

Barnet Refugee Service

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15



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Foreword from the Chair



This year Barnet Refugee Service is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It is with a sense of achievement that we can look back over the last 10 years at all that has been done to support our refugee clientele and marvel at the very fact of our continued survival despite the constant financial challenges.

Even as a small charity, we are delighted not only to have stayed afloat but to have been able, for another year, to sustain and extend the range of services you will read about in this Annual Report.

This could not have been achieved without the commitment and dedication of our Director, staff and volunteers in understanding and supporting the cause of asylum seekers and refugees and wanting to make a difference to the lives of those who have arrived here seeking refuge from unimaginably difficult circumstances in their home country. The Trustees extend their sincere gratitude to our Director Dr. Nazee Akbari, our fantastic staff team and all our wonderful volunteers.

We thank also our funders for their confidence in our work and also our many, many donors throughout Barnet who support us individually and through their own communities. Their donations have all been vital in sustaining our work. Our gratitude also to all our clients from whom we continue to learn so much.

We know that we will meet challenges year on year to fund our work as we continue to offer much needed services and to match these services to changing and unmet needs.

We invite you to join us in celebrating ten years of positive development, real achievement and active support for this group of people in our community and once again we thank everyone who has shared the journey with BRS this far.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Message from the Director



I am immensely proud to present our Annual Report 2014-15 which coincides with Barnet Refugee Service's 10th anniversary as an independent charity. The report which reveals the hard work of our dedicated colleagues and volunteers, who make a real difference to the lives of many refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

For the past 10 years Barnet Refugee Service has supported the most vulnerable people in our community. Building on the strengths and resilience of those it works with, our Integrated Holistic Model of Support assists refugees to move forward in their new lives in the UK. When it comes to finding a home, undertaking studies, gaining employment, making connections in the community and developing a sense of belonging, BRS is there at every step of the journey. Whilst refugees endure unimaginable difficulties and trauma in their journey to safety, they also hold an unshakable hope for a better future. They dream of peace, freedom and the opportunity to realise their aspirations.

2014/15 was a year of extreme humanitarian challenges. The number of displaced people worldwide is now the highest since the aftermath of the Second World War. With demand for our services increasing we have a challenging time ahead, but these challenges bring with them great opportunities. We will continue to work towards building an inclusive society where all people are valued. I cannot begin to describe the extraordinary courage, resilience and

of the people we work with. By delivering the services we do, we are providing the opportunity, as directed by our mission, to give refugees the chance to be a part of our community, our economy, our country.

I am greatly indebted to our funders, partners, donors and those who have supported us for the past few years. In particular I would like to express my gratitude to those who have asked their friends and family to donate to BRS for birthdays or other occasions. My deep-felt appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees and the Management Committee who have given me and the team ongoing support and motivation. I would like to mention the continuing, sometimes daily support from our Treasurer Ponusamy Karunaharan, who has been like a rock in our sometimes uncertain situations and I am forever grateful to him for his support and solidarity.

We work in a sector that receives the least support, deals with the most complex problems and is issued with the least amount of resources, but as a team we are determined to deliver world-class services that give people the opportunity to thrive. The BRS team is looking forward to the next chapters of our journey, which is already underway. Our strategic plan is under review and has bold initiatives and ideas, whilst remaining true to our mission.

This report reflects the increased trust and confidence that beneficiaries, partners, donors and the funders have shown BRS. We will do our best to live up to these expectations by doing our utmost to provide more and better support in order to help refugees and asylum seekers to help themselves.

Nazee Akbari
Executive Director

Organisational Chart



Trustees Serving in 2014-15 Were:

Zoe Aslanpour (Chair)
 Ponusamy Karunaharan (Treasurer)
 David Levey (Secretary)
 Peter Salomon
 Roger Selby
 Shubhi Raymond
 Tanya Novick
 Golnar Bokhaie (Co-opted Oct 2014)

*Board of Trustees: from left sitting Shubhi Raymond, Tanya Novick, Zoe Aslanpour
 From left standing: Peter Salomon, David Levey, Ponusamy Karunaharan, Roger Selby*



Our Staff



Nazee Akbari
Executive Director



Nousheen Ashtiani
Health & Social Care
Advisor



Jana Gigl
Volunteers Coordinator
(on maternity leave from Oct 2014)



Farida Stanikzai
Volunteers Coordinator
(Joined Oct 2014)



Leila Shams
Administrator/Health
Volunteering Coordinator



Shahrzad Pourabdullah
Emotional Support Officer



Josephine Durosimi-Etti
Integration/Finance Officer



Anita Koci
Sessional Youth worker



Caroline Victor
(left January 2014)
ESOL Coordinator/Teacher



Sara Hesabi
ESOL Teacher



Tanya Novick
Women's Group
Coordinator



Alison Stein
Mum's & Tots Group Coordinator



Abdul Moghrabi
Men's Group Coordinator

Director's Report

Annual Report for the year 2014/15

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

Introduction

Barnet Refugee Service is situated at:

8th Floor

Hyde House

The Hyde

London NW9 6LH

Telephone 020 8905 9002

Fax 020 8905 9003

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

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

Registered Charity: 1107965

Company Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Incorporated as company September 2004

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

Financial Statement

A summary of our audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 can be found on page 24.

The Board of Trustees is satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31st March 2015 and considers that the charity is in a position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

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

operating costs.

Current Funding

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

- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The City Bridge Trust
- European Fund
- The Hilden Charitable Fund
- The John Lyon's Charity
- Health & Social Care Volunteering Fund
- The Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- 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 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 unjust. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, immigration status, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

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

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

Our Vision:

Through its work BRS envisages:

1. A future where Refugees and asylum seekers recognize themselves and are recognized by others as human beings of equal status in society.
2. A greater understanding and positive image in the wider community of the contribution made by refugees and asylum seekers and the issues which they have to deal with.
3. Quicker and greater integration of refugees and asylum seekers through access to improved services particularly in health, housing,

education and employment.

