

Annual Report 2022 -2023





| | |
|---|-----------|
| Vision and Mission | 3 |
| Values | 4 |
| Chair's Report | 5 |
| Patron Statement | 6 |
| CEO & Deputy CEO Statement | 7 |
| Key Outputs | 8 |
| Mental Health | 9 |
| Our Services and Programmes | 10 |
| Casework | 11 |
| Resettlement | 13 |
| Reading City of Sanctuary | 16 |
| Drop-In Centre | 18 |
| Integration and Activities | 19 |
| Trans-National Research Project | 20 |
| Sanctuary Strikers | 21 |
| Campaigns | 22 |
| Fundraising and Communications | 23 |
| Special Thanks | 25 |
| BIG PLANS - Appeal | 27 |
| Corporate Partner - Appeal | 28 |
| Charity Partners | 29 |
| Volunteers | 30 |
| Staff Team | 31 |
| Trustee Profile | 32 |
| Trustees | 33 |
| Client Testimonies | 34 |
| Donate | 35 |
| RSG Unaudited Financial Accounts 2022-2023 | 36 |
| Trustees' Report | 37 |
| Statement of Financial Activities | 42 |
| Notes to the Accounts | 45 |
| Staff Testimony - Ozzy | 54 |
| Key Organisational Details | 55 |
| Legacy Appeal | 56 |



VISION AND MISSION

Our Vision and Mission statements define the work of the RSG.

Every year we will check to ensure our progress and achievements continue to reflect our commitments.

Our Vision

We are aiming to make Berkshire a supporting and inclusive society which embraces refugees and asylum seekers with humanity, respect and dignity.

Progress

As always, this is RSG's focus. We continue to campaign and advocate for refugees and asylum seekers throughout the County of Berkshire.

Through the work of Reading City of Sanctuary, the Berkshire community is becoming more aware of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers allowing them to get more involved in the community and to feel valued.

Our Mission

To improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers through advice and support which promote awareness and integration into the Berkshire community.

Progress

Our improving relationships with local partner charities help to encourage integration into Berkshire life, allowing all parts of the community to be accessible to refugees and asylum seekers.

Reading City of Sanctuary is making various community groups aware of the needs of those we help.



RSG VALUES

Our Values are set and remain central to the work of the RSG and guide the staff and trustees.

We review them every year to ensure we are upholding our values in everything we do.

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

There is much misinformation in the media and social platforms about refugees and asylum seekers and we have been vigorous in correcting the misconceptions generated.

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

We have continued to improve our relationships with different borough councils in Berkshire. Reading City of Sanctuary has also continued to spread awareness about refugees and asylum seekers in the county, and has created initiatives for our equality, diversity and inclusion strategies.

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

Throughout the year, we have campaigned to give effect to rights and responsibilities and to make sure that those with authority are held to account.

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

We would like to thank all the different charities and organisations we have partnered over the year; together we are creating a network of support for refugees and asylum seekers, and we are very grateful for all your help.

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

We have reviewed and improved our confidentiality policy, ensuring that all staff and volunteers are familiar with it.

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

We have reviewed our internal services and are working on plans to have a drop-in space wholly accessible to all.



Mike Martin MBE

Chair



In April 2022 when trustees were considering the budget, I remarked that our income had increased ten-fold in eight years with a big rise in staffing levels. However, another perspective occupied trustees during the year. With several contracts ending imminently, we could see a potential cash flow crisis with redundancies or service cuts. Happily, the team succeeded in securing new contracts and the continuation of our work. Nevertheless, it brought home to us the precarious reality of life in a local charity. When it comes to income generation we can never rest.

The Refugee Support Group is a membership organisation giving members the ultimate authority to elect trustees and approve our accounts. However, we are keen to go beyond these constitutional requirements by engaging members and our wider supporter base in our work. At our AGM in November 2022, we began a consultation with them which is ongoing. We hope that when we launch our new website, we can find more ways to interact with you, our members. You are important to us.

Also at the AGM, held in Newbury, members agreed to the change of name by dropping "Reading" from our title. We are proud of our history and origins as a Reading organisation but with our growth and services delivered in Wokingham and West Berkshire it was clearly inaccurate to present ourselves as a solely Reading organisation.

Our business plan is of fundamental importance in steering a course through the turbulent world of support for refugees and asylum seekers. In the latter part of this last year the trustees developed a new two-year plan. We consulted staff and users, much work was done by the Chief Executive and myself and our draft document was subject to intense debate at board meetings. For me it was very satisfying to see the competing, sometimes conflicting, perspectives distilled into a programme and direction that everyone could get behind. We also developed a marketing and fundraising plan giving us clear numerical targets for the income we hope to generate through our different fundraising activities.

The Refugee Support Group is all about teamwork. On behalf of the board, I want to thank our wonderful staff team - employees and volunteers - and I cannot finish without acknowledging the work of trustees who left during the year: Patrick Ismond, Richard Hanson-James and (special mention) our Treasurer Jon Linley. And a big welcome and thanks to those who joined during the year: Sam Lee, Sarah Seddon and Simon Price.



OUR PATRONS

"I feel that you are like my family at RSG and are helping me when everybody else has been turning me away" ~ RSG Client



Alf Dubs

Lord Alf
Dubs Labour Peer

This year has been tough for refugees and asylum seekers with the negatively changing views of the government and society on this group. I am impressed with their continuation to fight for refugee rights and how they have increased the support they offer for refugees and asylum seekers despite the turbulence they face in terms of public opinion on refugees and asylum seekers.

It has been another successful year for Refugee Support Group. The shift in public opinion highlights just how valuable the work of RSG is within Berkshire, with Reading City of Sanctuary helping local organisations to understand the needs of this vulnerable group.

Both RSG and I have publicly spoken against the Rwanda flights as they are inhumane and degrading on asylum seekers. I am proud to be supporting them and will continue to lobby for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.



+Olivia Graham

Reverend Olivia
Graham is the
Bishop of Reading.

This year Refugee Support Group has worked tirelessly to support refugees and asylum seekers – a task which is all the more needed as powerful voices in society call into question their rights, and our responsibilities towards these precious and vulnerable people.

This is an organisation which is marked out by the skill and dedication of wonderful staff, ever ready to adapt to the needs of the refugee community, and always willing to go the extra mile. In this they set us all a shining and inspiring example of how to listen to, and care for the most disadvantaged in our midst.

Being a patron of RSG is both a joy and a privilege. I look forward to supporting RSG for many more years to come and continue to pray for the impact of all they do. My heartfelt thanks to the staff and volunteers for all their incredible work.



CEO REPORTS



Nick Harborne
CEO

RSG is an amazing place to work. You meet some unforgettable people from all over the world. The desperation of some is heartbreaking. The gratitude others express gets you through to the next day. And you start all over again.

The staff at RSG are all compassionate colleagues, dedicated, experienced and resilient, but they are not superhuman. My biggest concern this year is the increased workload and stress faced by our team. We are working hard on our mental health well-being.

The mental health of asylum seekers trapped in dispersal accommodation is a big challenge we as a caring society face. We are proud of our achievements with our City of Sanctuary streams, which play a small part in helping to show refugees and asylum seekers that Berkshire is a place of welcome for all seeking sanctuary.



Flora Roshi
Deputy CEO

As a long-standing charity that since 1994 has supported asylum seekers and refugees in Berkshire, RSG demonstrates the compassion that drives us. The stories of clients navigating the UK's system are heartbreaking and become progressively more so. Our team – staff and volunteers – is faced with increased support demands. Funding is a challenge. It's the hard work of each colleague, volunteer, trustee, supporter and client that gives us hope. It's a privilege to work with you all.



