for ongoing delivery to our office. For our end of year

party we recieved donations of many gifts from various sources including faith groups, 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, 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, Kew Gardens Community Membership Scheme, Pret a Manger and Lola's Cake at Brent Cross, Hendon Sainsbury's and Tesco's Santander Bank, The Betty Messengers Foundation, Trace Charitable Trust and the Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue.

It was not practical to value the vital in kind donations but we believe the retail value to be in excess of £30,000.

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 £8,387 in cash and £2,300 (in vouchers) financial support for desperate individuals and their families who had nowhere to go and had given up hope. This was only possible with the support of The National Zakat Foundation, 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 assistance, IT equipment and subsistence. On behalf of our clients we thank them all for their ongoing support.

CEO'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 advised over 1,400 clients which includes over 672 new clients and handled over 9,764 enquiries across services including 4,350 cases during the past year. (Please see charts on page 12).

Outreach Advice Clinics

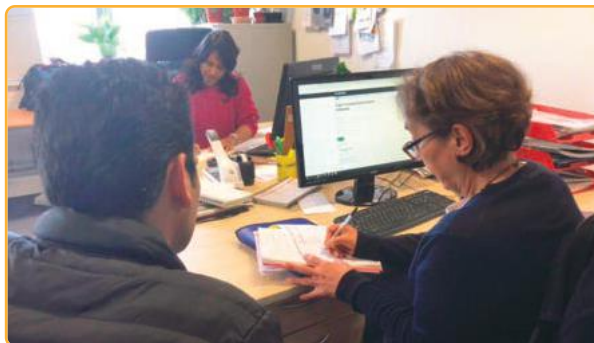
On Tuesday and Friday afternoons our team of advice workers offered outreach clinics at the Advice and Information Centre, Edgware Community Hospital dealing with over 690 enquires on various issues.

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 see k 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 Ata & Co Solicitors who provided 156 of our clients with free legal immigration advice during the past year by seeing them every other Wednesday 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 with relatives who are themselves traumatised.

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

seekers.

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

Our special thanks must go to Refugee Council who served 86 of our young clients seeing them every Thursday for a full day at Hyde House.

Health and Wellbeing

As a member of Barnet Wellbeing Hub much of our work is directly health focused, for example advice work where we saw clients with over 2,350 health related enquiries. During 2019/20 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 a healthy lifestyle through health promotion workshops
- Running ESOL classes with emphasis on vocabulary for visiting the doctor and health related subjects
- 2 outreach surgeries based at Edgware Hospital.
- Membership of an active planning group organising the Barnet Mental Health Event
- Policy work with NHS: Focusing on our client group our views and opinions will help NHS North

CEO's Report

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-to-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 through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, yoga, mindfulness, art & craft, poetry, dance etc.
- Close partnership work with researchers e.g. Oxford University, UCL and Anglia Ruskin University
- Active membership in supporting the Barnet Well-being Hub.
- Sharing our "Holistic Model of Support" with professionals through Health Care conferences organised by The Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust
- Provision of Counselling Service at a local GP surgery

In addition to the above BRS has been actively involved with NHS Barnet's different activities to promote a better health within the community e.g.

Health Watch, World Mental Health Day event.

We are a resource to be drawn upon by health professionals to help them to support this client

group and better understand their needs.

We were closely involved in policy work around provision of counselling and psychotherapy services for refugees and asylum seekers including young refugees.

"I would like to convey my heartfelt appreciation to you, and all the team for your kind support to the refugees in this difficult time. Greatly appreciate all your kind efforts and thoughts" N.R

We have been liaising and working 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 programme and instead 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 wanted to know more about refugee issues.

Legal Aid and Access to the Justice Event

Too often people seeking asylum are unable to access the essential legal advice and representation they need in order to stand a chance of being granted protection in the UK.

On 26 June 2019 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, chaired by Thangam Debbonaire MP, organised a meeting on the immigration legal aid market and access to justice.

BRS, in collaboration with the Refugee Council Advocacy Network team, took part in the event and Meraf Ayalwe, one of BRS's volunteers, shared her experience about difficulties in accessing quality legal advice, particularly since the Government decided to introduce a set of austerity measures, including cuts to legal aid advice and representation.



CEO'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:

- 2,226 clients accessing all our services with 672 new clients
- 9,764 Advice/general enquiries
- 1,078 client visits to emergency support drop in services
- 151 clients attended our Immigration Drop in with visiting solicitors
- 138 Health promotion workshops
- 10 Workshops on accessing health, housing and welfare benefits
- 5 Mindfulness and Art therapy sessions with 34 attendees
- 18 Yoga and relaxation sessions (each time at least 15 women attended)
- 38 Sessions of gardening with 25 to 30 active attendees on a weekly basis
- 420 one to one counselling sessions provided to 55 clients
- 300 one to one youth counselling sessions provided to 35 young people
- 22 clients attended our annual Residential Retreat
- 109 active volunteers supported BRS within different activities
- 4 Training courses provided to volunteers with 48 attendees
- 53 clients and volunteers were assisted with CV writing, volunteering opportunities, online job search
- 9 clients and 11 volunteers managed to get into paid employment
- Over 165 students attended 11 successful ESOL classes, 2 sessions per week
- 82 IAPT Psycho-educational workshops provided to 1,020 client
- 13 women registered with our successful Mothers & Toddlers Group with 14 children
- Over 150 young people involved with our successful youth activities
- 55 women registered with our Jasmine Women's Group
- 67 refugee children had 33 tuition sessions (KS1-KS4) - 99 hours Maths and English each
- 9 vulnerable clients received befriending support

Journey to Integration Project



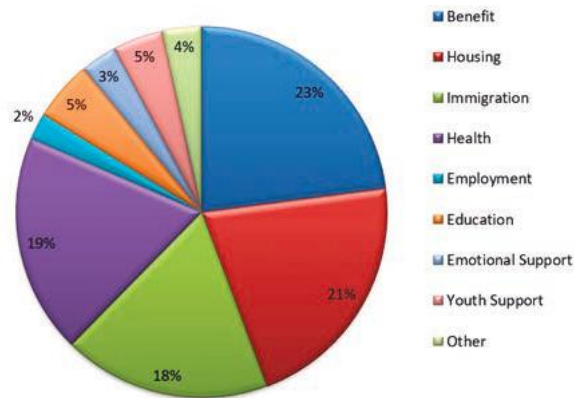
During the past year the Journey to Integration project had another fruitful year and from the beginning of the programme to the end of March 2020 served 320 refugees and supported them through their integration. The aim of this project is to increase integration and address isolation through intensive support. The activities within this project complement other BRS activities and include: Volunteering, Mentoring, ESOL, Citizenship Activities, Information, Advice and guidance and Homework Club for young refugees.

Our special thanks go to the European Fund (Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund - AMIF) for supporting this project financially.

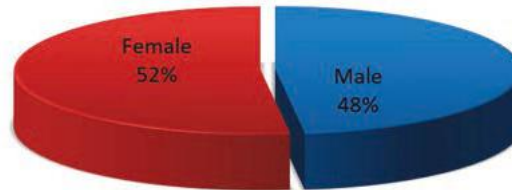
“This project is part funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. Making management of migration flows more efficient across the European Union.”

“BRS helped me to find my lost life and supported me to rebuild my life”

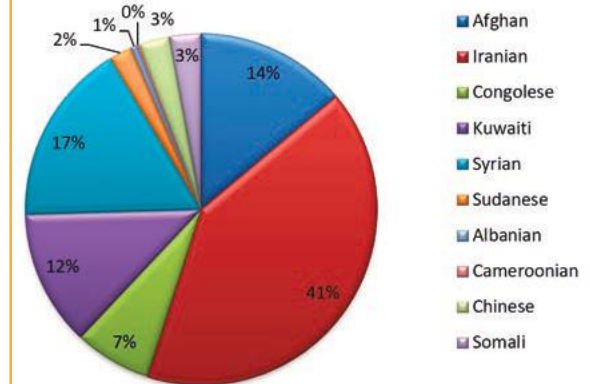
Enquiry Areas 2019-20



Clients by Gender



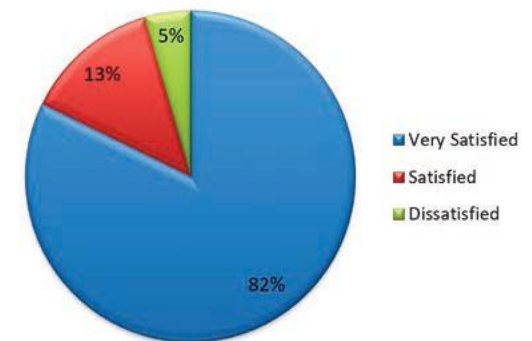
Where Our Clients Come from?



Customer Satisfaction Survey

In order to retain our Advice Quality Standard of the Community Legal Service (CLS) as well as making sure we provide 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. Overall 150 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 128 were returned. Our response therefore was a healthy 86%. Out of the 128 questionnaires returned 82% felt 'very satisfied' with our services and 13% 'Satisfied' and 5% felt "dissatisfied and we should improve in some areas". Overall 86% felt the service they received improved the quality of their life.