4. Greater understanding among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and responsibilities.
5. A well established and accessible Barnet Refugee Service, working impartially in partnership with other relevant organisations to identify and meet the changing needs of refugees and asylum seekers.
6. Enabling a fuller contribution of refugees to civic life through the promotion of social cohesion.
7. Local policies and services which reflect the needs of diverse asylum seeker and refugee communities.
8. A more powerful voice for refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet and neighbouring boroughs.

Our Objectives

1. To provide information, advice and support services to asylum seekers and refugees
2. To help promote equality of access to health care, social care, housing, legal representation, education and training for asylum seekers and refugees.
3. To provide and enhance educational and employment opportunities available for asylum seekers and refugees.
4. To increase awareness of the needs, rights and entitlements of asylum seekers and refugees in relation to health, social care, housing, training, education and employment.
5. To act as an information resource for statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and the wider community.
6. To ensure that service providers deliver culturally sensitive and appropriate services to asylum seekers and refugees.
7. To assist destitute and/or homeless refugees and asylum seekers to access emergency food and support.

Director's Report

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 and social activities to young refugees and asylum seekers to develop their confidence and skills.

Fundraising Strategy

The Board of Trustees has established a Funding and Finance Strategy Committee who develop and monitor the progress of their fundraising strategy. It is the aim of BRS to meet its funding needs through several funding bodies.

Our community fundraising committee works hard to maintain the funding stream through donations from members, local businesses and organizations and the general public.

Donations

We received over £5000 cash donations from many individuals, organisations and faith groups. Thanks to the generosity of the public and the hard work of our dedicated volunteers we raised over £2000 through LLST Sponsored Walk.

We cannot name the countless individuals and organisations who have given their generous support in so many ways. Without their goodwill we would be unable to provide our vital emergency support. We would particularly like to thank, all schools and faith groups for their on-going support. During the year food was donated from

numerous churches, temples, synagogues and schools for Harvest Collections. Although we had closed our emergency support Drop in, we managed to give out food parcels to destitute asylum seekers from our office. It was not practical to value these vital donations but we believe the retail value to be in excess of £3000.

We particularly would like to thank Pret A Manger and Lola's Cake at Brent Cross, for their weekly food/cake donations to our Men's Group.

For our end of year party we were donated many gifts from various sources and for the 7th year running we received a massive donation of brand new stationery as gifts for children from the Fila-Dixon Group.

Case Study 1

KS is from Afghanistan. He claimed asylum in July 2009. His asylum claim was refused in September 2009. His legal representative helped him and made a further submission about his asylum. The Home Office confirmed that they would consider his further submission and since then he is waiting to hear from the Home Office.

The Barnet Refugee Service adviser helped him to apply for support (accommodation and £35 weekly supermarket voucher) under section 4 of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999 in November 2014. He is still waiting to hear from the Home Office.

KS has got severe health issues. He is under regular treatment from The Vascular Malformation Service at the Royal Free Hospital. He has extensive right shoulder and neck vascular malformation which has been exacerbated over the last seven years following a bomb blast in Afghanistan.

He is not receiving any welfare benefits. He was sofa-surfing with different friends and now lives in a friend's garage.

KS comes every other week and collects a £10 voucher to buy food. Our thanks to London Churches Refugee (Hardship) Fund who gave us £500 grant to assist destitute asylum seekers like KS.

Director's Report

Advice

We provide advice, information and support to refugees and asylum seekers on a variety of issues, promoting equal access to services, particularly health. We have seen 1064 clients (which includes over 320 new clients) and handled over 6678 enquiries including 1905 cases during the last year. (Please see charts on page ?).



We maintained strong links with other advice providers with whom we cross refer. We continued offering legal services by providing a fortnightly immigration advice surgery in partnership with Ata & Co Solicitors.

Outreach advice clinics

Our team of advice workers offered outreach clinics in 3 locations across the borough of Barnet.

- Advice and Information Centre, Edgware Community Hospital on Tuesday afternoons
- Barnet College, Graham Park Campus Fridays
- Edgware Community Hospital, Refugee Clinic on Friday afternoons

Health work

Much of our work is directly health-focused such as the advice work where we saw clients with over 1000 health related enquiries. During the 2014/15 our health focused activities included:

- Health access and health promotion workshops for our clients
- Policy work with NHS Barnet. Actively involved with NHS Barnet's policy and strategy planning with regards to refugees and asylum seekers, policy work around using interpreters
- Development of our mental health support project supporting

young refugees

- Mothers & Toddlers Group to promote a healthy Life Style by health promotion workshops
- Production of an illustrated handbook for Maternity Dept by our ESOL teachers for mothers with limited or no English
- Running ESOL classes with emphasis on vocabulary for visiting the doctor and health related subject
- Health promotion workshops for young refugees through our youth activities
- Active partnership with the Multilingual Wellbeing Service, in partnership with 3 other organisations and NHS Barnet focusing on better wellbeing of ethnic minorities in Barnet.
- 3 outreach surgeries across the borough with 2 based at Edgware Hospital.
- Fully participated in Barnet mental health partnership Board meeting and other similar network meetings i.e. Mental Health Network meeting, or Multicultural Network meeting
- Policy work with NHS: Acting as an external auditor of the NHS North Central London Equality Impact Analysis (EQIA) Audit group. Focusing on our client group our views and opinions will help NHS North Central London deliver equitable commissioning and help to meet our public sector equality duties.
- Organised a focus group together with two other organisations (Chinese Mental Health Association and Barnet Asian Women Association) to work closely with the commissaries of NHS Barnet and the Council, to plan the future delivery of services in line with the council's targets.
- Close partnership work with researchers i.e. Hertfordshire University, Middlesex University etc
- As a planning group member, we participated in organizing the

Director's Report

Barnet mental Health Event

- Working in partnership with Refugee Women Association and attracting 2.5 years funding from Health and Social Care Volunteering Fund with the aim of providing 24 walking therapy sessions, 15 workshops on food and nutrition for our clients and 15 health-focused mums & tots groups

- Series of therapeutic weekly activities for refugee women with mental health problems, victims of DV, torture and rape. In partnership with artsdepot through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, art & craft, poetry, dance etc

- Working in partnership with Iranian Kurdish Women's Association and attracted funding from the European Fund. This project was focused on women on dependent visa with the focus on integration and tackling isolation. Within this project we provided emotional support with one to one counselling, volunteering, ESOL classes and workshops.