KEY OUTPUTS

FUN FACTS:

Top 5 countries clients came from:

1. Afghanistan
2. Eritrea
3. Syria
4. Iraq
5. Sudan



Casework Team dealt with
529 clients
totalling over **1,568** hours



1,612
food parcels
distributed with
the help of
Readifoods and
Wokingham Food
Bank

50% OF STAFF ARE FROM BAMER COMMUNITIES *



25% OF STAFF AND TRUSTEES HAVE LIVED EXPERIENCE



4
The number of
active campaigns
that RSG got
involved with



Resettlement Team
supported
70 families
and **156**
people still in hotels



Our **49** volunteers have given
around **1,679** hours through this
year

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

*Office of Immigration Services Commissioner

*Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee



MENTAL HEALTH

Twice a year we conduct an internationally recognised wellbeing survey* across our service user community to ensure that our policies and services support our community's needs. This year has been disappointing, however that means we will strive to make sure that we can fulfil these failings.

2023 (2022) Results:

59.2% (56.1%) of RSG service users were found to be below the UK average for wellbeing.

24.48% (21.6%) of RSG service users were found to be below the score of 40 for the NHS low wellbeing threshold.

Positively, RSG service users have been feeling more optimistic about the future. However, the lowest score was in response to "I am feeling relaxed". This could be partially due to the hostile environment that has been created by those in power.

93.87% (65.9%) of service users were satisfied with the support and services of RSG.

What are we doing about it?

We have increased our signposting to well-being organisations, such as Hempen Farm and Together charity. We have also increased the support within the drop-in and Atrium to help create a space that is safer and that our clients feel comfortable in. We are focusing on each department to help understand how we can support our clients through these services better in order to improve satisfaction with support and services from RSG.

Forbury Gardens

It is RSG's belief that earlier and coordinated mental health intervention and support would have prevented the tragedy in Forbury Gardens in June 2020. RSG will continue to be involved in the inquiry held, as well as further sharing our experiences as we believe we can contribute immensely to these enquiries.

Staff

Our staff are the front line of the charity; we must monitor and protect our staff's wellbeing. Results from the survey show that the staff team feel stressed and overloaded. The management team and trustees are using this information to support the team. We have introduced access to counselling support 24/7 days a week. We have introduced a number of 'welfare days' and we offer flexible working where possible.



As a small charity, RSG aims to maintain a high level of transparency, trust and accountability throughout the organisation. We uphold the regulation and standards of these organisations and groups.

OUR SERVICES



RSG is registered with the [fundraising regulator](#) and complies with its code of conduct.



RSG is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner up to level 3 services. Click here for more info [OISC](#).



RSG is a member of the [Living Wage Foundation](#).



RSG was awarded the [Queen's Award for Voluntary Services](#) in 2017.



RSG is a member of the [Thames Valley Immigration Alliance](#), collaborating with 3 other charities: Slough Refugee Support, Asylum Welcome and Settled.



RSG has achieved the [Safe and Sound](#) standard, ensuring that the governance of the organisation meets statutory and charity sector standards.



RSG has achieved the [Reading Advice Network standard](#) for charities that offer advice services,.



CASEWORK

The casework team has supported more than 500 clients: asylum seekers (68%), refugees (17%), failed asylum seekers (4%) and others (11%).

Over half of clients are in either initial or dispersal Home Office accommodation; alarmingly, nearly one in four is suffering housing insecurity.

The problem of limited access to legal aid representation permeates all areas of our work. Many asylum seekers appealing adverse decisions have no access to legal aid or private funds to pursue their appeals. These appeals are important: reports from the Refugee Council show that “the proportion of asylum appeals allowed in the year to March 2023 was 43%”. This highlights the importance of the opportunity to go to appeal as nearly half are successful. The casework team’s intervention adds significantly to the success rate.

The continuing backlog of claimants waiting for their substantive interviews leaves families waiting months, if not years, in Home Office accommodation waiting for a decision. Clients report unacceptable conditions in initial Home Office accommodation. Hotel conditions experienced by our clients match those found by Refugee Action's report. Families are living in single rooms for over a year, children have no space or safe place to play. Hotel staff enter rooms without permission. There are reports of unhygienic conditions such as mould; of overcrowding, leading to the spread of disease; of barriers to movement hampering the less mobile; of inedible food leaving families struggling to remain fed; of isolation with mental health consequences.

SG arrived in the UK in 2002 and applied for asylum. She approached RSG after eviction from her cousin's home in March 2022. SG had no financial or housing support. We submitted a Subject Access Request and regularly chased, given severe delays in the Home Office. Our in-house solicitor liaised with various authorities.. SG was at risk of homelessness. Eventually a Sanctuary Hosting application was successful and SG was placed with a host. We referred her to a facility where she learnt to garden, forage, and paint. She now has Indefinite Leave to Remain, her English is good and she has an active social life with many activities, and stable housing. She regularly shows us pictures of everything she is doing.

Caseworkers have continually to chase the authorities for financial support, for payment cards, for correcting incorrect payments, for quick dispersal, and to ensure safeguarding. Our contacts with the departments and authorities. In particular, we have had spent much time complaining to housing providers about sub-optimal living conditions. With the introduction of the Home Office-styled "accommodation centres" we expect these problems to get worse.

In 2009 CW applied for asylum, which was refused. Her support was removed, and she appealed; she was moved into initial accommodation. Once again, there were attempts to remove her support: the Home Office said she had no outstanding claims. RSG showed that CW was not given enough time to provide the additional evidence and requested additional time, which was refused. A formal appeal was lodged, The tribunal supported CW, the Home office withdrew the decision to remove her support and CW now lives in the same house.

We have had successful outcomes on many cases. We have built links with Reading Borough council housing team to expedite support for recent refugees at risk of homelessness.

Our partnership with Reading Community Learning Centre (RCLC), began in November 2022. Through this partnership, female clients can more easily access RCLC's educational programmes specific to their needs; male clients are referred to our services for further support. In this way, we have helped over thirty clients.

Our dedicated casework team, Bronte, Nargus, Abi and Hussam, have worked with dedication and diligence. The efforts are impressive, as are the results. Thank you all.



Mahmuna Hasnath, OISC Casework Team Manager



RESETTLEMENT



In West Berkshire, we currently support 11 Syrian and Afghan families - 46 individuals. We have helped with housing, education, driving licences car ownership. It's gratifying to see them become more independent and integrating in the West Berkshire community. All have made great progress in English and are confident with the education systems and their children's schoolwork.

A Syrian family who completed five years with local authority support is well settled. The dad is working, the mum is confident with daily tasks and activities with her children. She supports them with school forms, letters, and homework. They say they wouldn't have been able to get that far without RSG's bespoke hard work.

We also support 25 Afghan families in hotels around the area. The main challenges are finding houses and employment. The rental market is extremely difficult as private landlords often won't rent to refugees. Rental rates are higher than the Universal Credit housing payment, making private properties unaffordable for families on benefits. Explaining the complex rules and systems to families is challenging. Our team liaises with the Home Office and local authorities to ensure temporary accommodation after hotel closures. This is slow and frustrating .