ESOL Classes

ESOL stands for English for Speakers of Other Languages. For the majority of refugees and asylum seekers, one of the struggles they are engaged in when they set their foot on British soil is with English, the predominant medium of communication in the country. English is required for all aspects of life in the UK, and adequate English skills are vital for the new arrivals' progress and achievement in everyday life, study and/or employment. At BRS, English classes constitute part of the BRS "Integrated Holistic Model of Support" ... which develops mental health, improves community cohesion and increases the life chances of vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers."

In 2019-2020, 25 volunteer teachers and 12 helpers provided more than 160 students with practical and focused English tuition twice a week to aid their access to what the UK has to offer. Every week, 21-24 hours of lessons were taught and the topics ranged from daily activities such as shopping and going to a doctor to specific themes such as accessing emergency services and the UK politics. In class as well as outside of class, our experienced teachers provided both language skills teaching and pastoral care to support students in their pur-



suit of settlement in the new environment, and helpers who were ex-service users offered their own experience to assist and complement the teachers' effort. As a result the learners paid tribute to the dedication, care and professionalism of the BRS teaching staff in their feedback.

As in previous years, the majority of learners were female and a variety of nationalities were represented, including Afghan, Iranian, Kuwaiti, Bangladeshi, Syrian, Somali, Turkish, Sudanese, Albanian, Eritrean among others. The students' ages ranged from 14 to 78 and the schooling experience also varied greatly. General English courses were offered from Pre-Entry to Entry Level 3 according to each student's level, and special groups were formed to meet specific needs – the Mothers and Toddlers group catered for the need of women with young children, the Youths' ESOL (16-19-year-olds) and Men's ESOL group were formed for definite demographical groups, and a Literacy group aimed at improving learners' literacy skills.

Trinity Exam

BRS has been an accredited exam centre for Trinity College London since 2017, a highly regarded

International Exam Board for English Language and ESOL Skills for Life qualifications. Funded by the European Union's Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), 3 Trinity ESOL courses took place at BRS this year. These courses were intended to enable refugees whose English level is between Entry 1 and Entry 3 to improve their English skills and to obtain a highly valued ESOL Skills for Life qualification. Under the instruction and support of our teacher Sara Hessabi, students practised English for settling in the new community and to gain their first English qualification in the UK. In July 2019, 11 learners completed the course and 8 passed the exam. In December 2019, 9 students completed the course and 8 passed the exam. The spring 2020 course was unfortunately interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in March. However, we anticipate that the courses will continue online.

Our special thanks must go to our funders, the City Bridge Trust and The European Fund (AMIF) for their generous support. We would like to thank all the teachers and helpers for another successful year, their support and dedication made a difference in our students' lives, their English skills, and their well-being.



ESOL Classes



Standing left to right:

Bahareh Javanmardi, Rosemary Biseo, Helen Forbes, Masoumeh Haddad Momeni, Yohannes Berhanemeskel Kidanemariam, Elise Perrot, Elizabeth Morrell, Theodore Wang, Tulin Ucur

Seated left to right:

Rahela Amiri, Helen Stone, Ros Staines, Orna Almagor, Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi

Not in the picture:

Helen Syani, Jo Cuttell, Linda Carey, Sara Hessabi, Julie Matson, Esther Birago Ntim, Olivia Cooper, Shelly Fennell, Ruth Kitching, Sima Rutherford, Ibrahim Ahmed, Annisa Pryor, Narges Mansouri, Fanta Sheriff, Mojgan Rabiee, Fouzia Arouche, Eva Chrysostomou, Vivien Chappell, Golafshan, Sue Engelbert, Katharine Sathe, Kathleen Hayes, Sawsan Kofi, Farrukh Khairandesh, Rifat Mahbub, Shalina Khanon

“Thank you so much my teacher. I enjoy my class a lot. Unfortunately no chance to go to school in my country. I started class at BRS. My teacher taught me how to make appointment with my GP, Now I am very happy, make appointment with my GP and can talk to my children’s teacher and can speak with my neighbours. I feel strong and proud. God bless you all.”

Mentoring Programme

Our mentoring programme was launched in January 2020. Funded by European Fund (AMIF) as part of the Journey to Integration Project, this activity was designed to provide one-to-one support to refugees who needed help adjusting to their new life. It aims to improve the quality of life and promote the inclusion and integration of refugees by:

- Helping them build confidence, strengthen resilience and increase self-esteem
- Supporting them to pursue jobs and/or university enrolment
- Guiding them to become familiar with London and services available to them
- Assisting them towards improving their English skills in order to benefit from interaction with people outside their communities and usual network groups or on the other hand
- Boosting their morale to alleviate isolation and building rapport with others

Upon launching, a mentor volunteer role advertisement was put on the BRS’ website and other volunteering recruitment platforms. Many volunteers of various professional backgrounds applied and were duly invited for interview. The selection process relied on the following criteria:

- Enthusiasm and will to provide mentoring support to refugees
- Relevant knowledge or experience that ranged from educational enrolment, professional background, and knowledge of UK social and state institutions.

During the first three months, nine volunteer mentors were each matched with a refugee mentee to provide mentoring advice on general and specific aspects of integration ranging from professional and educational development to learning about health services and benefits. The mentors were able to explore with their mentees what they wanted to achieve and a plan was put together.

Highlight of a matched mentoring duo:

Barnet Refugee Service was approached by E, a young Iranian refugee who used to work in digital marketing back home but had also done acting and was aspiring to be able to become a professional actor and host his own show in London. He was matched with a British arts teacher who had experience teaching theatre, Shakespeare, and acting. The duo hit it off immediately during their first matching session, which took place virtually during the first week of the UK COVID-19 lockdown. This meant that they could only meet via video conferencing; nevertheless the results were very encouraging. E and H had their first mentoring session on 30 March 2020.

Our special thanks go to our Mentoring Coordinator, Jida Malas, for her hard work and dedication, our volunteer mentors and our funders who made this activity possible.



Lush White City

Every year the Lush cosmetics retailer awards grants to their chosen charities through their 'Charity Pot Party'. 'Charity Pot' is a Lush hand and body cream where 100% of all sales (minus local taxes) are distributed as grants, to groups working in the areas of Animal Protection, Environment and Human Rights (incl. social justice, peace & equality). We have been lucky to be selected as their chosen Charity for the 3rd year.

Our special thanks go to Gemma Sorce, the Lush Charity Campaigns & Donations Supervisor, who chose BRS and hosted a Charity Pot fund-raising event by selling Charity Pot hand and body cream during the weekend of 6th to 8th December 2019.

The event was intended not only to raise funds but also to spread awareness of the services BRS provides to refugees and asylum seekers. Over a three-day period, two BRS staff and three volunteers were invited to visit the store and approach a demographic that usually wouldn't be familiar with the work we do. We are grateful for their dedication and support.

BRS is very grateful for this partnership with Lush White City that allowed for £719 to be raised.



Youth Counselling Service

One of the common traits that we often identify among the young unaccompanied minors and refugee youth we support is the significant need for emotional support. The troubled and complex contexts which these young people flee, the loss of their home and meaningful connections as well as the extremely perilous journey to a safe sanctuary, inevitably expose most of our young clients to a series of traumatic events. Undeniably, experiences such as loss, violence, war, separation from family members and the consequent disruption of the home dimension and its meaningful ties, have a highly traumatising impact on the mental health of these young people.

Left alone to navigate an asylum system which often fails to address their complex needs, these young people develop dysfunctional behavioural patterns as well as a generalised reluctance to trust - and therefore accept therapeutic support from - professional bodies such as BRS.

We believe that by offering young refugees and asylum seekers a therapeutic intervention within a safe space where they can express their feelings without fear of being judged or persecuted, as well as promoting their free expression of their most intimate fears and needs, we enable our young clients to develop a meaningful and genuine therapeutic relationship and therefore, to engage into a reparative experience.

The Youth Therapy Service is one of the essential pillars of the holistic model of support on which our youth wellbeing project is based. Specifically, this programme offers some of these highly vulnerable young people a chance to process their own experiences and feelings in a safe environment whilst increasing their receptivity to receiving this type of support.

Funded by the One to One Children's Fund under the One London Project, the project provides one to one youth-centred, creative art therapy interventions. During the past year four trained creative arts therapists offered 30 young individuals up to 10 sessions of therapy on a weekly basis. The project aims to provide trauma relief by offering young people the tools to help manage their own mental health and gain an enhanced awareness of their mental and emotional states. For the New Year, we are in the process of collaborating with the One to One Children's Fund and BRS youth group to co-design and implement a new project focusing on wellbeing and mentoring.



CEO's Report

Psychosocial Therapeutic Activities

Refugees are a particularly vulnerable population that is at risk of mental and physical health problems for a variety of reasons: traumatic experiences in and escapes from their countries of origin, transit experiences, culture conflict and adjustment problems in their host country, and multiple losses-family members, country, and way of life.

We believe that the provision of appropriate mental health services for asylum seekers and refugees is essential to improve their quality of life and well-being, and to enable them to recover from experiences of trauma.



During 2019/2020 we provided our clients with a series of workshops, with the aim of strengthening them and their families through the promotion of activities that foster social cohesion and self-help.

Through these workshops we helped our clients, especially women, by bringing them together to build meaningful relationships and to cope with their



stress and anxiety.