- Series of therapeutic weekly activities for refugee women with mental health problems, victims of DV, torture and rape. In partnership with artsdepot through our Women's Group, Jasmine. i.e. music therapy, art & craft, poetry, dance etc

- Series of therapeutic weekly activities to refugee men with mental health problems encouraging social interactions tackling isolation
In addition to the above BRS has been actively involved with NHS Barnet's different activities to promote better health within the community i.e. Flu jabs etc.

We are a resource to be drawn upon by health professionals to support them to better understand the needs of this client group and to support them.

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

We have been liaising and worked with service providers, in

particular health professionals, statutory and voluntary sector staff to raise awareness about the physical and mental health needs of asylum seekers and refugees. In the past we used to provide training for service providers on refugee health issues but this year, due to cuts and shortage of staff we did not feel the demand was there. We redesigned our training program and instead attending different network meetings and used the opportunity to talk about our clients and their needs. We provided 4 refugee awareness talks to our local schools in their assemblies, attended Leaving Care Team meetings and had one to one meetings with those who were willing to know more about refugee issues.

Health Access Workshops

We are performing an essential link between NHS Barnet and refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet through our workshops and user group and as a patient representative, helping to increase understanding and raise awareness amongst health professionals of refugees' needs and issues and amongst refugees of their rights to health and their responsibilities in using the services.

8 Health Access workshops have been delivered to students of our ESOL classes, our Mums & Tots group and women's group. This total number of 96 people benefited from these sessions.

The aim of these health talks is to ensure our client group is using health services adequately and appropriately. It covers the common services available, how to access them, what to do in an emergency or at the weekend or evening.

At these talks it was stressed how this information should be passed around to all friends and family and a resource pack including information on local services was distributed.

Director's Report

Meeting our Targets

We have met or exceeded all of the targets agreed with our funders which include:

- 1064 clients accessing our services with 320 new clients
- 6678 advice/general enquiries
- 326 client visits to emergency support drop in services
- 10 health promotion workshops
- 12 workshops on accessing health, housing and welfare benefits
- 309 clients accessed our service through outreach surgeries
- 81 users accessed employment and volunteering opportunities
- Over 50 women registered in our Jasmine
- Over 100 young people involved with our successful Youth Work projects
- 139 clients attended our Immigration Drop in with visiting solicitors
- Successful ESOL provision including 45 health related lessons
- Successful Girl's Group work in Partnership with Whitefield School
- Successful Mothers & Toddlers Group in partnership with the Hyde Children Centre
- Successful Men's Group
- Job Club – 8 volunteers managed to get into paid employment
- Domestic Violence Befriending program
- Provision of a Holistic Model of Support including volunteering, emotional support, structured ESOL training and advice

Health Promotion workshops

During the past year, 10 Health Promotion workshops have been delivered to members of our women's group, ESOL students, Volunteers, Men's group and our Mum's & Tots group. The workshops were delivered by multilingual wellbeing services, Director of BRS, a GP trainee, Fire brigade and other voluntary organisations and included topics such as Assertiveness, Parenting Teenagers, Women's and Children's health, Healthy

Eating, How to keep children's teeth healthy, Children's Development, First Aid, Fire Safety, Healthy Mind Healthy Body, Mindfulness etc. Total number of 135 people benefited from these sessions. We also provided health focused workshops for our young people at our social club, Drug and Alcohol, Domestic Violence amongst Young People, Gang Violence and Knife Crime, CEPO/ Safer use of internet, Sexual Health, Smoking cessation, Healthy eating and Cooking sessions, Personal Hygiene and Pampering and Self-defense - Martial Arts.

Multilingual Wellbeing Service (MWS)

Multilingual Wellbeing Services is a consortium of Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee community organisations in Barnet with an expertise in mental health and wellbeing. The consortium was set up in June 2010 as a separate legal entity and got registered as a Charity in 2012. The partner organisations are Barnet Refugee Service, Chinese Mental Health Association and Farsophone Association. As a board member and an active member of this consortium during the past year BRS has been MWS to achieve its aims and objectives. We also supported MWS to achieve its targets agreed with its main funder, Big Lottery Fund. The aim of this project is to improve the mental health of BMER communities in Barnet by increasing their knowledge and confidence in accessing support, supporting BMER mental health services to provide support to others suffering mental distress in their community. We are pleased to announce that this project is flourishing continuously providing mental health promotion workshops, training mental health advocates, recruiting volunteers from different communities and providing counselling services in a range of different community languages either through partners or through Associate Counsellors. MWS is currently working in partnership with Surrey & Boarder Partnership Foundation NHS Trust as part of providing Improvement Access to Psychological services (IAPT) in Barnet.

 MWS
Multilingual Wellbeing Services

Director's Report

Health First Volunteering Project



We successfully run our Health First Volunteering Project in partnership with Refugee Women's Association for the second year. The aim of this program is to improve the quality of life and promote

the physical, social and mental well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, helping to reduce health inequalities, social exclusion and poverty enabling integration. In order to support good physical and mental health of our clients, led by volunteers, this program has been delivering series of healthy food and nutrition workshops, Walking Therapy, Yoga and Mindfulness sessions as well as health promotion workshops for Mums & Toddlers. Our special thanks go to our dedicated volunteers and Leila Shams to manage this project.



World Mental Health day In Barnet 2014



Once again BRS as planning group member, alongside over 15 other organisations marked the World Mental Health Day with a free event open to the public and consisting of fun activities, live music, dancing as well as presentations. The event, which was jointly organised by voluntary organisations, Barnet Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust and Barnet Local Authority was held at St Mary's Church Hall at Finchley targeting the service users and the members of the public. This was to raise awareness around mental illness, promote mental health services in Barnet and to work in harmony to end the negative connotation of mental illness.