This year, West Berkshire resettlement clients have been enthusiastic in response to a Reading University student's dissertation, They discussed how the resettlement scheme has helped integration into the Berkshire community. This experience has been eye-opening and helpful for us to understand how our support can really influence and help those on the scheme. The positive feedback from this dissertation has reinforced the need for resettlement schemes.

**Samera Abba-Mjid, West Berkshire Resettlement
Support Manager**

The Reading resettlement team is now supporting 20 Afghan families under resettlement schemes. We had concerns that some families might still need our intensive support as they are not yet fully independent. We shared these concerns with Reading Borough Council, who agreed to extend the support for another year.

All clients are now enrolled with English classes to improve their language skills. Many women have joined sewing and beauty classes. All new mothers now attend or on the waiting list for an English class. We work to give these women a creche so they can further their education and their English language. We even found a volunteer to provide English lessons for one client at home.

Eight clients have gained employment, and one has finished his Master's at Henley Business School. We supported him with his successful sanctuary scholarship application. Many of our clients have passed their driving tests.

We continued with our wellbeing programme. We included activities for the families such as Flying Seagull and Jamie Gibberish where children learnt circus skills and magic tricks and had fun making new friends. We organised Eid parties and a women-only party. Help was given for families with school holidays activities and camps. The Women's Coffee group continues successfully. We are part of the maternity- and sanctuary-seeking programme to support and help mothers-to-be, winning a national award. Language and cultural differences remain big challenges. As do managing expectations, and all our dealings with officialdom.

In Wokingham we are supporting two Syrian families. As families become independent, we see the success of our plan was to ready them for life in the community at the end of the five years' support.

Our support embraces several different areas: school admission and transport; GP appointments as many GP surgeries refuse to provide interpreters leaving families unable to manage their appointments. There has been a rise in the number of Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) applications when families come to the end of their initial leave.

One family faced many challenges as their English was limited and they are illiterate in their own language. The mother was pregnant with her fourth baby and the father had medical issues. With our help, his English improved. His teacher describes him as very attentive. The mother is learning English as well. The father found work against the odds. The children's school reports are positive.

Soha Hafez, Reading Resettlement Support Manager



UKRAINE RESETTLEMENT



Ukraine was invaded in February 2022. RSG immediately responded and started supporting Ukrainians under the Homes for Ukraine scheme or the Family Scheme. The needs of the families have changed during the year. We have helped with rehousing, job searching, improving English, translation and documentation filing. While we are helping families to integrate, new families continue to arrive with their immediate needs for basic set-up information and signposting to various organisations.

We secured funding from Reading Borough Council to cover Ukrainian support from March 2023 until March 2024. The objectives are to help Ukrainian families integrate and absorb the basics of life in the UK. The challenges are the lack of housing and jobs We find English language courses - ESOL and volunteer- led. Another problem this year was the mental health of our clients We have continued our volunteer-run wellbeing workshops for the year. We included fun activities like canoeing and rock climbing where children could learn new skills and have fun. We organised Easter & Christmas parties at the Atrium. There was a volunteer-led Jazz concert at Greyfriars Church to raise funds the purchase of generators. Dance and Pilates classes attracted adults and children.

One family faced a lot of challenges with temporary accommodation, struggling to express their needs due to limited English. The property was very unsuitable and the family with a disabled person and a 2yr old toddler had to be moved. After several months of conversations, the family moved into a suitable flat with a disabled access throughout. Dad has managed to find work and Mum will be looking for jobs after their son is settled into nursery.

While finding ESOL and informal English classes will continue to be a challenge, we are proud to report that most of the clients are now enrolled with ESOL classes. We even set up English for Grannies, Talk and Tea and Conversational Kitchen to help improve language skills. Almost half of the Ukrainians have now found employment. However, many have found employment not within their area of expertise due to the language barrier.

Mainly language barriers and some cultural differences remain our biggest challenges as well as managing expectations, referring to RBC housing team. Supporting clients with their mental health referrals, signposting to access free dental care and GP, benefits applications and job seeking. These challenges are heightened as new families continue to arrive on the Ukrainian schemes.

Tatiana Miller, Ukraine Resettlement Coordinator



We believe that every person and local institution can have a role in making Reading a welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary. We work with mainstream organisations to support refugees through the [‘Sanctuary Award’](#) process.

Arts: There are currently four different art centres in Berkshire: the Rising Sun Art Centre (RSAC), MERL, Reading Museum, and Rank and File. RSAC has run sewing and art sessions for sixteen women and it hosted a refugee artists' exhibition in refugee week. MERL is pursuing the Museum of Sanctuary award and during refugee week it hosted Rank and File Theatre group. Reading Museum has Arts Council funding to with a view to becoming a Museums of Sanctuary.

Churches : **Greyfriars and New Hope Churches** are the first churches to receive the Church of Sanctuary award. They are RSG's partners at the Atrium drop-in where befrienders meet up. They host English for Grannies and Talk and Tea on Saturdays and provide college stationery packs. **St Nicholas Church** has been utilising its gallery space to showcase the work of refugee artists, and St Mary's Minster has been fundraising and holding awareness raising events.

Education: Reading School became Reading's first 'School of Sanctuary'. As part of the award process, they undertook staff and student training on refugee issues, and set up a student sanctuary ambassador group which included learning about migration in the curriculum. They run Wednesday afternoon activities for children of sanctuary seeking background in Reading, including canoeing sessions. **University of Reading** is developing their application.

Sport and Leisure. We have several organisations that fill this category, including **Hempden Farm** who is a 'Garden of Sanctuary' and has been developing their 'Growing Solidarity' Project which hosts farm days every Wednesday which include meditation, yoga, cooking and growing sessions. Recently it organised a camping day and have been doing up a caravan which they hope to make available for 'Sanctuary breaks' which is a mini holiday for people stuck in hotels. **Newbury Library** is working towards becoming Berkshire's first 'Library of Sanctuary' and are partnered with other local refugee organisations. **Climbing Hanger** (Refugee Rocks) is running activities for sanctuary seeking families as part of their sanctuary award process.



Other Highlights:

- **Reading Borough Council** has renewed its commitment to supporting sanctuary seekers in Reading by passing a full council motion and agreeing to reaffirm its City of Sanctuary status and are establishing a Refugee and Asylum team and convening several multi-agency refugee forums.
- **Wokingham Borough Council** is planning council motion committing to becoming recognised as a Council of Sanctuary.
- **Royal Berkshire NHS Trust Maternity Services** is working toward recognition as a maternity service of sanctuary for its commitment and inclusive practices in supporting moms of sanctuary seeking background.

KB. passed her driving theory test and is very proficient in English after 2 years of lessons. She meets her befriender on Friday at Atrium (Greyfriars church is recognised as Church of Sanctuary) for 2 hours. Also, K is involved with the "Growing Solidarity" project in Hempen farm (recognised as Garden of Sanctuary) and sewing session at Rising Sun Arts Centre (encourage them to be recognised as a place of Sanctuary).

DA. is very much involved with the difficulties some of her family face, but befriender sees it as a positive step that she talks about what she would like to do in the future.

Reading City of Sanctuary: Befriending programme.

The befriending programme is a unique programme offered to refugees and asylum seekers. The results of can be significant, not just in reducing isolation and loneliness but also in shaping the future of the befriender. The befrienders make huge efforts online and face-to-face to make sure their tutee is improving in conversational English skills, engaging in local activities, searching for jobs, filling out forms, making a GP appointment, and more. We had 41 registered befrienders who helped more than 48 individuals. The result of the one-to-one programme exceeded 1500 hours of help, support, and engagement.