We are pleased to report that during the past year we managed to run 44 different workshops for over 108 clients in yoga, mindfulness, and art and craft therapy. The sessions were run by qualified and professional facilitators to whom we are very grateful.

Chair yoga was one of our most popular exercises among our older clients who have trouble working through the up and down motions of traditional yoga.

During the mindfulness workshops our clients had the opportunity to learn how to embrace their sadness and use it to practise developing compassion



and loving-kindness towards themselves and those they miss.

All the group members valued how what they had learnt was applicable in their daily lives. And most of all they cherished the closeness and connections that the workshops created, and friendships that developed alongside the practice.



Real People Honest Talk

Real People Honest Talk is a community engagement programme run by Near Neighbours and funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It brings together people in areas of high ethnic and religious diversity to talk with their neighbours over a meal about how to live comfortably together; about hopes and fears for the community; and about how to work together to make neighbourhoods better, safer and more connected.

Barnet Refugee Service is working closely with Near Neighbours to develop ideas for collective action and future involvement among neighbours. As part of our Big Conversation on 14th November we, as local agencies, charities and other stakeholders, got together to build on these conversations. It was a great opportunity for charities like us to share our ideas on how our client group has been affected by policies and decision-making.

"Thank you so much for providing us the chair yoga. I really enjoy the sessions; our instructor is amazing. I have got knee and back pain, it helps me to reduce my stress and pain."

Befriending and Peer Support

Our Befriending/Peer Support project began in 2016 to tackle social isolation and loneliness among refugees and asylum seekers and help them to feel welcome, valued and integrate in the host country.

Our committed befrienders meet with their clients at a minimum once a week to assist them to build their social network, offer them friendship and help them to rebuild confidence, overcome practical problems such as language barriers, and better understand UK culture. They accompany them to their appointments and to participate in community activities, and help them to practise their conversational English.

During the past year we provided nine vulnerable clients with intensive befriending support and helped them through their difficulties. Our special thanks must go to all our befrienders in particular to Nancy Brenner who provided more than 100 hours of support to one of our most vulnerable clients. Thanks to all of Nancy's hard work and dedication, and despite the challenges faced, the client has now settled.

Drop In for Destitute Asylum Seekers

Destitution is a huge problem among asylum seekers. The majority are in an extremely vulnerable situation because they are not permitted to work, and receive only minimal or no financial support. They frequently struggle to meet their basic needs and rely upon charities and friends to access food and warm clothes.

BRS has been running a daily Drop-in since 2006. We provide emergency food and toiletry packages as well as clothing to refugees and asylum seekers who are experiencing destitution.

During the year we provided food and toiletry packages to 1078 individuals. This service has been funded by kind donations from individuals, Hendon Mosque, churches, synagogues, and Colindale and Harrow Food Banks.

"Thank you for caring for all of us in this difficult time. May God bless you and listen to your prayers." Y.B

With the support of the National Zakat Foundation, London Catalyst, London Churches Refugee Fund, the Catholic Women's League, and many other small funders, we managed to raise funds for individual destitute clients who received the support in the form of cash or supermarket vouchers. Our special thanks go to all those donors and to those who donated their harvest collection to BRS.

In particular, we would like to thank Mrs. Jodi Mishcon, who set up the Big Shop Appeal for BRS and managed to get 52 sponsors to spend £100 each for a weekly shop for our destitute clients. Jodi also accepted responsibility for doing 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.

"Thanks, a lot for everyone in BRS, thank you from the heart for your humanity and your support." M



European Placement Network Erasmus + Project

For the seventh year running our successful partnership with Erasmus+ enabled BRS once again to host two interns from Wake Forest University, USA who were pursuing a degree in Health & Exercise Science and Politics & International Affairs. They both worked closely with the Operations Manager and the Client Advisers and their contribution was greatly appreciated.

Barnet Refugee Service is the best NGO we work with in terms of the quality of the placements and the satisfaction of the trainees. (Gary McGrath- Placement Coordinator)"



Case Study 1 Chandler Marshall International Intern

My name is Chandler Marshall and I had the wonderful opportunity to intern at Barnet Refugee Service while studying abroad in London in the Fall of 2019. This experience is one that I will never forget, as I had the chance to meet and get to

know the amazing people who work at BRS, in addition to their broad client base. While I was not entirely sure what to expect on my first day, I received a warm welcome from the entire staff and was happy to get to work, assisting Operations Manager, Farida Stanikzai for the next few months.

The work that Barnet Refugee Service does for the surrounding community is outstanding and inspirational. In my time there, I was able to become involved in a variety of projects that ranged from working with clients to attending English classes and learning more about the numerous programs offered to help clients in every aspect of life. The number of programs and amount of support provided by BRS to their clients and the community are extensive.

Through BRS, I was able to meet so many inspiring and hardworking people, and these values were passed on to me. Farida is a powerhouse in her own way, constantly taking impromptu meetings and making phone calls to secure funding or create new programs to help clients not only assimilate to a new culture, but also to maintain ties to their home countries. I have learned to apply the same fortitude and motivation to not only my schoolwork, but my volunteer work at home.

It was a privilege to be a part of BRS, even for just a short time. I learned many valuable lessons both from the staff and from the clients. The staff and volunteers at BRS are each caring, funny, and kind— always putting the needs of others first. BRS is an organization dedicated to helping others, despite any and all challenges. I will forever be grateful for my time there, the lessons I learned, and the people I met. I wish BRS, its staff, and its clients, nothing but the best.



Case Study 2 Megan Monroe International Intern

My name is Megan Monroe. I am a student at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. I am studying health exercise science with the hopes of attending medical school in the future. I was looking for an internship experience that would provide me with a more global perspective while allowing me to gain experience talking with people of diverse backgrounds. Luckily, I was placed at

Barnet Refugee Service for the spring semester where I was to complete four months in such a gratifying and open atmosphere! This experience was one of the best decisions I have ever made!

Working in BRS opened my eyes to the experiences of refugees and asylum-seekers that I never could have possibly understood! Farida Stanikzai served as an inspiration to me and ensured that I received a diverse experience by making it possible for me to assist with ESOL classes, help with advising services, participate in women's groups, and work with children's clubs. I particularly took an interest in the mentoring program which was started by Jida Malas during the time of my internship. I really enjoyed this aspect of BRS because it utilized successful and accomplished refugees to mentor newer refugees with topics only refugees would understand fully! I loved meeting refugees at different stages of integrating into the community and understanding what each of the refugees went through or are going through to become successful in their new life in the UK!

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, I had to return to the US early and did not receive the full time that I would have liked to experience with the awe-inspiring people of BRS! When I had to leave London so suddenly, leaving BRS was the hardest part of the return home especially since I did not get to have a proper goodbye! I had started to find my role at BRS and was really getting to know everyone at BRS! BRS was the perfect place for my global experience as it has the most welcoming and compassionate workers and volunteers who I will be thankful to forever for my eye-opening experiences! They work as hard as they can to ensure that they provide the best services to the refugees and asylum-seekers that need assistance. Overall, my experience at BRS was one that I will never take for granted because of the rewarding work that the employees and volunteers do every single day out of compassion for refugees and asylum-seekers who depend on them!

I wish the best for every endeavor that BRS pursues because I know it will always have the best interest of refugees and asylum-seekers at heart!

Sowing Seeds Gardening Project

Five years ago, under our Ecotherapy programme, we established a new project called "Sowing Seeds Therapy Project" to promote the good mental and physical wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers through outdoor activities in a green environment (Ecotherapy). We believe that gardening is one way for refugees and asylum seekers who have faced considerable trauma to reconnect with positive memories of home and to re-establish their identities.

As with other BRS therapeutic projects this project attracted clients of all ages including children and elderly people. Around 23 clients and 5 volunteers were involved with the project for at least two days a week, and over 160 people, including clients, staff, school students, our local GP and Santander Bank employees, visited the allotment. The project had a major positive impact on our client group, tackling their social isolation, encouraging integration and improving community cohesion.

Our everyday gardening activities offered our clients, especially elderly people, a meaningful experience and a way to reconnect with positive memories to feel more at home.

With the support of a professional volunteer gardener the clients have an opportunity to plant a variety of British vegetables as well as seeds from their countries of origin. At the allotment we also have cooking sessions, where clients prepare dishes from around the world using seasonal vegetables and share them with everyone.

As part of our promotion of a healthier lifestyle and with the support of volunteer nutritionists, last year we delivered three health nutrition workshops on how to make good herbal teas; measuring health; good/bad food; top tips for making food last longer; making our favourite meals healthier.

We would like to thank our dedicated volunteers and in particular our Gardening Project lead, Mohammad Fard, who worked so hard and tirelessly to transform our allotment into a beautiful garden. Our special thanks must go to our funders, The National Lottery Community Fund as well as London Catalyst and the Catholic Women's League Relief and Refugee Committee who with their financial support made this project a success.

Partnership Work

Barnet Refugee Service partnered with Faiths Forum for London and Dwight School, to run a Community Roots project at the allotment. 15 pupils from the school joined with 11 BRS volunteers and clients working alongside each other. They were joined by another mentor, an expert gardener provided through the Jewish Volunteering Network.