Case Study 2

P is a refugee from Iran who came to the UK in 2013 together with her husband and 6 year old son.

She was referred to BRS through social services after she was moved to London from Bristol following experiencing Domestic Violence.

P was suffering from severe depression, was living in a poor housing, could not access benefit and she was unfamiliar with the system in London.

What BRS did for P:

- Through our advice team, we supported her to find a suitable accommodation, applied for welfare benefit, Housing benefit and all other benefits she was entitled to
- Found a suitable local school for her child
- Got her and her son with a local GP
- Referred her to our Women's Group where she found new friends and received support with her emotional problems through peer support and psych-social activities
- Referred her to Farsophone Counselling Service together with her son as she was having difficulty to cope with the child's behaviour after the separation
- Supported her a volunteering opportunity where she led on our Mum's & Toddlers Group
- Our emotional support team managed to get the husband involved in support of the child through smooth and calm discussions, something which had never happened before. They both are talking in a civilised manner now.
- As Z is a very good cook, our Volunteers Coordinator managed to find her a placement in a café where she worked as a volunteer chef for 3 months
- Z is now offered a part time paid job in the same Café as a Chef.

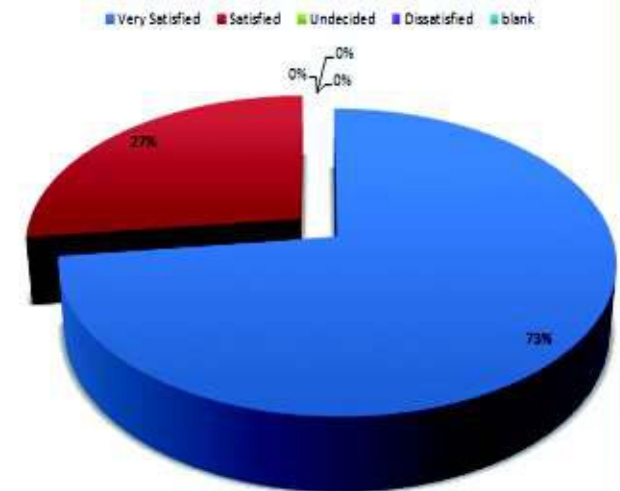
P is still volunteering with BRS and is able to cope with her day to day life a lot better. She has been supporting other women similar to her own situation through volunteering for BRS. Her feedback on the holistic support BRS provided her with says:

"...when I came to London I was so scared, I did not know anybody, I was suicidal, lonely and mentally and physically so ill. I felt I was not able to cope with my son's demand. BRS supported me like a mother and gradually helped me to find my way to have a normal stable life. I feel so positive that I can work and earn money now, BRS helped me to find my lost self again. Without BRS's help I might have been dead by now."

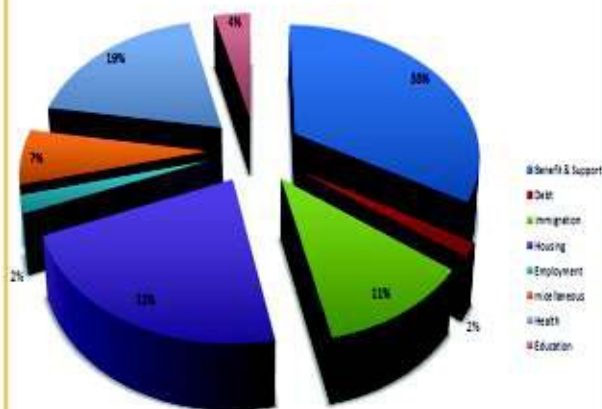
Customer Satisfaction Survey

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

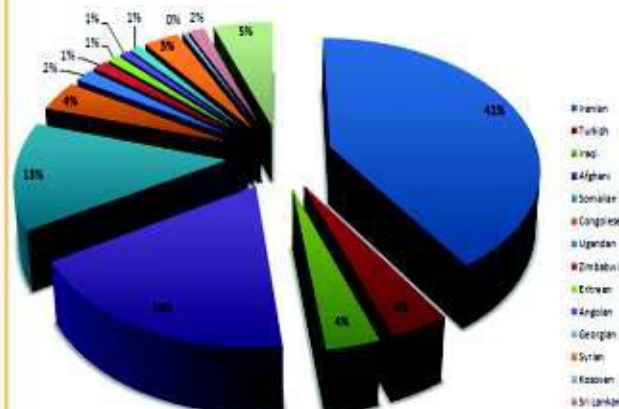
Throughout 2014/15 we randomly selected clients who had used our services and gave them questionnaires. Over all 150 questionnaires were distributed, and, from these, out of that 118 were returned. According to the CLS / CDS Client Feedback Guide a normal response is between 25 – 30 %. Our response therefore is a healthy 78%. Out of the 118 questionnaires returned 73% felt 'very satisfied' with our services and 27% 'Satisfied'. Over all 67% felt the service they received improved the quality of their life. To access the full report on our client's evaluation please contact our office.



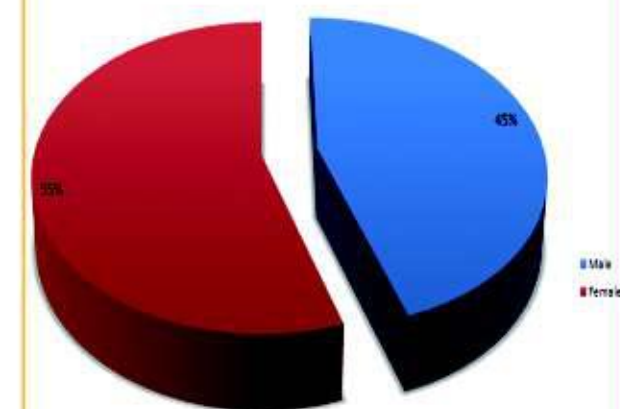
Enquiry Areas 2014-15



Where our clients come from?



Clients by Gender



ESOL Classes

“Cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another.”

(Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, p. 38)

From the above definitions the concept of community cohesion seems to be straightforward, based upon people living together by adapting to each other and responding to emerging demographical changes. For such adaptation, the ability to speak English is regarded as a key factor in promoting the way newly-arrived migrants and immigrants live with those who have made a long-term commitment to living here.



ESOL Team from right: Alison Stein, Farida Stanikzai, Heather Gross, Catriona Pickard, Helen Stone, Elizabeth Perrot, Kathryn salomon, Ros Stains, Rosemary Biseo, Orna Almagor

Not in the picture: Caroline Victor, Sara Hesabi, Sandra Green, Vivian Chapman, Penny Rae, Barbara Goldstein, Susan Stewart, Raji Karunaharan, Sheeba Edgeerton, Anne Perez, Laila Salam, Catriona Pickard, Sylvia Sander, Mojdeh Hajifathaliyan, Monira Hosseini



The Census 2011 data shows that over 50% of London residents are from black and minority ethnic communities and have the lowest rates of employment. According to the report of the GLA Report 2012 “Migrant workers make a positive contribution to the London economy.

ESOL is essential as it helps London benefit from the skills refugees and migrants bring with them as well as ensuring the language skills needed for safe working practices for the substantial teams of staff for example London’s offices and workplaces. Being able to speak English not only enables people to get jobs, it also encourages integration and a cohesive society, develops family capital and improves health and wellbeing. Supporting those furthest from the workplace and with the poorest skills is of paramount importance to make London a stable and integrated city. London needs ESOL. It needs to enable people to acquire language skills to be able contribute positively to the London economy.”

For the seventh year running, our ESOL project has had a busy and fruitful year. Due to increasing demand for English classes we managed to expand our ESOL provision and held nine classes per week working at five different levels with over 90 students. We have a highly dedicated and enthusiastic team of qualified volunteer teachers and additional helpers who have managed to keep the classes going. The students come from many different countries around the world. Many topics have been covered within the classes with a large amount of time being spent on health issues.

There is a true sense of respect and community amongst the students. They have a chance to experiment with their English, express their worries, and realise they are not isolated anymore. These lessons not only provide a meeting point for refugees, but also provide some kind of structure to their day. They can build on their confidence at their own pace.

We feel we have had a successful year and our special thanks must go to our donors and our dedicated teaching team. Our special thanks also goes to Caroline Victor for the excellent job she has been doing as the ESOL Coordinator and her on-going support.

“I can now speak to my son’s teacher!”

Women's Group (Jasmine)

For the 8th year running, the Jasmine Women's Group continues to meet every Tuesday at the artsdepot to participate in the programme led by arts consultant Poppy Szaybo. The aim of this project is to support isolated BMER women and specifically supporting those with mental health issues through psych-social activities.

The attendance has been on average 15 participants each week from 11 different countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, the Congo, Eritrea, Turkey (Kurdish,) Zimbabwe, Kosovo. Newcomers have come via friends from within the group, but referrals are also received from outside agencies such as social services, women refuges, GPs, IAPT and refugee organisations.

In the sessions, we continue to concentrate on English, spoken & written. We play word games – our equivalent of hangman,



crosswords etc – based on recent outings etc. We also play board games for fun but also to improve English – Scrabble, Boggle etc.

We also have outings in good weather to parks. We have visited museums & art galleries, eg Tate Modern, Victoria & Albert, Mall Galleries, Geffrye Museum usually with a workshop there followed up by activities back at the artsdepot based on the recent visit.

During the past year Jasmine participated in a 6 week drama project at the artsdepot. We continue to utilise skills from within the group.

"Our life is a very bad life, but we come to the group to feel better. Too much stress and thinking in the house. When we come here everything is out of my head, no thinking about the Home Office, bad life. I am happy here. We talk, laugh and are happy"

We have had Health workshops in conjunction with the Multi-lingual Wellbeing service on different aspects of mental & physical health eg stress management, depression, healthy eating, stroke, breast cancer, diabetes, dementia. Where possible we have also had an interpreter to help those whose English is weak to be fully included in the health sessions. This has proved most valuable.



We feel we have had another flourishing year. Our special thanks must go to our donors, the Hilden Trust for their continued funding and generous donation from Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue. We also thank our art consultant, Poppy Szaybo, our dedicated volunteers and in particular our women's group co-ordinator Tanya Novick.

With also thank Yarok (greengrocer) & Orli Café, both of Edgware who supply Jasmine with fruit, bread & cakes to help the sessions go well.



LT Project

Life Transformation Project

We are pleased to report on our successful Life Transformation (LT) Project. Funded by European Social Fund for 14 months this project was set up in partnership with two other organisations, Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO) and Refugee Women's Association (RWA) in June 2014. With IKWRO being the lead partner, this project was based on their experience working with third country nationals on their other project funded by European Fund, feedback of need analysis from two other partner organizations, RWA and BRS, as well as external reports produced by the external bodies i.e. Middlesex University 2011, or Migration Observatory 2013. It was confirmed that women, particularly recent arrivals are more isolated than men in their activities, with daily



lives revolving around childcare and domestic tasks. Being dependent on male relatives increases their vulnerability as lack of English language skills prevents them accessing mainstream services.

Through this project we aimed to increase integration and address isolation through intensive support; develop new ways of teaching English such as voice coaching and mentoring/volunteering to help them feel more confident; provide intensive support through information, advice and emotional support.

LT Project at BRS

Through LTP project, we were responsible to deliver the Information, Advice and Guidance, structured ESOL classes, Volunteering Program, Emotional Support and Educational Outing and Workshop.

Information, Advice and Guidance

We are providing information and guidance to the clients which includes support on their practical issues such as, housing, welfare, education for themselves and their families, referral to solicitors on DV cases, finding shelter on DV cases, referral to social services, referral to our ESOL classes, referral for emotional support, raising fund for individuals experiencing financial hardships and many more.



Skills for life ESOL

We are delivering structured ESOL classes with the aim of priorities 4 terms of classes throughout the life of the project. It is for the participants to learn English and develop skills for life preparing them to sit for an exam at the end which will help them in their term and future application for citizenship. All students attend an assessment session to measure their level of English. Student are attending the sessions twice a week and those with children have an opportunity to leave their children with a registered nursery all paid for. All their travelling expenses are also paid. Students sit for an exam at the end. To date 90% of our students passed their exam.