Talk and Tea

At the time of writing, Talk and Tea, an initiative set up by volunteers under the Reading City of Sanctuary umbrella, has been running for over a year on Saturday afternoons at the Greyfriars Atrium. Run by a tiny number of volunteers, it offers an opportunity for conversation and discussion, and works best when there is a total group of between five and ten people. Notable achievements include helping a young person to address her local church congregation and facilitating access to cricket opportunities for a young 12-year-old lad. Also, a carefully crafted discussion about memories of SCUD missile attacks on Shiraz during the Iran-Iraq war.

Many thanks to Greyfriars Church who agreed to us using the venue and the sessions. And, of course, thanks to the volunteers - you know who you are. Thanks! - Michael Prewett
Editor's note. Thank you Michael.

Maggie Filipova-Rivers, RCoS Coordinator



Over the last year we held 42 Monday drop-in sessions and 37 Wednesday sessions. 1045 clients came to the Monday session with 357 of those from hotels, while 300 clients came to the Wednesday one, 146 were from hotels.



The last year has seen an increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Reading and surrounding areas. Most drop-in attendees have been clients from hotels. This might also be due to no longer being able to pay clients travel expenses to attend the drop-in, due to lack of funding. Despite that, the Monday drop-in is still a valuable and important service. It provides clients with a safe space to socialise, meet new people and access information. The laptops donated by the Reading Rotary Club last year continue to be used allowing people to search for jobs, gain online support or even contact family.

Over the last year, one of my goals as the drop-in coordinator has been to not only to focus on a welcoming environment for our clients, but also to create an information hub with regular visits from partner organisations to promote their services. Providing a safe space for clients in hotels to voice their issues and concerns is of particular importance as they don't feel comfortable enough to do so in the hotels.

For light entertainment, we provide board games, playing cards and magazines for the adults. For the children we have books, Lego, toys and colouring books. During the festive season we held a Christmas party and children received presents provided by Reading Family Aid.

Brighter Futures For Children, National Careers Services and Eurospeak are some of the local organisations who have visited the drop-in centre over the last year, providing information on their services, including how to access funded childcare, advice on CV writing and interview skills. Eurospeak Language School held four workshops specifically developed for refugees and asylum seekers, to help them settle into their new country and to integrate within their communities.

The purpose of the Wednesday sessions is to give our clients English lessons. Some of our volunteers are retired teachers and they possess the right skills to give these lessons. The lessons are structured and planned. Our volunteers are extremely dedicated and hardworking, spending their own time devising lesson plans weeks in advance.

The overall atmosphere of the lessons is one conducive to learning, it's relaxed, joyous and gives clients an opportunity to practise their conversational skills. The number of attendees is significantly lower than that of the Monday-drop in, so clients can receive more attention and at times one to one assistance, which would not happen in college.

Kushinga Hare, Drop-In Coordinator



INTEGRATION & ACTIVITIES



We embrace many of the festivals and celebrations that are important to our client group. This has included Eid, Easter and Nowruz where we had parties with music, food and activities. Alongside this, we have introduced the clients to British life whilst helping them improve their English language skills.

Our annual Christmas party was popular and Father Christmas was there to give out gifts to both children and adults. Art and craft activities and biscuit decorating were on offer too. A highlight was a Coronation party in May where we showed parts of the Coronation on the big screen and had our own 'King' and 'Queen' waving Union Jack flags. Clients enjoyed a traditional English cream tea and learnt about the British Royal family. For these parties we have around 50-70 attendees, with lots of comments asking, 'when is the next party?' We were lucky to get a children's entertainer during the Easter holidays called the Flying Seagulls and asylum seeking and refugee children had a chance to practice magic and circus skills while their parents watched happily. Activities have included a boat trip in Henley, a visit to a coffee shop, picnics and trips to Bournemouth and Caversham lakes are planned. The aim of our activities is to improve English, celebrate the richness of the many cultures and religions within our client group, and to aid integration into British society, promote friendships and positive relationships. We try to create an environment where people can have a distraction from their day to day worries and receive useful information.

The homework club during the last academic year has brought together sanctuary seeking children and their families with 6th form students at 2 local girls' schools in Reading. The Tuesday session has been at Abbey school and led by head of 6th form Edmund Hills. The sessions have been creative and fun as well as providing a learning environment and a chance for help with homework. At the end of term the students raised some money for RSG by selling ice lollies during their lunch breaks.

The Kendrick school club is led by head teacher Karen Perry and some of her team. This takes place on Thursday afternoon between 4 and 5pm. Our sessions are in the canteen area with the library close by. This has proved useful as sometimes the tutors go in and bring out books, magazines and resources for the children and waiting parents. A keyboard was brought out at the request of a Ukrainian family and the sound of her playing was music to our ears! The Kendrick staff team has been proactive in looking for ways to assist the families further.

A very successful academic year with the homework clubs. Approximately 6 families attend each week with around 8 children of primary school age from 4 nationalities per session.

Maria Baker, Integration and Activities Co-Ordinator



TRANS-NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

“The migration of people is not just physical”.

These are the words of one of the Community Researchers engaged on this project which seeks to unpick the complexities of giving and maintaining care in migrant communities across national borders, in different cultures, through linguistic barriers and across generations.

A snapshot of these experiences has been gathered by the in-depth interviews RSG and RCLC Community Researchers have conducted with 18 families in the Reading area over the past year. This data is now being analysed by the University of Reading team. Professor Ruth Evans reports: “We have undertaken a total of 292 interviews with family members, including members in countries of origin or third countries, and have exceeded our objective of undertaking research with 100 families across the four partner countries (UK, Spain, France, Sweden) by collecting data from 116 families for the large sample. This has produced rich data about complex transnational family caring arrangements and inequalities in social protection and support. Preliminary findings reveal how population mobility has been restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and care needs and socio-economic inequalities facing transnational families have increased.”

On a local level, an informal meeting hosted by RSG and RCLC and attended by representatives of the university research team, as well as partner organisations and the three councils RSG works with - Reading, West Berkshire, and Wokingham – concentrated on the human stories of both the interviewees and Community Researchers behind these numbers as well as on explaining this innovative interview approach. The Wokingham Council Lead on Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities reflected: “My officers would never have got this kind of information”. Much discussion was devoted to the mental suffering the interviewed families experienced exacerbated by language and cultural barriers when dealing with authorities and support groups. All of the Community Researchers reflected that care is just the tip of the iceberg. “All conversations around care raise so many other inter-connected issues – access to housing, medical support, advice.” The process of interviewing took longer and was more emotionally challenging than initially thought.

In this final year of this research, the various teams aim to present the results of this transnational research to policy-makers at an international conference whilst ensuring that the feedback from the project is made available to all participants through more informal workshops.



L to R: Lina Domani (CR), Kamila Othman (CR), Rihab Mohammed (CR), Buhle Mpofu (CR), Grady Walker (UoR), Khrishne Neupane (CR).



Alison McQuity, Project Coordinator



SANCTUARY STRIKERS



This football team started in 2017 and was created by a former client/volunteer.

The aim of the club is to promote integration and unity between refugees and non-refugees through the sport of football.