Over three days they cleared weeds, dug new furrows and planted vegetables. Verges were cleared and an unused patch of lawn was turned into a pleasant flower bed with a bench for the weary to rest on. Supervised by an art teacher from the school the pupils and BRS clients created an art work together.

Under the Garden Trust Programme, BRS has a plot at Russell Square Gardens in Central London. This is the first refugee group in the history of Russell Square to be involved in the garden. We planted a variety of flowers and our clients visited the garden and enjoyed their time there.

In addition, two groups from Santander Bank volunteered at our allotment and spent two days with our clients to implement improvements to the allotment using £250 of donations per visit. We thank Santander Bank and their volunteers for their ongoing support.



CEO's Report

Mothers and Toddlers Group

We had another successful year of the provision of the Mothers and Toddlers group, in partnership with the nearby Hyde Children's Centre, which catered for the language and social needs of mothers with pre-school children. During the year 13 mothers with 14 children attended the ESOL class regularly at Hyde Children's Centre from 09:30 to 11:30 on Tuesdays. While the mums attended a lesson in English for practical daily use and covering essential topics, their children were offered a safe, friendly and supportive space looked after by a qualified nursery teacher and two helpers.

The mothers who attended these sessions showed a strong drive and desire to learn English. The teaching and learning in the group helped the mothers improve their English skills and encouraged socialisation and companionship. The fun activities the children engaged in facilitated their physical and social development as well as psychological preparation for attending nursery. 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!

We thank all the staff at the Hyde Children's Centre as well as all the volunteers who made this project another success.

Our special thanks must go to a generous anonymous donor who has regularly supported this group financially.



The Faith & Belief Forum Award

The Faith & Belief Forum is one of the UK's leading interfaith organisations. Each year they organise an awards ceremony to celebrate the vital work of local communities in making London a welcoming place for people of all faiths and beliefs. The ceremony brings together local heroes and shines a light on the inspirational work they do. The event is supported by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith.

Barnet Refugee Service had the privilege of being selected by the Judging Panel, who had received an overwhelming number of nominations, as one of the heroes of London's faith and belief communities, for inspiring community-led, grassroots projects. On Tuesday 26 November we attended the evening Awards Ceremony and received our Certificate of Recognition and a Monetary Award from Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE.



End of Year Gift Distribution

Every year Barnet Refugee Service organises a party for our client families. The party offers a rare opportunity to those seeking asylum or recently granted the right to settle here, to have a few hours recreation and socialising.



This year in partnership with Brent Council, and the Latter-Day Saint Charities Friendship Centre the end of year party took place on December 10th at the beautiful hall of the Friendships centre in Wembley. Special guests included the Deputy-Mayor of Brent, Lia Colacicco, Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council, and Councillors Harbia Farah from Brent and Golnar Bokaei from Barnet who is also a board member of BRS. Over 250 people from 13 different countries joined this celebration. In addition to a large group of BRS staff and volunteers

who helped organize and set up for the event, there were other partners of the Friendship Centre attending from ELATT and Brent Action for Refugees. There was entertainment for the children, speeches, traditional music & dances and food from several of the countries represented. The big hall was transformed into a festive wonderland, and the children with their parents had a chance to laugh, play and enjoy themselves and forget, at least momentarily, about their difficult circumstances. Gifts were provided for the refugee children and for many of them these were the first presents they had received in a long, long time.

Our special thanks go to our supporters, BRS Volunteers, church leaders, youth leaders and the young people (aged 12-18) who made this event so successful.

We also would like to thank the local schools, nurseries, faith groups, church leaders, youth leaders and individual donors and supporters who provided us with cash, toys and adult gifts. In particular, we would like to thank Nelson and Laurel Hafen from the Friendship Centre for their generous financial and in Kind support.



IAPT Psycho-Educational Workshops

In the NHS IAPT programme step two provides psychological low intensity support for mild to moderate level of depression and anxiety. It was identified by Barnet CCG that there was a gap in current provision of step two psycho-education groups within the IAPT service for refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet. To address the gap in provision and to overcome the barriers identified BRS has been commissioned to provide psycho-educational workshops in Arabic, Farsi and English.

We are proud to announce that during 2019-20, in partnership with CommunityBarnet and Barnet Wellbeing Hub we provided 82 psychoeducational workshops to 1020 of clients in English, Farsi and Arabic on different topics e.g. PTSD, sleeping problem, panic and anxiety, depression.



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 towards mental and emotional well-being.

Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Sixth Annual 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, for the past few years we have been invited to these conferences as a guest speaker to share what we have learnt. In May 2019 our Operations Manager attended the sixth annual conference on this topic and spoke about our Holistic Model, developing strategies for providing peer and community support for refugees, the benefits of these strategies, and the experiences of refugees who use the service.

Participants' feedback

- The community based psychosocial sessions that can benefit refugees, besides formal therapy
- Amazing ideas – will take away lots of ideas thank you
- A very 'touching' session – BRS – a great service!!!
- Great presentation – inspiring lady. Amazing service!



Case Study 3

Elizabeth Ezekiel

I thank BRS for accepting me on this work placement that I have really enjoyed and it has given me an opportunity to know how asylum seekers and refugees are treated in this country. Before I came to BRS I didn't really have any idea how refugees and asylum seekers experience life when they first come to the country and even some of them are children and they are here alone. Through this placement, I have been able to understand how BRS helps in many different circumstances. Whilst being at BRS I have been able to learn some key skills which will help me in the workplace and how I must be required to respect others from whatever background they are coming from. Farida has taken time with me and has helped me gain a lot of experience. I have been also shown many of the projects which the service takes part in and the three I visited were the English classes, Women group, and the garden allotment. From the garden experience I have been able to communicate with some of the volunteers and was able to have my first experience of gardening which I quite enjoyed.

CEO's Report

Volunteering Project

Barnet Refugee Service has over 11 years' experience in the delivery of volunteering programmes.

Volunteers are an important resource for BRS, and their involvement and contributions make a genuine difference in our direct and indirect service delivery. We are lucky to have more than 118 volunteers from all backgrounds and walks of life who bring with them a wealth of expertise, giving their time to support refugees and asylum seekers to gain confidence, self-discipline and to enable them to rebuild their lives and integrate into UK society. We rely on the talent, skill, passion and creativity of our volunteers to further our mission. Their dedication, energy and enthusiasm is invaluable to helping BRS make a positive difference, and BRS is proud of the contribution of its volunteers, ranging from retired ESOL teachers to social work students, who help make BRS the unique organisation that it is.

This year again, due to the expansion of the organisation and the introduction of new services, BRS has relied even more on volunteers who are involved in Advice, ESOL, the Mother and Toddler Group, Mentoring, the Women's Group, Peer Sup-



port/ Befriending, the Youth Group, counselling, gardening, office administration, interpreting, Homework Club, the Job Club and more.

One of the aims of BRS is to involve refugees and asylum seekers and BAME group with the volunteer programme. The 46% of our volunteers have a refugee background, some of whom are ex-service users. They work closely with volunteers from British society to develop new skills, increase



their confidence and improve their communication skills.

In order to help our refugee volunteers to improve their English and communication skills we provide them with a tailor-made ESOL class (for two days a week), which is taught by a qualified ESOL teacher

We also provide them with the opportunity, under the close supervision of the Operations Manager, to lead some projects, as many of them have skills in running art, craft or cookery workshops. This has been a great way to motivate them, to build up their confidence, and help them to regain their dignity, as some of the volunteers were active in their home countries and feel low and useless when they come to the host country.

BRS volunteers have had the opportunity to attend internal and external training sessions, conferences and workshops which were relevant to their roles in order to keep them updated and to provide good quality service to clients. Every year we organise a special Volunteer Reward and Recognition event to thank our volunteers for their hard work and outstanding involvement.

We are proud to announce that with BRS's help and support nine of our volunteers managed to get into paid employment. Two of the nine volunteers got employment within BRS, one as an employment adviser at Groundwork, and the rest in catering, hospitality and interpreting services.

This year, as in previous years, we had nine students from colleges, schools, Brunel and Middlesex universities for work placements to gain valuable work experience and an insight into charity work. We also work closely with the European Placement Network (European Traineeship) where we accept volunteers for work placement. This year we had two young volunteers from Wake Forest University, United States.

Our volunteers provide approximately 6,000 hours per year to BRS. It is impossible to place a true value on the vital contribution of our volunteers,



CEO's Report

but if we were to assume modestly that their commercial cost would be £10 per hour, then their contributions in the past year amount to the equivalent of £60,000.

Every year, in line with our quality assurance policy and to improve our volunteering programme, we carry out a survey and ask for feedback. The result of the survey confirms that we have volunteers from very many different nationalities and backgrounds, including from Afghanistan, Iran, Albania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kurdistan, Iraq, Algeria, Sri Lanka, Syria, Bangladesh, Yemen, Sudan, Kenya, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, China, Egypt and Turkey as well as native-born British. 90% of volunteers reported their experience as being "excellent" and 10% as "very good".

Our special thanks go to our volunteers, our operations Manager Farida Stanikzai and our funders. In particular, the National Lottery Community Fund and the European Fund (AMIF) for making this worthwhile project a success.