"I was stuck at home for 7 years, this project helped me to move on..."
(48 year old from Afghanistan)

LT Project

Volunteering Program

BRS has years of experience delivering volunteering programs. Our experience shows that volunteering opportunities help immigrants to gain confidence, self-discipline and is a positive way to integration. It will also be a path into employment which can affect people's mental health and confidence. Many of the clients within the LT project are well educated in their own country but their qualifications are not recognized here. The volunteering program within the LT program has been a true success. As volunteers, the service users are helping to deliver this and BRS's other projects and working alongside people from the native community to come together in helping overcome issues such as unemployment, lack of English language, low skills, and local knowledge. It is also building understanding, tolerance and cross-culture friendships. Through their volunteering experience we are providing them with one to one regular supervision and supporting them to write their CVs, improve their interview skills and even find placement outside BRS. To date, with our support, we have had three clients from LT project who have managed to get into paid employment.

Educational Workshops

Our clients have poor linguistic skills and little or no knowledge of the British "system". They have also had little contact with the native British or BME communities. All of these facts slow their integration with the wider community. Through LT Project we have provided community cohesion workshops including understanding the concept of integration, learning about local and national government, voting rights, women's rights in the UK i.e. Domestic Violence as well as educational visits to museums etc.

Emotional Support

Many of women attending the LT Project have had small or non-existent social networks. They are extremely isolated. A few of them have had traumatic experiences including DV, torture, loss, so this activity has been vital for the women who are using this service. We are providing one to one emotional support to those who sought this service. We pay their travelling expenses. Our Emotional Support officer's role does not end in providing just one to one sessions. She is there to make sure the clients are accessing mental health services appropriately.



"I don't feel useless anymore, volunteering helped me to find myself again, I have a part time job now".

(31 year old from Iran)



Director's Report



Men's Breakfast Club

We are pleased to report the success of our Men's Group for the 4th year running. Led by Abdul Moghrabi alongside other two very dedicated volunteers, the club provides a healthy breakfast and creates a friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the West Hendon Community

Centre to refugee and asylum-seeking men. On average 10 men attend from different countries including Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Algeria, Ethiopia, Yemen, Congo, the Lebanon & Pakistan. The participants are able to take part in psycho-social activities i.e. yoga classes, English improvement sessions, educational board games and outings. They will also have opportunity to enjoy breakfast, read a newspaper & socialise in a friendly atmosphere. In addition we run health promotion workshops for them and attend to any problems that the participants may be experiencing.

We are deeply grateful for the support of Prêt à Manger & Lola Cakes for their supplies of food and Barnet Homes for providing us with a reduced rate venue.

We are also very thankful to our committed volunteers, without whom the club could not exist and in particular our Men's Club's Coordinator, Abdul Moghrabi.



The "Little Treasures" Mums' and Toddlers'

Our "Little Treasures" Mums' and Toddlers' group is flourishing constantly. And we are pleased to report on this successful project for the 5th time. This project is in partnership with the Hyde Children Centre where every Monday morning an

average of 8 refugee women come along with their babies and pre-school toddlers. Sessions are held in cheerful, modern surroundings, in a room well-stocked with toys, games and art materials, and with access to its own outdoor play area. There is always a minimum of two volunteers on hand to share the tasks of both occupying the children and of doing ESOL with their mothers. Lessons are geared to Pre-Entry level, as many of the mums speak little or no English. One or two of the volunteers do speak community languages. Lessons are health focused, with practical vocabulary - parts of the body, food, safety in the house, and conversation practice involves talking about, for instance, daily routines, going shopping, and going to the doctor. The group is relaxed, very sociable - and extremely willing to help one another, and to join in singing games and action songs with their children.

"Little Treasures" is well-integrated with the Children's Centre. Our special thanks must go to the Hyde Children Centre for accommodating this group and their staff. The feedback from the attendees confirms that this is a well - placed partnership which maximises the support the mothers are getting. During the past year series of health focused workshops were delivered to this group i.e. Healthy Eating, Oral Hygiene for the kids, Breast Awareness etc. Our special gratitude goes to Alison Stein, who has been coordinating and financially supporting this group.

Director's Report

London Legal Support Sponsored Walk

This year the capital's generous legal profession has broken all previous records and raised over half a million pounds for the provision of free specialist legal advice. The tenth anniversary of the London Legal Walk took place on 19th May 2014 and had 8,000 walkers who have to date raised over £560,000, more than any other year. The evening turned out to be perfect for our team and the 8,000 others on the Legal Support Trust 10K Charity Walk.

our thanks go to our dedicated 15 walkers who raised over £2000 in sponsorship, a really remarkable achievement in the midst of a recession. This is a brilliant achievement during a time when all talk was of spending cuts, higher taxes and general gloom. The fund raised by our walkers went directly to BRS and made a significant contribution to our vital advice service for our clients who have fled persecution and seek asylum and a chance to rebuild their shattered lives. Our special thanks go to the walkers and most importantly all the sponsors who generously sponsored our walkers to raise funds for this important cause.



Drop In for Destitute Asylum Seekers



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

We have been running a Drop In to support destitute asylum seekers since 2006 and due to lack of funding for the past 3 years, we have been operating this project from our main office in Hyde House. This essential project has continued to flourish with 670 visits last year. Our Drop in is currently providing emergency food and clothing to destitute asylum seekers. This service has been funded by kind donations of individuals and local faith groups. During the year food was donated from numerous schools, individuals, churches, temples and synagogues. Our special thanks go to all those who donated their harvest collection to BRS, in particular St Mary-at-Finchley Church, Churches together, Colindale School and many more.

Director's Report

End of Year Party 2014

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

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

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

Once again this year's party was organised in partnership and with the support of North Western Reform Synagogue (Alyth) and St Matthias Church. The party was held at St Matthias Community Centre, Colindale on Monday 22nd December 2014. It was great pleasure to have the participation of Barnet's Mayor Cllr Hugh Raynor and mayoress Susan Ryanor.