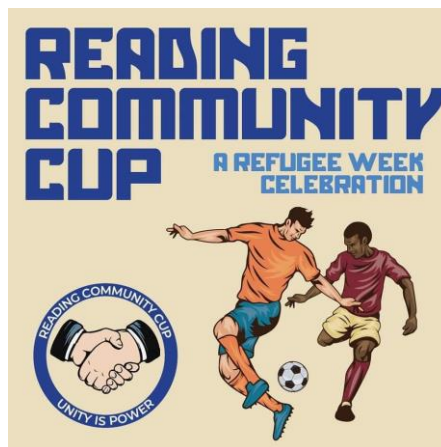
Sanctuary Strikers Football Club are Berkshire's only refugee football club.

Currently they are playing in Division 3 and the Reading and District Sunday League. So far, they have played together for 6 seasons. Their home ground is Palmer Park.

Over the last 2 years they have celebrated Refugee Week by hosting and creating the Reading Community Cup Tournament. We are hopeful that this will continue to be an annual event.

It has taken a considerable amount of time and effort to create this team and we are incredible grateful for everyone who has helped organise it and fund the Sanctuary Strikers. Including The FA's Grow the Fame fund, AKG and Adam Moss and AKM Geoconsulting.

We would like to give a big thank you to Joe and Tomson who have put so much time and energy into running this unique and special team.



Tomson Chauke, Volunteer



CAMPAIGNS

We actively campaigned for refugee rights across 2022-23. Our key campaign areas were opposing anti-refugee legislation and promoting safe routes, speaking out against the Rwanda plan, raising awareness about unsuitable accommodation and resisting the hostile environment.

Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws: Last year saw the implementation of the Nationality and Borders Act and the introduction and subsequent passage of the Illegal Migration Act. As a member of the Together with Refugees coalition, and signatory of Refugee Action's *'Fight the Anti Refugee Laws'* pledge, RSG has made the case that these laws defy the spirit of the Refugee Convention, neglect our international duties, and effectively place a ban on claiming asylum in the UK. We called for the Home Secretary to establish safe routes as an alternative to deadly channel crossings.

Stop the Flights! In April 2022, the UK struck a deal with the Rwandan authorities to remove people to the East African country before hearing their asylum claims. The first flight, set to take off on 14th June, was grounded following intervention from the European Court of Human Rights. The Rwanda plan was then scrutinised by the High Court; RSG staff and service users demonstrated outside the Royal Courts of Justice. As the Rwanda case progressed to the courts, RSG continued to argue that we must not abandon our responsibilities towards people claiming asylum. We encouraged supporters to contact their MPs and sign petitions, we promoted Freedom from Torture's successful campaign to encourage private airlines to withdraw from the scheme and joined Together with Refugees *'Fill the Skies with Hope'* campaign action.

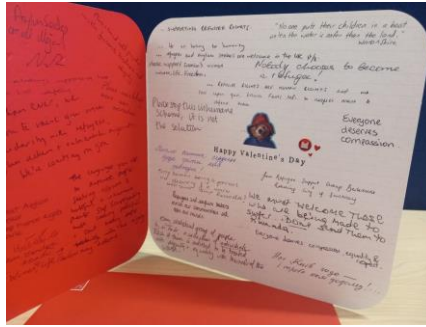
Challenging Unsuitable Accommodation: RSG was committed to raising awareness about the largely forgotten Afghan families held in 'transition accommodation' for over a year, in Berkshire and across the country. To mark the one-year anniversary of their arrival in the UK, RSG honoured the 800-year-old tradition of Afghan kite flying as part of the *'Fly With Me'* festival. We called on the government to create a family reunification route for Afghans on the ARAP and ACRS schemes. We continue to argue that a 28-day time limit on detention must be imposed and enforced across the UK, in line with other European countries. We supported Women for Refugee Women by sending over 30 'Valentine's Day' cards to the directors of Mitie and Serco, which spoke out against the imprisonment of women in immigration detention. RSG also became a member organization of the Coalition to Keep Campsfield Closed.

Resisting the Hostile Environment: The immigration controls that make up the 'Hostile Environment' are designed to prevent individuals without leave to remain from accessing healthcare, housing, education, work, and benefits. The aim is to criminalise the everyday activities of undocumented migrants and disincentivise them from accessing public services. We affirm that refugees should be protected without discrimination of any kind that is based on their characteristics, beliefs or origin.

Hari Reed, Campaigns and Advocacy Co-ordinator



FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS



It's been another very challenging year, but despite this, we've managed to achieve much to be proud of. The Government's increasing hostility and neglect of refugees has stirred up the Far Right and led to more refugees suffering. While more refugees are turning to us for help than ever before, seeing pressure on our services soar, the Cost-of-Living Crisis has seen donations decline at a time when we need them most.

In spite of all of this, we continue to punch above our weight, reaching ever wider audiences, increasing our income, and ultimately supporting more refugees in crisis. We continue to be staggered by the generosity of you, our supporters, and your desire to do more to help refugees here in Berkshire. We have had massive successes this year. Our third Gospel Carols Concert was again the best Christmas concert in town, with our biggest crowd ever dancing in the aisles and helping to raise £6,500. We had our biggest ever team for the Reading Legal Walk and raised £3,500. We raised a record £16,200 in just seven days with The Big Give Christmas Challenge thanks to so much public support.

This year was our biggest ever Refugee Week programme, with film events in Wokingham and Reading, the Reading Community Cup football tournament, multiple art exhibitions, theatre performances and so much more over four weeks – more a Refugee Month, really. It was incredible to have so many people attend, participate and support refugees in Berkshire.

Our supporters have done so much for us these past twelve months. Three people ran 100km for Race To The Stones raising £3,200. Redstor ran for 24 hours solid and raised £4,000 as part of Endure24. Reading SSKI Karate and Singh Sabha Reading TKD raised £3450 with a martial arts tournament. More than 70 people ran 5km for us as part of The Grumpy Goat's fun runs. We were even three Christmas concerts in our support beside our own!

Overall, we've seen a -7% decrease in unrestricted monthly income, which is particularly tough as demand for our services continues to grow at pace. This is a sector-wide issue, and we continue to focus on trying to reach new audiences and nurture our current supporters to fund our frontline services.

Every penny we receive means we can do more to help refugees here in Berkshire, so we're eternally grateful to you, our brilliant supporters.



Corporate Fundraising Our three-year partnership with Deloitte Reading drew to a close in June. While we were sad to see it end, we are unbelievably grateful for everything we achieved as part of it. We raised over £70,000, had hundreds of volunteer hours, donated laptops and furniture, pro bono work that we could not have afforded included impact reports, a plan for buying a permanent home for refugees, and a new website.

This year we also had a one-year partnership with the wonderful Porterhouse Medical, who supported us on The Reading Legal Walk, donated to The Big Give and supported us throughout the year. We look forward to more partnerships in the year ahead.

Communications We continued to build on past success and to reach more people in Berkshire and beyond this year. We received widespread media coverage, from national outlets like BBC News, Sky News, LBC, and Times Radio, as well as more local outlets like BBC Berkshire, Heart Thames Valley and BBC South Today. Our Communications Strategy continued to deliver success, with more people visiting our website, receiving our supporter newsletters and following us on social media.