"I've enjoyed the experience of teaching so much that I've decided to take a career change in that direction and will be training as a primary school teacher. I just wanted to say how much I've enjoyed getting to know you all and collaborating with you. It's been great to exchange ideas and to feel part of a wider, and amazingly supportive, team."



Case Study 4

Kathy Lichman
Volunteer

"Two things drew me into volunteering with the BRS's Jasmine Women's Group twice a week. Firstly, my grandparents were refugees from the persecution of Jewish people in Eastern Europe. I was close to my grandparents, and grew up hearing how it was for them, settling in and adapting to life here in London, while learning English, achieving status, finding work and a place to live, and bringing up their children in a totally strange lifestyle and environment, with totally strange rules and regulations.

Secondly, I went to live in Israel as an immigrant, with a husband and two young children. We all had to learn the language and my husband and I had to find somewhere to live and work, and a school for the children. We had to bring the children up and we all had to get used to a different way of life. So, I felt I could empathise with refugees and have some understanding of what they were going through.

BRS is an amazing outreach organisation, with many dedicated volunteers, and I am learning so much from being a part of it."

Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Prostitution Conference

One in every 200 people today is estimated to be trapped in modern slavery. According to the latest figures published by the International Labour Organisation and the Walk Free Foundation, an estimated 40.3 million people are exploited in some form of modern slavery. More than half of them are trapped in forced labour, compelling them to work against their will and under threat, intimidation or coercion. An additional 15.4 million people are estimated to be living in forced marriages. Modern slavery is everywhere. It harms people in every country in the world, every single day.

BRS staff and volunteers attended the conference on Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Prostitution which took place on 5 March 2020 at the Council Chambers, Hendon Town Hall. The aim of the conference was to increase participants' knowledge and understanding of the support and protection needed by survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.



Our Volunteers

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Women's Group

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Elsa Shamash

Jen Albert
Johanna Knight
Jan Clegge
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Kathy Lichman
Kitty Quinn
Margaret Macken
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Laura Rojan Akturan

Counselling and Emotional Support

Chinyelu Esomeju
Amir Saeedi
Luma Kahlili
Sultana Momand
Zohreh Azizi
Yasmin Sher
Teodara Stefania
Zahra Alam

Mothers and Toddlers Group

Gulafshan Karami
Fanta Sheriff
Fauzia Arouche

Youth Activities

Parviz Hazarbut
Manna Rose Shamshirifard
Robyn Smith
Thomas Freeman-Eves

Interpreters/ Translators

Moluk Vakili
Mariam Reza
Narges Mansouri
Hanane Kara
Patricia Peiris
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Parwaneh Sultani
Ammar Bajboj
Adila Badri
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Rahila Amiry
Yohannes Berhanemeskel Kidanemariam
Fateme Mir Sadeghi
Thoraya Dujaili

Advocate/ befrienders

Fateme Mir Sadeghi
Nancy Brenner
Valerie Davies
Rahila Amiry

Employment and Education

Kate Ferguson

Gardening

Vegeun Boick
Fariba Rafiei
Shafiq Valizada
Zeba Dendar
Mohammad Bahmaninejad Fard

Community Liaison

Michael Mugishangyezi
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International Intern

Chandler Marshall
Megan Monroe

Social Work Student

Rizwana Sultana

Design/ IT Support

Hamed Khabazsahami
Saleh Bokharaei

Emergency Food supporters

Massoud Tahmassebi
Michael Hahn
Daniela Harris
Rahila Amiry

Volunteers' Party



**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!!!**

Counselling and Emotional Support Project

People seeking safety in the UK are often deeply traumatised. We help them to make sense of their experiences, drawing on their resilience and strength to recover and start rebuilding their lives. Many of the people we support have lived through dreadful experiences and faced devastating losses. All have lost their homes, their livelihoods and their communities and been separated from their loved ones. Many have witnessed terrible violence, been tortured, seen family and friends killed and made perilous journeys before they finally arrive in the UK.

Here in the UK, refugees also suffer acute anxiety about the complex asylum process. They worry about accommodation, money, education, access to legal advice. They fear detention, deportation, destitution and homelessness. And there is a constant concern about loved ones left behind or missing. All this takes a heavy toll on their emotional and psychological wellbeing.

We are pleased to report that with the support of the National Lottery Community Fund, during 2019/20 we provided specialist mental health support to help refugees to rebuild their lives using the resilience, strength and skills acquired on their journeys. Our bilingual therapists applied a range of evidence-based and best practice approaches to 55 clients and provided 420 sessions of one to one counselling and emotional support to anyone who sought this service in their mother tongue.

Our special thanks must go to everyone - our Therapeutic Services Manager, counsellors and clinical supervisors - who contributed to the success of this vital project.



Case Study 5

Amir Saeedi
Volunteer Counsellor

Whenever I look back and remember that it has been a year that I have been volunteering for BRS as a counsellor, I find myself being proud not only because of my achievements and the rewards I received towards providing services for eligible people, but I also am proud of being able to successfully build up a deep and powerful professional network with the organisation itself. I feel that I am being connected and supported by the team members, including colleagues, other volunteers, managers, my supervisor; and I feel that the presence of such a strong social bond empowers us to deliver a good service towards our service users.

The multidimensionality of BRS not only enables me to be more fluent in delivering the right service for clients but it also helps me to extend my scope of learning from counselling to other fields such as housing, mentoring, befriending, interpretation, administration, and so on.

During the past year, I personally succeeded to offer counselling to vulnerable people and helped them, mostly to settle their problems or find another available services to carry on their therapies. Thanks to the provided online facilities, even during the crisis of pandemic we could continue offering our services to our clients with commitment and pleasure.

In general, I shall say that BRS, for me, is like an open space in which one can find a way to make the best out of one's potential. Of course, BRS is an organisation with its own internal regulations and systematic defences in order to preserve and maintain its organisational boundaries and frameworks, but it also upholds a good level of integrity which creates a safe space for both the staff and service users to be able to communicate smoothly with each other. My hope is that we can carry on with our good in BRS and develop our services for those who are in need of care and support. And I see a bright future in keeping my attachment and professional relationship with this successful organisation.

Homework Club

Promoting Education amongst Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children

Refugee children are among the most vulnerable groups in society, facing the challenges of disrupted education, cultural confusion and lack of knowledge of English. Their lives have been thrown into a state of chaos because of what they experienced in their home countries prior to displacement, as well as on their journeys to find safety. The majority of them struggle to engage and to integrate with the education system and have no one to help them with their schoolwork. Many parents do not understand the English education system or the curriculum and are often unable to speak, read or write enough English to be able to support their children in their learning.

For the last four years, BRS has successfully been providing a Tuition/Homework Club for refugee children which is one of the most needed projects that we run. Throughout the year it provides three hours' weekly Maths, English language and science lessons (KS1-KS4).

From April 2019 to March 2020, with the support of the European Fund (AMIF), 72 students from year

3 up to A-Level benefited from this project. The tutors created a structure to help develop foundation skills, using the national curriculum as their guide. They also helped students with their school homework and devised plans for them to develop in areas where they were struggling.



Due to the financial problems that some of the families were experiencing, BRS provided eight laptops to the families in order for their children to do their assignments. During the summer we provided an intensive English and Maths course for 18 newly arrived refugees to help them feel confident and well-prepared for the start of the school year in September.

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

Students' feedback

"There are a lot of things which we enjoyed during the session, but the most fascinating was our lesson time we learnt a lot and had an amazing and motivated tutor who explained everything more clearly in an understandable way. BRS had tried a lot to not

miss anything that could support us. This programme was very supportive particularly for the students like us who were new in this country and not very familiar with system"

"There is no better way to thank BRS for giving a helping hand to someone in the dark. I want to say thank you. Thank you is the least I can say to you to show my appreciation for everything you have done for me...I had lots of difficulty doing my assignments. I never forget as this is my first laptop. Limited words I might say now but BRS owns a great place in my heart. "

Parents' feedback

"This educational programme was very well organised, very supportive particularly for the student like my children who were new in this country and were not very familiar with system. BRS has been running very good programme for the refugee and the education programme and it is one of the best. Keep up your good work"

"Today I received an email from my daughter's maths teacher. She mentioned that my daughter has improved from average to the one of the best at maths, Thank you BRS for your support".

"So grateful, the tutor is so good, I was so worried who could help my children who just arrived in the UK, as I cannot speak English. It is now nine months that my 5 children attending the BRS tuition Humanity exists"

"I would like to thank you massively, for the tutor you provide to my son. She is super friendly, has great knowledge on the subject, ensures to keep the sessions very interactive and fun".



CEO's Report

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 2019 World Mental Health Day event that took place on October 10th at the Meritage Centre, Church End, Hendon, NW4 4JT. This year's theme was "Suicide Prevention" and 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.



Case Study 6

MP a refugee from Iran

"Leaving your country, family and friends is not easy. It is a real challenge that refugees face. My son and I joined my husband almost 2 and a half years ago. When I first came here, I was very isolated and felt very lonely. Slowly, my mental health and well-being began to deteriorate. I went to my local library and joined a group of women in order to improve my English. One day at the library I saw a flyer for Barnet Refugee Service. I was so happy to find out that there was an organisation near my house that could help us.