Over 320 clients attended at least half of whom were children. There was food, live music, entertainment including a children's club as well as Santa Claus who handed out 175 presents to the kids. We were fortunate to have the help of over 30 volunteers without whose participation none of this would have been possible. The volunteers worked very hard and effectively together to facilitate the smooth running of the party. The partnership between St Matthias, BRS and Alyth worked

well with a great deal of input and collaboration from all three groups.

Our special thanks go to the local schools, faith groups and individual donors who provided us with cash and gifts for Santa's Grotto. In particular we would like to thank the Playwrite Group who once again donated a generous number of different types of gifts which we gave as presents to the children.



Director's Report

Case Study 3

Oma Almagor
Volunteer, Helper to ESOL



I started volunteering at BRS in September 2014, and am now in my second year assisting one of the volunteer ESOL teachers in the adult beginner's

literacy class and in the far more advanced class 3. Working together allows us to give individual attention to the students where it's needed and to enable more interactive learning. I have been very impressed and inspired by the commitment and enthusiasm of all the volunteer teachers at BRS. The students who come to our classes are keen to learn and very appreciative of the help they receive, making our job that much more enjoyable and rewarding. The atmosphere is always relaxed, friendly and supportive.

Recently, I have extended my volunteering to also assist the service's refugee advisors. BRS helps asylum seekers negotiate their way through a complex and, to them, foreign system in a foreign country with a foreign language. My background is in law and in my years working as a solicitor, I have always enjoyed the task of finding practical solutions to people's difficulties. So many asylum seekers have had to overcome immense hurdles over the years. I cannot think of many better or more deserving causes to work for. It's been a pleasure to contribute through BRS and I look forward to continuing to work here.

Case Study 4

Mozhdeh Hajifathaliyan
Volunteer ESOL Helper



Being a volunteer is a rewarding chance to offer a small token of appreciation to the community that has given me and my family a lot since I came to UK in 2013.

I came to know the BRS through social media about a year ago when I was looking for somewhere to get some help for my children to be integrated into this community. Dr. Nazee Akbari asked me to come into the centre for a consultation.

The atmosphere of BRS was so friendly that it has become a place where now I love to be working as teacher assistance which gives me the opportunity to help others in their first learning steps towards a brighter future. It was also a great privilege to get to know such nice colleagues and to learn from them. Hopefully I can be helpful to students who are coming to learn in our centre in order to reach their highest goal in forming a better future by integrating into the society.

Case Study 5

Heather Gross
Volunteer ESOL Teacher



In September 2014 after retiring from my post as assistant head teacher at a local secondary school, I approached the Barnet Refugee service and was

offered a place by Farida to teach ESOL to a group of 10-15 women from Afghanistan, Iran and Somalia for one and a half hours per week

At first this was rather daunting as the levels were very varied. Some of the women had never been to school and could therefore not read or write in their own language, while others had had some formal education. The atmosphere in the class was always extremely supportive with the more advanced pupils helping the less able. Everyone was friendly, co operative and responsive and we were all soon singing, playing games and exchanging recipes as well as learning basic English. The class especially enjoyed bringing items of clothing to the lessons to be used as props for the shopping project.

The pupils were always delighted to see my mother who acted as my assistant and produced a wealth of material each week One of the highlights was the party held at the end of term in December when the pupils all prepared a traditional sumptuous lunch which was absolutely delicious! Farida also arranged a trip to Kew gardens and a fabulous BBQ in the summer for all the volunteers at the allotment in East Finchley Volunteering at the Barnet Refugee Service has proved to be a most rewarding experience which I would highly recommend

Many thanks to Kathryn Salomon for her invaluable support.

Youth Activities



Throughout 2014/15 we continued with minimal resources but managed to continue our youth program and provided one to one and group advice, support, group activities and ultimately helping young refugees emotional and social developments in an informal setting but through educational processes, mostly in the borough of Barnet as well as neighbouring boroughs.

A positive approach to collaboration (partnership) with other organisations' statutory or non-statutory, is key to our work, with where resources are limited and services are being outsourced. We worked in partnership with Refugee Youth Project, Whitefield School, Graham Park Youth Centre, Children Services and Orion School.

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

Girls Group

Due to the fact that high number of refugee children is attending Whitefield School, we continued our work in partnership with the school running our Girls's Group on Tuesday after school time.

Girls group is a one year program encouraging young girls aged 12-16 year old to grow in confidence and self-esteem through having a little time, each Tuesday after school , just to be girls, to do what they want to do and talk about whatever they want to talk.

The group enjoys sessions on health and beauty, and particularly popular are arts and crafts activities. They also have cookery sessions, mosaic making, bakery and cake decoration, t-shirt painting, glass painting, outings, just to mention a few.

We also talk about friendship, peer pressure, feelings, exploitation, grooming, health and mental health risk and where to get help.

North London Global Gathering

For the eighth year going we continued our activities within our Youth Social Club but regrettably with limited activities due to the financial strain. This is a mixed group (boys and girls) aged 12-18 years old that met every Wednesday afternoon at Graham Park Youth Centre in Colindale, but due to the closure of this centre we moved this group to the Orion School in Mill Hill.

These young people are amongst the most vulnerable and challenging in the whole Borough of Barnet. Being new to the country, a lot of them have poor social skills and struggle with the basics.

Through our activities, we enable young people to develop their voice, influence, build confidence and place in the society while reaching their full potential.

With the help of John Lyons Charitable Trust we have been able to continue providing positive activities to young people. Graham Park Global Gathering together with the members of the Girl's Group participated in outings such as London Dungeon, cinema, barbecue etc.



Volunteering



"The best way to find your self is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Mahatma Gandhi



Volunteering is an essential part of all healthy and dynamic communities throughout the world, whether it is formal volunteering within organisations, or informal within communities. Volunteering in the UK has developed over the centuries to be a huge area of activity, with over 40% of the population volunteering formally, within complex structures and support mechanisms.