To everyone who has supported refugees in Berkshire this year, thank you for your support.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Jonjo Warrick , Fundraising and Communications Manager



DONORS & FUNDERS

SPECIAL THANKS

Grants and significant donations

Grants

A B Charitable Trust
Berkshire Community Foundation- Jubilee Fund and RLW
Englefield Charitable Trust – Mental Health (Good Exchange)
Human Rights Fund – match funding with The Big Give
Justice Together Foundation - Thames Valley Immigration Alliance and Casework
Land Aid – Ukraine Support
Lloyds Bank Foundation

NACCOM
NHS Berks West Clinical Commissioning Group - mental health
Reading Borough Council - Ukraine and Narrowing The Gap
The Earley Charity – City of Sanctuary
The Greenham Trust – Mental Health
The Henry Denman and Agneta Mary Cook Charity
The Sara & Michael Scanlon Trust
Vodafone Charities Connected

Donors

Adam Moss and AKM Geoconsulting
Andy Barnes
Anne Wheldon
Bracknell Parish
Greyfriars Church and The Atrium
Healthwatch Reading
Hope Law Limited
Ian Korner
Serco Foundation
Nature Nurture CIC
Jamia Masjid & Islamic Centre, Slough
Iain MacMillan
Leighton Park School
Margaret Laurie
Porterhouse Medical (corporate partner)
Pangbourne Rotary Club
Parenthesis Choir
Peter and Liz Driver
Petr Sadilek
R S Brownless Charitable Trust
Reading Catenian Circle
Reading Community Gospel Choir
Reading Labour Councilors

Reading Phoenix Choir
Reading Quakers
Reading Rotary Club
Reading SSKI Karate
Rotary Club of Reading Abbey
Rotary Club of Reading Maiden Erleigh
Rotary Club of Reading Matins
Rotary Club of Reading Thames
Shinfield Baptist Church
Singh Sabha Reading TKD
Six Bells Pub, Beenham
South Street Arts Centre and Craft Theory
St John The Baptist, Crowthorne
St Luke's Church, Reading
The Grumpy Goat
The Tannery Trust
Tilehurst Methodist Church
Tilehurst Methodist Wesley Guild
Daniel Symes
Kirsten Makepeace
Anne Wheldon
Cris Harborne
The Sewing Space Social

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

SPECIAL THANKS

In memory of Kiran Tailor,
Thomas Palmer, Louis Barratt
and Alice Drive



Honorable Mentions

Abbey School, Reading
Alex Warren
Asylum Welcome, Oxford
Barret & Co Solicitors
Berkshire Cricket Foundation
Care4Calais Reading
Compass Recovery College
Daneshill School, Hook
Diana and James Brooks, Will Fitch and friends
Harry and Maxx Media
Hewlett Packard Reading
John Sykes Foundation
Greenways, Reading
Kendrick School, Reading
Leslie Barron, Mary Chambers and Alina
Linzi Blakely, Freddie Burger and friends
London Legal Support Trust
Pocketalk
Queen Anne's School, Reading

Rank & File Theatre
Reading Biscuit Factory
Reading Buses
Reading Family Aid
Reading Football Club Community Trust
REDA
Reading Minster Church
Reading Red Kitchen
Reading School
Reading Scientific Services Ltd and Mondelez
Reading University Students Union
Settled, Oxford
Slough Refugee Support
Thames Water
The Cowshed, Wokingham
The University of Reading
Wokingham Film Society
Sarah Snow and Stepping Forward
Gary and Rhiannon Stocking-Williams



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



APPEAL

BIG PLANS for a NEW OFFICE

RSG is excited to announce a long-term plan to buy its own office and refugee centre.

Refugee Support Group has been supporting refugees in Berkshire for nearly thirty years. We have been working in West Berkshire and Wokingham for six years. Unfortunately, we suspect our services will be needed for another 30 years at least.

First and foremost, we need to offer refugees and asylum seekers a safe space where we can hold our drop-ins **every day**, ideally with a small café and perhaps a kitchen. We need facilities that can accommodate disabled members of staff, volunteers and service users. We need to create a place where people can come to socialise, to learn, to get help advice and support, but overall a place that is theirs, where they can feel safe.

We are open to sharing this office with other charities who may also looking for a more stable and sustainable future, all of whom will support the most marginalised and disadvantaged people in Berkshire. Together, we can be more efficient and stronger.

We have drawn up a business case. We know we would like the office to be located within a mile of Reading Station. We know we will need a minimum of £500,000 as a deposit.

Big plans will take time: we have started fundraising. We have set aside two legacy donations and have the promise of further financial assistance and interest free loans from one of our supports.

Do you feel you could be part of our plans?

Could you:

- make a substantial capital contribution
- provide an interest free loan
- fundraise for us
- do you have a suitable property or land that might be available, or skills & connections that may help us?

Please contact nick@rrsg.org.uk

Be part of the next 30 years in the history of the Refugee Support Group.





CORPORATE PARTNER

Your **logo** here!

Refugee Support Group has had an amazing three years working with Deloitte. We firmly believe it was a two – way partnership, and that there are many benefits to be gained for a corporate partner.

What we offer:

- An opportunity for your staff to learn about and better understand international events and how they impact on us all, here in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. We are happy to give talks. We have some clients who are motivated and willing to share their stories and testimonies.
- An opportunity for your staff to engage in activities and events in support of a longstanding local Berkshire charity who supports a very disadvantaged part of our Reading community.
- Volunteering and befriending opportunities with full training and support.
- An opportunity for a large corporate organisation to make a local difference in the town is lives and works in.

What we ask of you:

- Preferably a three-year partnership. This gives us time to turn meaningful plans into action.
- We would like to address your staff team and ask for support through Give As You Earn
- We would like you to extend your professional skills and experience and help us in areas like business planning, planning against cyber-attacks, organisational digital development, EDI policy development, and impact reporting. We currently need help to finish an IT skills training and job search website specifically aimed at the refugee community.
- We have an ambitious project to fund and buy our own refugee centre (see page 32). Any help you can bring to the table would be welcomed.
- We would love to hear your ideas and thoughts on what you feel you could do to help.

Please contact nick@rrsg.org.uk



**Refugee
Support
Group**



Your logo



PARTNER CHARITIES



**CARE 4
CALAIS**



**Wycliffe
Baptist
Church**



ReadiFood
Reading's Food Bank



THE COWSHED



**Alliance for cohesion
and racial equality**



West Berks Action for Refugees



Thames Valley Immigration Alliance



THAMES VALLEY IMMIGRATION ALLIANCE



Thames Valley Immigration Alliance (TVIA) was founded by four local charities on 1st April 2022 - Refugee Support Group, Asylum Welcome, Slough Refugee Support and Settled supported by funding from the Justice Together initiative.

There is currently a shortage of immigration advice services in the Thames Valley area. The TVIA aims to strengthen and increase access advice and legal services for EU migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and vulnerable migrants, trying to provide better more coordinated support for people struggling to engage with the legal aid system.

We aim to collaborate closely, while continuing to manage their own operations, also providing a platform for the partner organisations to speak with one powerful voice on issues that affect the whole region:

- Advocating for a fairer and more humane asylum system
- Afghan refugees still living in 'transition hotels'
- Supporting asylum seekers living in dispersed accommodation under dreadful conditions.
- Coordination of local support for refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

"It has never been more important or urgent to assist migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with good legal advice. Our asylum, immigration and legal aid systems are overstretched and fail many people. This is an important opportunity for four agencies to work with each other and with legal aid solicitors and partners to improve the service for vulnerable clients." Mark Goldring, CEO Asylum Welcome

Asylum Welcome (AW) has supported refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants in Oxfordshire for 25 years. We help our clients understand and access rights and opportunities, develop and share their talents, and feel welcomed. www.asylum-welcome.org

Slough Refugee Support (SRS) helps all asylum seekers and refugees in Slough and surrounding areas to achieve their rights and settle with dignity. Set up 24 years ago, SRS provides OISC advice and support up to Level 2/3; legal support from solicitors; Asylum Support (NASS); access to benefits, health and education support; family support; job searches for those eligible to work; English classes. Last year, SRS supported 402 clients from 36 countries. www.sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk

Settled has considerable experience in supporting EU migrants with post-Brexit registration and a related legal challenges. Settled is an independent charity providing information, advice and support in multiple languages to EU citizens in the UK. A small staff team coordinates 100+ volunteers throughout the UK, providing immigration advice to EU citizens to gain Settled Status and respond to difficulties they face, prioritising those most in need.