The next day I came to BRS. They welcomed me very warmly and made me an appointment to see an advisor regarding my benefits and housing. The advisor helped me a lot. I joined a free 12-week ESOL class, and I was so happy to come to BRS 5 days a week to learn English. My teacher Sara was an amazing teacher. I made lots of friends and it felt like being at home. It's been almost 2 years now that I've been coming to BRS. I joined the Women's group which I really enjoy. It's so relaxing to do artwork and attend the workshops, and I also enjoy the yoga classes. I'm really fond of going to the allotment, where we grow vegetables that we cook and eat, together with different people from different countries. My son also benefited a lot by attending BRS Homework club. I would like to thank Farida and the BRS team, who help people like me in exile"



Case Study 7

Esther Birago Ntim ESOL Teacher

In March 2019, I had completed my CELTA Course and was looking forward to volunteer to build up my confidence and also to gain experience of what I was going to meet in the real world.

In autumn 2019, I was called for an interview and was to start with BRS. I have developed so much interest in meeting and helping people through volunteering especially when a little effort made brought a change in another person's life. There are a few challenges though but the end result is rewarding; for instance, most students are not familiar with the English Language and again they do not have some of the letters of the English alphabet in their language and this makes it challenging to pronounce certain words to sound as they should. Despite these challenges appropriate activities were designed not on a silver platter but through the support of BRS management and staff who always assist with links and resources from great websites to aid teaching.

BRS is a welcoming place to be not only giving out but also receiving too. I will be very pleased if my students get on heights in English Language whether listening, speaking, reading or writing very soon and help them move around freely in their community.

Residential Retreat

The purpose of our retreat programme is to provide an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to temporarily leave behind the usual distractions and anxiety they all face, to find healing, and to have a taste of living life with a purpose.

Under the umbrella of our Emotional Support Project, in August 2019 for the fourth year running BRS held a weekend residential retreat at Bore Place Farm in Kent. This historic, peaceful venue set in 500 acres of beautiful green landscape offered 22 of our clients the opportunity to step back from their daily lives, find moments of reset, get in touch with themselves, connect with nature and surround themselves with positive energy.

After last year's positive response to mindfulness workshops, mindfulness was a leading theme of this year's retreat. Workshops about managing stress and understanding how the mind creates unhelpful habits and patterns were well received by participants.

The participants also enjoyed the wonderful gardens for mindful walking and movement, and used natural objects to create art and help meditation. Walking in silence allowed the participants to hear their own inner voice, and to allow the voice of nature to speak to them. For many clients it was their first experience of enjoying nature and the company of others in silence, and they fed back how powerfully calming that had been.

Anna Jezuita Counsellor, Mindfulness Teacher and experienced group facilitator, organised the nature walk where participants were encouraged to use mindfulness techniques while exploring, to be aware of their thoughts and to bring themselves to the here and now. They were each asked to pick something

from nature that resonated most with them, and encouraged to share it later on with the group.

Each meal, lovingly prepared by participants and enjoyed at leisure under the trees, was an opportunity for sharing stories, songs and dance. A workshop empowering female awareness and strength offered by Elias our Wellbeing Coordinator gave each of the clients a space to shine. Finally, a masterclass in Bhangra by a professional instructor shook us all into breathless heaps of laughter.

The retreat helped our clients to break down language barriers, bridge cultural divides, and discover themselves; they were able to connect with people coming from different cultures and backgrounds who had had similar life experiences. The participants also attended sessions of group drama therapy, glass design, relaxation, baking and cake-decorating.



"This retreat was truly a unique experience for me, I found it very inspiring, re-energising and re-empowering. I learnt how to focus on my breath as well as self-care techniques".

"Not only thanks to presence and translation of Farida Stanikzai (who as always was tireless in assuring a seamless running of things) that made connection possible, it was also unbelievable courage of this lovely participants to open their hearts to new challenges - breathing, eating and walking mindfully."
Anna Jezuita, Counsellor, Mindfulness Teacher



Case Study 8

Fariba Rafiei
Service User

My name is Fariba Rafiei. I am from Iran. I was introduced to Barnet Refugee Service by a friend 3 years ago. Barnet Refugee Service helped me with my journey to integration in the UK. I attended ESOL classes to improve my language. In early 2019 Farida Stanikzai, the BRS Operations Manager helped me to join the Hotel School hospitality course. At the 10 weeks programme I learned professional cooking skills, housekeeping and hospitality. I would like to thank the Hotel School and Barnet Refugee Service especially Farida Stanikzai for their support. Now I am working part time as a barista and I love my job. As I wanted to give back, I joined the BRS volunteering team almost one year ago and enjoy every minute of my time at BRS as I consider the organisation a place that help me to increase my knowledge and skills.



Case Study 9

Rezwana Sultana
Trainee Social Worker

My name is Rezwana Sultana and I am a second-year student Social Worker at Middlesex University. During my time at Barnet Refugee Service (BRS), I have grown as a person after my experience. I exceptionally enjoyed my time at BRS as I got along with all my colleagues and I felt welcomed straight away. From the very first day, I felt a part of the team and I was treated with respect and kindness. I felt blessed with this opportunity and I knew as a person I would be dedicated to be working in this field.

I worked alongside my supervisor and my colleagues with several service users. This taught me how to use my observational skills, allowing me to handle service users on my own. My experience has led me to improve my communication skills as conversing with service users became more natural and my active listening skills have improved.

I think BRS has a great variety of connections that benefitted my learning. I was given the opportunity to go with my colleagues to different places where I met new people. This was an insight into my future. As a result, I believe that BRS was an amazing placement for me as I was not assigned one job.

Barnet Refugee Service is beneficial for a learning step as I learned new legislation that I haven't been informed on before. I explored the Immigration and Asylum Acts in detail and I am now aware of the human rights for asylum seekers. My knowledge has increased in this area and I feel proud that I have become more open-minded and educated on this topic.

I have also faced challenges however, my supervisor has helped me through it. My supervisor has taught me how important communication is and whenever I needed help, she was always there for me and I really appreciated that. All my colleagues were always ensuring I had maximum support and they guided me through the 70 days. I am proud to say my experience was positive and I succeeded through no complications. Barnet Refugee Service is a charity that is genuine and has employees that are selfless and hard working. I loved my 70 days at BRS and I will always treasure my first real experience here. Overall, I thank everyone at BRS for their support and hard work!

CEO's Report

Refugee Youth Wellbeing Project 2019-20

Our youth programme was established in 2009 to provide holistic emotional and psycho-social support as well as other activities for young asylum seekers and refugees aged 13 to 21 years old. Our primary aim is to show solidarity with young refugees and asylum seekers by creating a safe space whereby everybody feels equal, supported, and empowered; through our programme, we seek to accompany these young people on their journey to improve their wellbeing and re-build their lives.



New developments in our project

Thanks to our dedicated youth team and in particular our Youth Wellbeing Coordinator, Elias Matar, our project has expanded significantly over this past year. In November 2019 we received funding from Children in Need, which was followed by matched funding from the Mayor of London's Young Londoners Fund (YLF) in January 2020. Our youth team has grown substantially this year and now consists of a Youth Wellbeing Co-ordinator, full-time youth

worker and sessional worker, alongside our amazing volunteers. With this funding we were able to work with the young people to design and develop our expanded specialist Refugee Youth Wellbeing Project (RYWP).

Overview of project

The Refugee Youth Wellbeing Project offers a weekly youth club, football club, action club, youth ESOL classes, outreach and advocacy work and individual/group creative therapy services. The programme is focused around a youth-empowerment



model, whereby the activities are co-designed by the young people to ensure these are needs-based and that young people have ownership over the programme. The program aims to provide:

- Opportunities for young people to celebrate their own culture while developing cross-cultural knowledge and promoting 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 skills 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

Youth Club: Weekly Psychosocial Activities

Since March 2018, our youth club has been running at Middlesex University, where we have access to the university's facilities and a designated room that we can use to run our weekly youth club. The campus also allows us to use its sports facilities such as basketball, ping pong, football and billiards, etc. Extra support for our activities in the campus is provided by our wonderful placement students from Middlesex University. The youth club is also open for collaboration with external organisations, projects and individual facilitators.



CEO's Report

Every Thursday the youth club hosts, on average, 20-25 young people and offers them a variety of different activities. We run quarterly co-design sessions with our young people, whereby they tell us the types of activities they would like to do, the skills they would like to develop, and we evaluate together what we have done so far. Below is an overview of the various activities that we have held throughout the year. We have divided these into different themes:

Heritage, Culture, and Identity

These activities aim to provide young people with the opportunity to celebrate and share their own culture with others, to learn about different cultures and explore themes such as identity and belonging. We hosted parties to celebrate Eid and Christmas; held an Indian night where young people could enhance their knowledge of diverse cultures, languages, and food; organized an international folk song evening where the young people shared and taught traditional songs from their cultures. We explored the theme of identity through a focused creative session and a 'Tree of Life' workshop hosted by young lead-



ers from migrant backgrounds from Coram. This year, we also celebrated two landmark days: on International Women's Day, we celebrated the contributions of women and discussed the diverse inequalities they experience and on Valentine's Day we practiced self-love and gratitude by writing powerful letters to ourselves and significant others in our lives.