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

The relationships developed between UK volunteers and refugees when working alongside each other also help to promote mutual understanding between individuals and communities.

Volunteers are an essential force in delivering our activities. They provide support in every aspect of the service we provide: Advice, ESOL, peer support, Mother and Toddler Group, Women's Group, Employment support through our Job Club, Girls Group, Youth

Social Club, workshops, outings, Health Walks, Men's Breakfast Club, outreach, interpreting and event organisation. There have been a number of training sessions for Barnet Refugee Service volunteers internally and externally. There has been ongoing support to volunteers in various posts, including one-to-ones and supervisions. Some of our volunteers have also managed to secure volunteer placements in other organisations. To support the local community we also take students from local schools for work placements where they gain valuable work experience and an insight into charity work. We are proud to announce that through this successful program, 16 of our volunteers managed to get into paid employment.

We would like to thank our funder The City Bridge Trust for supporting this essential program. Also our special thanks go to our Volunteers Coordinators Jana Gigl and Farida Stanikzai. Jana has been coordinating our volunteers for the past 4 years till December 2014 when she went on maternity leave and Farida managed to continue her excellent work as her replacement maternity cover.

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



Our Volunteers



Trustees

Ponusamy Karunaharan
David Levey
Dr Zoe Aslanpour
Tanya Novick
Roger Selby
Shubhi Raymond
Peter Salomon
Golnar Bokaei

Men's Group

Abdulwahab Moghrabi
Vijah Depala
Alpha Jalloh
Shakib Murshed

Volunteer Advisers

David Bier
Sodabeh Gashtasebi

Events Volunteer

Razieh Noromand

Admin and Office Support

Zohreh Shahrabi
Suhad Adam
Elham Safenick
Sandy Planel

Finance and book-keeping

Fahimeh Afshinrad
Josephine Durosinmi-Etti

Women's Group

Tanya Novick
Elsa Shamash

Poppy Szaybo

Web Design/ IT Support

Vi Bang
Ersin Demirtassuhad
Saleh Mohamed Abuewilly

ESOL Volunteers

Kathryn Salomon
Sandra Green
Elizabeth Perrot
Ros Staines

Rosemary Biseo
Vivian Chapman

Penny Rae
Barbara Goldstein
Helen Stone

Susan Stewart
Solomon Amare Zewold

Raji Karunaharan
Sara Hessabi

Nigel Nicholson
Sheeba Edgeerton

Caroline Victor
Anne Perez

Laila Salam
Catriona Pickard

Orna Almagor
Sylvia Sander

Mojdeh Hajfathaliyan
Monira Hosseini

Heather Gross

Mother and Toddler Group

Alison Stein
Zohreh Shahrabi
Charlotte de Lord
Haura Almoathen
Rosalia Cavaliere
Sara Hessabi
Negar Khosravi
Fatima Najibullah
Zahra Khanum

Youth Work Volunteers

Yuko Kamogawa

Volunteer Interpreters

Francoise Mandungu
Sukran Anastasio
Fatemeh Beagzadeh
Ahlam Ahmed
Suhad Adam
Monique Ebrahimnia
Rahela Amiry

Volunteer Advocates

Helal Atayee

Health Walks

Viola Brisolin
Job Club
Victoria MacGregor-Osifeso

Graphic Design

Kamela Amiry
Saleh Bokharai
Manna Shamshiri



BRS Job Club

Through our day to day work with refugees we recognise how essential it is to secure employment when people are in the process of rebuilding their lives in an unfamiliar country. We also understand how difficult and confusing the process of finding a job in the UK can be. Our Job Club provides crucial 1-2-1 support to our clients to empower them to make their first steps into employment. We work with our clients to explore ways of removing individual barriers to employment and help to find ways how their skills and qualifications can be recognised in the UK.

Our volunteers meet with clients on a 1-2-1 basis to provide support in CV writing, searching for jobs and training opportunities, making personal decisions and how to manage their expectations.

We also deliver workshops on job interviews including UK culture and body language, how to answer difficult questions and mock interviews.



Financial Information

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2015

	2015 Unrestricted funds £	2015 Restricted funds £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Income resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income	13,203	22,383	35586	66,788
Grants	-	82908	82908	9226
Interest receivable	181	-	181	92
Incoming resources from charitable activities	-	98969	98969	97959
Total incoming resources	13384	204260	217644	174065
Cost of charitable activities	11,401	202,602	214003	171933
Governance costs	2,948	-	2948	2097
Total resources expended	14349	202602	216951	174030
Net incoming/ (outgoing) resources - before transfers between funds	(965)	1658	693	35
Gross transfers between funds	1,658	(1,658)	0	0
Net movement in funds	693	0	693	35
Total funds at 1 April 2014	52,550	0	52550	52515
Total funds at 31 March 2015	53243	0	53243	52550

Trustees Statement

These above accounts have been extracted from the accounts prepared by Ashley Nathoo & Co and were approved by the Trustees of Barnet Refugee Service on 11/11/2015. The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to Companies House in due course. If copies of full report are required they may be obtained from the Director of Barnet Refugee Service.

Zoe Aslanpour
Chair

Our Major Funders for 2014/15

- NHS Barnet & Barnet Council
- The City Bridge Trust
- European Fund
- The Hilden Charitable Fund
- The John Lyon's Charity
- Health & Social Care Volunteering Fund
- The Zakat Foundation
- The Catholic Women's League
- Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- London Churches Refugee Fund

Barnet Refugee Service Telephone 020 8905 9002
Fax 020 8905 9003

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

Barnet Refugee Service, 8th Floor, Hyde House, The Hyde
NW9 6LH

Email: advice@b-r-s.org.uk Website: www.b-r-s.org.uk
Charity Number: 1107965 Co Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595

Donations

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

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

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

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

Barnet Refugee Service
(Registered Charity No: 1107965)
Gift Aid Donation Form

Full Name

Address

Post Code

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

Signed

Date : ___/___/___

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

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



Immigration by: Bruno Catalano

BARNET REFUGEE SERVICE

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