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

Drop-In and Admin

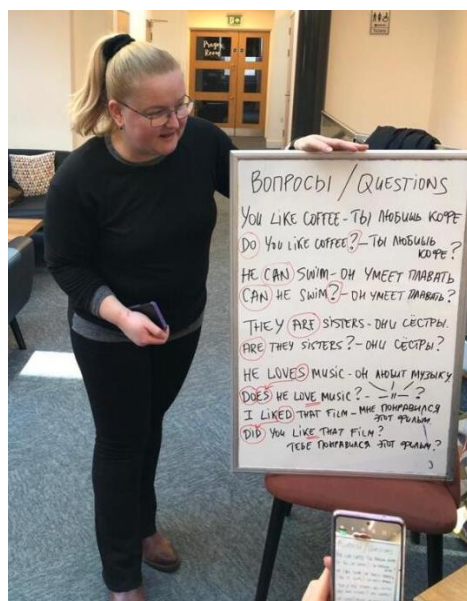
May Akhalifa, Francis O'Neill, Siddiq Haroon, Colin Campbell, Marina Hart, Alison Mcquitty, Jenny Carr, Arsalan San-Ahmed, Jacklin Mikhael, Paula De Wet, Teagan Rooney, Seleyian Kennedy, Emma Conway, and Sorrel Bulpitt

Fundraising and Events

Thank you to everyone who took part or volunteered at any of our events this year!

RCoS & Befriending

Ian Finlayson, Martin Ashford, Andrew Linnell, Graham Bates, Hilary Pierce, Naomi Iliff, Colin Campbell, Peter Hutton, Edward Reynold, Nilufer Patel, Elaine Edge, Rachel Thake, Marc Edwards, Eric Moyse, Chloe Elizabeth Smart, Hazel Davies, Jenny Gordon, Sergio Gallego-Schmid, Amanda Jennings, Elizabeth Bailey, Joanna Hanson, Loraine McQueen Fletcher, Andrea Leonelli, Laiba Ather, Rohin Sharma, Imogen Eddings, Selina Whiteley, Regina Maria Conibera, Teresa Jane Waring, Katharine Margaret Donegan, Eithne Sarson, Lottie Temblett-Wood, Christine Davidson (Chrissie), Helen Muriel Hathaway, Anna Elizabeth Huxtable Lister, Emily Cork, Paula Lucido, Melanie Khuddro





STAFF TEAM

A big thank you to the fantastic staff team who go above and beyond what is expected of them! RSG wouldn't be the organisation it is, without the dedication, support and compassion from our staff.

Abiodun Popoola
Alison McQuity
Arsalan San-Ahmed
Bronte Makepeace
Emma Conway
Flora Roshi
Hadil Tamim
Hari Reed
Hussam Allahham
Jonjo Warrick
Kushinga Hare
Mahmuna Hasnath
Maria Baker

Maggie Filipova-Rivers
Nargus Ijaz
Nick Harborne
Oscar Manjengwa
Paula de Wet
Samera Abbas-Majid
Shady Hagag
Soha Hafez
Sorrel Bulpitt
Tatiana Miller
Teagan Rooney
Tony Cornwell
Tori Baddeley

**Goodbye, good luck and thank you to: Shady,
Arsalan, Hussam, Sorrel and Emma**





Trustee Profile

Fiona Zeneii
Treasurer



We are recruiting trustees with skills and experience of safeguarding, mental health, fundraising and property.

You can find out more on our website or contact the Chair for an informal discussion

I decided to become a trustee for the Refugee Support Group because of the deeply personal connection I share with this charity. My family and I moved to the UK when I only just six years old, seeking refuge and a chance for a better life.

During our challenging journey to gain our indefinite leave to remain, the Refugee Support Group played an indispensable role in providing us with invaluable support, resources, and a sense of belonging. Their unwavering commitment to helping newcomers like us not only transformed our lives but also instilled in me a profound sense of gratitude and the desire to give back to the community that had welcomed us with open arms.

By becoming a trustee, I hope to contribute my skills, experiences, and passion to help others find the same hope, resilience, and opportunity that this incredible charity offered me and my family. It's my way of expressing my gratitude and ensuring that more refugees can find the support they need to rebuild their lives and thrive in their new home, just as I have.

~Fiona Zeneli





TRUSTEES 2022-2023

Thank you to Jon, Richard and Patrick who have stood down this year.



Emily Cantrell
Lead for Fundraising



Patrick Ismond
Lead for Diversity,
Inclusion and Equality



Charlene Wattley
Safeguarding Lead



Mike Martin MBE
Chair of Trustees



Richard Hanson-James
Business, Property and
Campaigning



Jon Linley
Treasurer



Sam Lee
Lead for
Marketing



Prof. Mary Richardson
Deputy Chair



Thabo Makuyana
Lived Experience &
Lead for Activism



Fiona Zeneli
Lead for Project
Management



Simon Price
Lead for Local Authorities



CLIENT TESTIMONIES

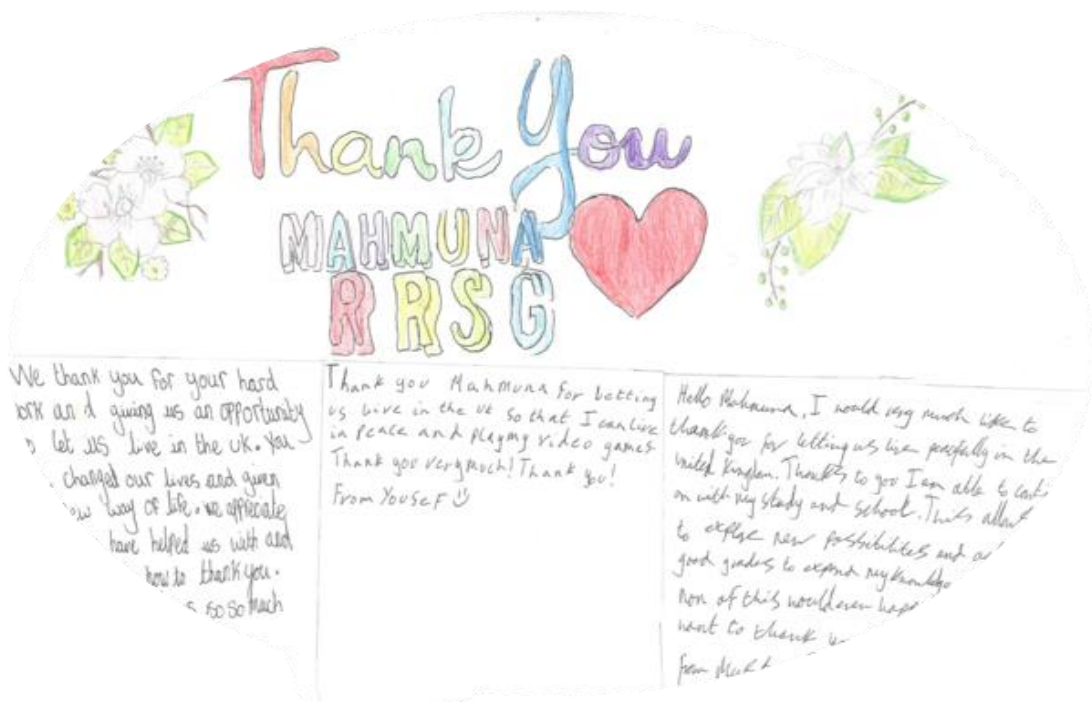
"I would like to say thanks to everyone at RSG for working hard to get me my Leave to Remain. They have been very helpful throughout the process and supported me whenever I needed help. Thank you"

"I wanted to say thanks in ton for getting my card issue sorted I have received my card today - Thank you so much once again"

"The staff respect people and I can speak to them when I need help."