Self-development and new skills

These activities aim to provide young people with the opportunity to find their own voice, express their needs and self-advocate. Activities have included workshops such as how to navigate London transport, understanding immigration procedures and age assessment, recognizing their rights as unaccompanied minors in the UK and developing their awareness of sexual health. We have also developed our communication skills through taking part in skill-based workshops and philosophical debates led by one of our amazing volunteers.

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 we have offered a wide array of art-based sessions such as origami, shadow puppet making, pottery, and printmaking. We have also held workshops on poetry, storytelling, filmmaking, and 'how to be an actor' which provided the opportunity for the young people to express themselves and tell their stories through creative outlets.

Social and recreational activities

The main aim for 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 social gatherings; cosy winter nights; trivia nights; team challenge evenings and bridge-building competitions. Our placement students from Middlesex University organized an entertaining games night for us all and one of our most popular activities was facilitated by Santander volunteers who joined us for a day of games and T-shirt making.



CEO's Report

Summer Activities

Funded by the John Lyon's Charity, we offered a wide variety of activities to the young people during the school summer holidays. These included action-packed activities such as playing sport, making several visits to the garden to enjoy delicious picnics and work in the allotment, visiting the theatre, and watching a storytelling show.



Sport and Physical Health

Many of young people enjoy staying active by participating in a wide variety of sports and physical activities. This year we hosted a Taekwondo class, fitness bootcamp, and two capoeira sessions.

Action Club

In March 2020, we set up our Action Club. The club is a collaboration with Brunel University PhD student and BRS sessional youth worker, Robyn Smith. Action Club was co-designed and developed by the young people and aims to develop leadership skills and promote purposeful community social action. This year, the Action Club took part in London Youth City Leader's Project and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and food insecurity, established the 'Food Support Project' which provided emergency food parcels to 119 young asylum seekers and vulnerable refugees across London.

Partnerships

The holistic activities that we offer at BRS would not be possible without the collaboration and support that we receive through our community partners. We are very grateful to them for their continued support and provision of funding, space, and volunteers. Our partners include: Shubbak Festival, Middlesex University, Refugee Council, NI Education's 3C project, and One to One Child.

Shubbak Festival

This year, we partnered with Shubbak Festival, one of the largest Arab arts festivals in Europe that invites artists from the Middle East to present their work across multiple art forms. We worked closely with Shubbak's Programme and Engagement Producer, Taghrir Choucair-Vizoso to offer art-themed workshops to our young people. During April and May 2019, Shubbak invited pho-

tographer Hassan Al-Mousaoy to work with the young people to chart their daily lives through a sequence of personal photographs. As part of the Shubbak Festival 2019, their work was exhibited in June at the Bush Theatre Attic. Later in the year, we participated in a series of workshops including Physical Theatre with artist Colette Dalal Tchanchou; Capoeira with musician and dancer Laura Hanna; and Hip-hop dance with international dancer and choreographer, Ben Fury. In addition to these engaging workshops, Shubbak funded and co-ordinated two outings for us: last summer, 20 of our young people were invited to the Moroccan dance show performed by the acrobatic company Halka at Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre. Later in the winter, 15 young people were invited to visit Stratford upon Avon and watch the play A Museum in Baghdad by the Royal Shakespeare Company. We highly value our partnership with Shubbak Festival as it allows our young people to meet talented artists from the Middle East region and participate in activities which celebrate diverse forms of artistic expression. These events aimed to promote young people's positive insights into their own Middle-Eastern culture and heritage.



CEO's Report

Middlesex University

Alongside providing us with the use of their campus facilities for youth club and football, Middlesex University allocate us two student placements each semester as part of their Students' Union's Community Placement Scheme. The scheme is designed to boost students' employability and increase collaboration within Barnet and beyond. This year, we were fortunate to have the amazing Peter & Nahid supporting our youth club. Our special thanks must go to them and to the Middlesex University for their ongoing support.



The Northern Ireland Education Authority - 3C's

This summer, as part of the 3C's Leadership Development programme, organized by the Education Authority in Northern Ireland, we selected a group of 8 young people and 2 members of staff to visit Belfast. The young people participated in a three-day residential at the Share Discovery Village Belfast alongside 130 other young people who were taking part in the 3C programme. During the residential, the young people participated in adventure and water sport activities, visited landmarks in Belfast, learned

about the history of Northern Ireland, and shared their stories and experiences with other peers. The young people enjoyed making new friends, travelling together and exploring a new region. For some of the young people, it was their first time on an aeroplane, which made the trip even more special.



During the winter, we continued our partnership and hosted two groups of young people from Northern Ireland's youth centres who joined our youth club and enjoyed participating in tailored psychosocial activities with our young people. Through the sessions, we aimed 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 back-

grounds. The visits were a great success: more than 60 BRS young people participated and many new friendships were made.

Advocacy work Workshops

The youth programme offers customisable outreach workshops with young people and the wider community to introduce them to the topics of forced migration, asylum, and the realities of being a refugee in the UK.

In March 2020, the youth team collaborated with Give Together to organize a full-day workshop at the Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School. The workshop consisted of an interactive storytelling session, meeting somebody from a refugee background and asking questions, fun quizzes, and exploring the themes of migration and displacement through art, discussion, and presentations.

Moreover, this year BRS was invited by Christ Church College, Oxford University to offer a themed workshop for year 12 pupils at Wren Academy. The BRS workshop was one of a series of workshops offered as part of the college special programme for students who are interested in studying social science at university level.

The workshop was designed to develop the skills and the critical thinking required for future Social Science university students. The main aim of the BRS workshop was to challenge some common stereotypes and debates about immigration in the UK and to learn how to think about immigration. The pupils experienced a creative session that touched upon these topics using creative methods such as Drama Therapy and storytelling.

Football club: Weekly Football Sessions

This year football has been our most popular activity among our young people. Funded by the Leathersellers Fund and Children in Need, our weekly football session runs every Friday evening at the University of Middlesex, attracting a growing number of players.

The sessions are facilitated by a professional coach and our dedicated lead volunteer, Tom Freeman-Eves. The aim



of our Football Club is to bring together young people for a two-hour group exercise in a safe outdoor space and friendly atmosphere. Young people have the chance to engage in sporting activity, develop their individual skills and learn to be part of a diverse team whilst expanding their network of friends. Our special thanks must go to our coaches, our volunteers, our youth team as well as our funders for making this project a success.

A: "I like a lot of things about BRS: I like to join the activities because I always feel welcome there every time I go to the youth club or football I meet new people that soon become friends. I like to spend my time with BRS and join their youth projects. BRS helped me a lot when I needed it. I send everyone at BRS all my love"

T: "If I had the opportunity to explain or talk about BRS to people I can honestly say BRS is my home, my family and my friends. I spend most of my time there"

R: "A place for young people to participate in fun and creative activities"

N: "The youth club is the only place where I feel valued. I can feel my voice is being heard. Everyone is so kind and caring. I went to many organizations when I first arrived, but no one was as caring as BRS staff. I feel safe when I am with the youth club."

I.K: "Barnet Refuge Service is a light in the dark for people like me. At BRS people come first."

I.Y: "I would like to thank BRS youth project, I feel very lucky to be part of it. I also want to thank the youth workers for their hard work."

Jasmine Women's Group



The Jasmine Women's Group, which has been running for the past 13 years, has had yet another fruitful year. The Jasmine Group provides a safe, welcoming environment where we provide space for refugee and asylum-seeking women to build connections to the community and to learn about life in the UK. Our group of women meet regularly every Friday morning at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Mill Hill to talk, make friends, gain confidence, improve their English skills, discuss common concerns, learn about new programmes and resources, and participate in a variety of activities.

The women travel from across London, and on average 20 to 25 women from different countries including Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo, and Albania, participate. It has been a great pleasure to watch women grow in confidence through our variety of activities and workshops. They are learning new skills to help them in their journey to integration.



We continued to offer a range of topics and events, including the ever-popular chair yoga which enables everyone, whatever their level of fitness, to benefit from gentle exercise.

During the year, Jasmine undertook 11 creative arts and crafts programmes, including crochet, glass decorating, jewellery-making and card-making. These classes were led by BRS art and craft volunteers and CIRCLE/Groundwork with whom we work closely. Jasmine paid its annual visit to Kew Gardens – another popular event - to enjoy the early summer vistas.

Many thanks to Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue, Edgware, who hosted a party on December 25th for those who were not able to join the festivities elsewhere.

English language classes were run throughout the year to encourage improvement in English, but in a relatively light-hearted way, with games and puzzles as well as conversation and reading. English is the common language of the group and the participants are encouraged to speak and listen to the language without recourse to translation, although they do help each other with explanations.



As Coronavirus approached, we endeavoured to give the women basic advice and discussed the issue in order to provide them with a greater understanding of the situation. We produced a simple leaflet to help them understand the message of basic hygiene.

Our thanks go to Tanya Novick, our women's group coordinator, to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Mill Hill for being such generous hosts: and especially to the Jasmine volunteers – Elsa Shamash, Kathy Lichman, Ros Lester, Keng Ho, Rojan Akturan, Jen Albert, Jane Clegg, Margaret Macken - as well as to Kitty Quinn from the Church.

We also would like to thank our funders and donors, in particular, the Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation for their kind support.



Job Club



For the last 8 years, Barnet Refugee Service has successfully offered employment support to refugees rebuilding their lives in the UK.

The majority of our clients are highly educated and have been professionals in their home countries. We understand how difficult and confusing it is for them to secure

employment while they are in the process of rebuilding their lives in an unfamiliar country.

Our Job Club provides crucial one-to-one support to our clients to empower them to take their first steps into employment. We work with our clients to explore ways of removing individual barriers to employment, and help to find ways in which their skills and qualifications can be recognised in the UK. Our volunteer adviser meets with clients on a one-to-one basis, supporting them in various ways to become integrated into the workforce.

During the past year our employment adviser helped over 53 refugees with CV writing, online job searches, registering with online job portals, completing job applications, interview techniques, and mock interviews. She 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 are proud to announce that one of our admin volunteers got paid employment at BRS as an administrator, one of our volunteer client advisers found a full-time job as an adviser at Groundwork, and another volunteer joined our youth team as a sessional worker. Eight volunteers found jobs in the fields of hospitality and interpreting. In addition, one of our former clients started volunteering at BRS as an adviser.

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.

For the second year running BRS referred three of our volunteers and two clients to this 10-week hospitality course at London Hotel School. The participants were taught the key skills needed to prepare for the main areas of service, including kitchen, housekeeping and reception. In addition, they learnt teamwork, built confidence, learnt about budgeting and nutrition. They were also supported individually to become work ready. After the successful completion of the course they received a course completion certificate. We are proud to say that by passing this course two of our participants managed to find paid employment.

"I would like to thank you BRS for referring me to the Hotel School to complete the 10-week hospitality course. A big thank you to the employment adviser who helped me with my job application and CV. Also thank you for providing me with reference. Now I am working part time as a barista in a beautiful café and enjoy it a lot. I am still continuing my volunteering at BRS as BRS is my family"



CEO's Report



Case Study 10

Nasim Hassani
Volunteer

On my second day at BRS I shadowed Farida and she took me to an ESOL class for mothers and toddlers. This class gave mothers with young children an opportunity to study and achieve an education. These mothers were not only pleased with their achievements but they also felt more comfortable speaking in a new language. On my third day of work experience, Farida showed me the eco therapy garden, which I found extremely fascinating as the idea of being connected to nature to help mental health issues really amazed me. During my 5 days of work experience, I had the chance to be a part of a group of wonderful people that helped me develop as a person. What really amazed me was that most of the people working there were volunteers and their aim was to help others prosper and find a country to call home. Overall, the experience was truly and utterly unforgettable.

Thank you Barnet Refugee Service



Case Study 11

Yohannes Berhanemeskel
Kidanemariam
Volunteer

BRS has given me the biggest opportunity I have ever had since I came to the UK – volunteering. I was given this chance about a year ago to learn from all the wonderful staff and contribute with the skills I have learned and acquired over the years.

Initially, I began volunteering with the advising team while at same time assisting as an office admin. This has given me a practical experience on how I can carry out office duties in the UK. A couple of months later, I also joined the ESOL team by teaching the Men's Group. Here is where I can say I have used my previous work experience as a qualified English as a Foreign Language Teacher. I am also providing translating and interpreting service to those clients who speak Amharic.

Every level and variety of work I took part has made me really appreciate what BRS does for all the people in need. I am very much happy that I was able to be part of this amazing opportunity. I am sure we will have many more years to go together and that I will keep on learning and thriving. Thank you very much for making me feel important again.



Case Study 12

Nasin Syad
Volunteer Adviser

Firstly, I'd like to thank Farida for introducing me to BRS. I was a volunteer there for 18 months. I was blessed to work with such a wonderful team of people. The team spirit was absolutely amazing.

During my volunteering at BRS, I worked closely with two advisers to support with varying needs. My key role was helping clients to access welfare benefits. GP, filling grant application, school registration for children, signposting, and referring clients to both internal and external services. I had the opportunity to interact with different nationalities and diverse cultural backgrounds

BRS is a wonderful organisation with dedicated staff and volunteers who are trying their utmost to support the most vulnerable members of society. I am pleased to say that working at BRS as a volunteer adviser equipped me to move into paid employment and gain a job at Groundwork. My special thanks must go to my mentor, Aisha Ahmed, whom without whose help and support I wouldn't have been able to find a paid job as an employment adviser.

Financial Information

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2020

Income Resources	2020 Unrestricted Funds £	2020 Restricted Funds £	2020 Total Funds £	2019 Total Funds £
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds				
Voluntary Income	27,265	15,828	43,093	91,574
Grants	0	124,956	124,956	76,765
Interest Receivable	267	0	267	193
Other incoming resources	0	414,741	414,741	296,413
Total incoming resources	27,532	555,525	583,057	464,945
Cost of Charitable Activities	25,727	524,650	550,377	447,873
Governance Costs	0	9,581	9,581	11,638
Total Resources Expended	25,727	534,231	559,958	459,511
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources - Before Transfers Between Funds	1,805	21,294	23,099	5,434
Gross Transfers Between Funds	20,000	20,000	0	0
Net Movement in Funds	(18,195)	41,294	23,099	5,434
Total Funds at 1 April 2019	40,778	23,789	64,567	59,133
Total Funds at 31 March 2020	22,583	65,083	87,666	64,567

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 02/09/2020. The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to Companies House. Copies of the 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 Association of Jewish Refugees
- 4 Atta & Co Solicitors
- 5 BAN Network
- 6 Barnet Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team
- 7 Barnet Healthwatch
- 8 Barnet Jobcentre Plus
- 9 Barnet Homes
- 10 Barnet Stand up to Racism
- 11 Barnet Mencap
- 12 Barnet Recovery Centre
- 13 Barnet Social Services
- 14 Barnet Multi Faith Forum
- 15 Barnet Volunteering Centre
- 16 Barnet Wellbeing Hub
- 17 Bishop Douglas School
- 18 Barnet Youth Foundation
- 19 Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust
- 20 Breaking Barriers
- 21 Brent Social Services
- 22 British Red Cross
- 23 Cambridge University
- 24 Camden Social Services
- 25 Community Focus (Articulate)
- 26 Child Poverty Action Group
- 27 Centre Point
- 28 Cotton Tree Trust
- 29 Colindale Communities Trust
- 30 Colindale Foodbank
- 31 Community Barnet
- 32 Doctors of the World
- 33 Dahlia Project
- 34 Dr Azim and Partners
- 35 Duncan Lewis Solicitors
- 36 Education Authority –Belfast
- 37 European Placement Network
- 38 Felix Project
- 39 Good for Goods
- 40 Grahame Park One Stop Shop
- 41 Give Togethers
- 42 Barnet Federated GPs
- 43 Great Ormond Street Hospital
- 44 Ground Work
- 45 Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group
- 46 Helen Bamber Foundation
- 47 Hendon Jobcentre
- 48 Homeless Action Barnet
- 49 Hestia
- 50 Harrow Food Bank
- 51 Host Nations
- 52 Hyde Children Centre
- 53 Inclusion Barnet
- 54 Islington Law Centre
- 55 Jewish Volunteering Network
- 56 Kew Gardens (Community Scheme)
- 57 Let' s Talk IAPT
- 58 LDS Charities Friendship Centre
- 59 Metropolitan Police
- 60 Middlesex University
- 61 Migrant Help
- 62 Meeting Point
- 63 Multilingual Wellbeing Service
- 64 North Locality Link Worker
- 65 National Zakat Foundation
- 66 North London Hospice
- 67 Onwards and Upwards (Leaving Care Team)
- 68 Pret a Manger
- 69 Project Seventeen
- 70 Refugees at Home
- 71 Refugee Action
- 72 Red Cross
- 73 Refugee Council
- 74 Refugee Women's Association
- 75 Refugee Support Network
- 76 Royal Air Force Museum, London
- 77 Sangam
- 78 Sufra NW London
- 79 Silver Birch Care
- 80 St Mungo's
- 81 Solace Womens Aid
- 82 The Network
- 83 The Sacred Heart Church, Mill Hill
- 84 The Tavistock & Portman NHS
- 85 The Ex- Detainee Project
- 86 Transitions Living
- 87 Trinity Church, North Finchley
- 88 Turning Point
- 89 University of Oxford
- 90 Victim Support
- 91 Wren Academy
- 92 Westminster Social Services
- 93 Wake Forest University (USA)
- 94 Young Barnet Foundation
- 95 Young Roots
- 96 Shubbak Festival
- 97 The Northern Ireland Education Authority
- 98 London Youth
- 99 Give Together
- 100 Coram
- 101 Brunel University
- 102 Westminster LAC & Leaving Care Service
- 103 Persia Advice Bureau
- 104 Alyth Drop in
- 105 Silver Birch Care Housing
- 106 Phase II Care Limited Housing
- 107 Higher Level Care
- 108 Wellspring Care Services
- 109 Brent LAC & Leaving Care Service
- 110 City Of London - Department of Community and Children's Services
- 111 Barnet Children's Services
- 112 Harness Care Co-Operative Limited
- 113 Taylis Homes
- 114 CASS Associates Harrow

**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]

**BARNET
REFUGEE
SERVICE**