*"Thank you so much for the great news!"
(Client being granted refugee status)*

"Thank you so much for taking your time and helping me out"



"Since ages I needed someone to cry and today that happened which makes me feel so much better. Thank you for listening to me and for your valuable time."

"The community and socialising. Staff are helpful and care about people. You feel like there's someone who cares."

"When I come to the drop-in I have a community, friends and family."



ALICE DRIVER
13th Dec 1990
- 6th Jun 2019



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

Alice Driver



www.refugeesupportgroup.org.uk/donate



FINANCIAL REPORT

Unaudited Financial Statements

for the year ended

31 March 2023

REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Trustees | Mr Mike Martin MBE Ms Fiona Zeneli Mrs Emily Lloyd Prof. Mary Richardson Mr Thabo Makuyana Ms Samantha Lee Ms Sarah Seddon Mr Simon Price Mrs Emma Broomfield Mr Patrick Ismond Mr Richard Hanson-James Mr Jon Linley Mrs Charlene Wattley | Chair Treasurer Appointed 13/04/2022 Appointed 12/10/2022 Appointed 14/12/2022 Resigned 21/04/2022 Resigned 21/10/2022 Resigned 16/11/2022 Resigned 18/05/2023 Resigned 24/09/2023 |
| Chief Executive Officer Deputy CEO | Mr Nick Harborne Ms Flora Roshi | |
| Charity number | 1098058 | |
| Company number | 04515238 | |
| Principal address and Registered Office | First Floor, R.I.S.C 35-39 London Street Reading Berkshire RG1 4PS | |
| Independent examiner | Rachel Eden ACMA Curious Lounge, 1st Floor, Pinnacle Building Tudor Road Reading Berkshire RG1 1NH | |
| Bankers | The Co-operative Bank 13 New Road Oxford OX1 1LG | MetroBank One Southampton Row London WC1B 5HA |



FINANCIAL REPORT

For the year ending 31st March 2023

| | 2,023 £ | 2022 £ |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Income Resources | | |
| Contract income | 303,181 | 238,985 |
| Grants donations | 263,176 | 317,464 |
| Legacies | - | 5,843 |
| Other Income | 3,863 | 1,330 |
| Total Income, | 570,220 | 563,622 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Wages and salaries | 471,416 | 339,859 |
| Staff training and development | 6,870 | 7,090 |
| Freelance and consultancy | 48,149 | 22,565 |
| Volunteer costs | 5,367 | 2,035 |
| Cost of delivering services | 28,545 | 87,417 |
| Administration costs | 29,014 | 22,283 |
| Publicity and marketing | 3,481 | 1,404 |
| Meetings and events | 305 | 29 |
| Travel and subsistence | 5,184 | 1,808 |
| Membership and subscriptions | 1,277 | 623 |
| Premises | 24,565 | 17,143 |
| Office equipment | - | 744 |
| Professional fees | 3,148 | 618 |
| Depreciation | 1,313 | 8 |
| Total Expenditure | 628,634 | 503,626 |
| Net income / (expenditure) | -58,414 | 59,996 |



STAFF TESTIMONIES



Ozzy

RSG
Resettlement
Officer

Through your donations, Refugee Support Group have supported many people, clients like Ozzie.

In 2003, Ozzie, a 12-year-old from Zimbabwe, embarked on a flight to the UK to join his mother in pursuit of a safer life, leaving his father and extended family behind.

Zimbabwe, then under the controversial rule of Robert Mugabe, was marked by corruption, economic mismanagement, and human rights abuses, prompting Ozzie's parents to make the difficult choice to leave their homeland out of fear for their children's safety.

While Ozzie's journey to the UK was relatively straightforward, seeking asylum was an arduous process and it took Ozzie a full 15 years to obtain leave to remain.

Back in 2003, there were still safe routes to reach the UK, allowing Ozzie to seek asylum at the airport—an option largely closed to asylum seekers in current times. However, Ozzie and his family faced a lack of government support, financial hardship, the threat of homelessness, and limited access to basic necessities.

Ozzie's mother turned to the Refugee Support Group, where they found assistance with their asylum claim, received food parcels, and experienced the warmth of a supportive community. Eventually, the family reunited and years later Ozzie, eager to give back, found an opportunity to volunteer as a caseworker at the Refugee Support Group, completing a full circle.

Ozzie still works for RSG, reflecting on his journey, Ozzie shared, "All my experiences have given me a passion to help people who are going through the same thing that I've gone through. I know what it's like to be separated from family. But it's much more volatile for people to seek asylum now. I have such sympathy for the people who risk their lives to get here, having met people who have gone through these journeys has given me an appreciation for my own journey, they risk everything to get here."



KEY DETAILS

General enquiries Support enquiries

0118 950 5356

info@rrsg.org.uk

www.refugeesupportgroup.org.uk

Key Contacts

CEO Nick Harborne

nick@rrsg.org.uk

Deputy CEO Flora Roshi

flora@rrsg.org.uk

Fundraising & Communications

fundraising@rrsg.org.uk

Volunteering

kushinga@rrsg.org.uk

Social Media:

Twitter:

[@readingrefugees](https://twitter.com/readingrefugees)

Facebook:

[@readingrefugees](https://facebook.com/readingrefugees)

Instagram:

[@readingrefugees](https://instagram.com/readingrefugees)

LinkedIn:

[@readingrefugees](https://linkedin.com/company/readingrefugees)

Threads:

Legal:

Charity Reg No:

1098058

Company No:

04515238

Data Protection

All personal details of individuals mentioned in case studies have been changed to protect people's anonymity and confidentiality. We have consent to publish pictures from those who feature in them.

Proud to be working in partnership with:

Blank

Blank

Blank



LEGACY APPEAL

GIVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF REFUGEES A LIFELINE BY LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Writing a Will lays out exactly what you want to leave your friends and family. Without one, intestacy laws decide who gets what from your estate.

Writing a Will ensures your loved ones are looked after and can also help the causes you hold dear to continue transforming lives long into the future

Remembering Refugee Support Group in your Will can give hope to the next generation of refugees in Berkshire. We've spent over 25 years helping refugees in Berkshire, and our aim is to be here for refugees long into the future.

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

Leaving a gift in your will can help us continue successful programmes like our Drop-In Centre that helps refugees to feel less isolated and improve their mental health.

It could fund our football team that lets refugees make friends through sport, or our Homework Club that aids children to achieve their potential at school.

A Legacy gift could even enable us to create new projects that will touch people's lives in new ways and help them to succeed

We are proud to be partnered with **Barrett & Co solicitors** to offer discounted Will services to our supporters! Please get in touch to request a referral.



barrettandco
solicitors