



Refugee Support Group

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025



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Chair of Trustees Report

As the newly appointed Chair of Refugee Support Group, it is both my honour and privilege to present this annual report, marking the culmination of our current three-year strategic plan and casting an eye toward the future. The landscape in which we operate has grown increasingly complex, marked by global upheavals, shifting policies, and the persistent struggles faced by refugees seeking safety and dignity. In the face of these challenges, Refugee Support Group has persevered, remaining steadfast in our mission, adapting to new realities, and achieving meaningful progress. This report aims to reflect upon our recent achievements, address the pressing challenges before us, and outline the development of a new strategic plan to guide our work for the next three years.

The Challenging Refugee Environment

Global and Local Context

The last year has witnessed significant changes in refugee flows worldwide, driven by conflict, persecution, economic instability, and environmental crises. Internationally, the number of forcibly displaced people has reached unprecedented levels. Locally, our community has seen a marked increase in the arrival of individuals and families seeking sanctuary, many of whom come with urgent needs and face considerable barriers to integration.

Evolving Policy Landscape

Alongside these changes, the policy environment has grown more restrictive and politically charged, with tightened borders, reduced access to asylum procedures, and increasing pressure on support organisations such as ours. We have experienced delays in refugee status determinations, challenges in family reunification processes, and a rise in the demand for legal advocacy and representation. These shifts have required us to be nimble and resourceful, finding new ways to advocate for the rights of refugees and to ensure that basic needs are met.

Social and Economic Challenges

Refugees arriving in our area confront a multiplicity of challenges: securing safe housing, accessing healthcare, finding employment, and overcoming the trauma of displacement. Host communities, too, are navigating economic pressures and at times, polarised public debate. Refugee Support Group has worked tirelessly to foster understanding, solidarity, and practical support, but the needs continue to grow.

Actions and

Achievements

This year represents the final chapter of our last three-year strategic plan, which was designed to improve the quality of our services, create a more sustainable charity, and deepen our engagement with both refugees and the wider community. Despite the obstacles, we are proud of what we have achieved.

Service Delivery and Direct

Below is a brief overview of some of the work RSG has done over the year and its impact:

1. 53 people were granted a form of Leave to Remain as a result of RSG's work.
2. As a charity we worked on over 1,000 different issues for our clients.
3. We supported 981 people across our Monday and Wednesday Drop-In Centres.
4. As a charity we received 180 positive outcomes - ranging from food parcels to indefinite leave to remain granted.

Chair of Trustees Report

Strengthening Our

Volunteers: We recruited and trained our volunteers, building a more diverse and skilled team to serve our clients.

Partnerships: Collaborative projects with schools, faith-based groups, and businesses have broadened our impact and created new opportunities for refugees to participate in community life.

Funding and Resources: Through grant writing and fundraising initiatives, we secured over £500,000 in funding, ensuring financial stability and the ability to grow our services.

Looking Forward: The Next 3 Years and

Beyond As we prepare to launch a new strategic plan, our organisation is committed to building on our successes while adapting to the evolving demands of the refugee environment. Our development process has been inclusive, drawing on the perspectives of refugees, staff, volunteers, and partner agencies.

Key priorities for the coming years:

The RSG Business Plan 2025–2028 sets out a clear roadmap to protect and strengthen core services for refugees and asylum seekers across Berkshire. The key priorities include: delivering high-quality legal and resettlement support; investing in staff and volunteer wellbeing; expanding strategic partnerships and networks; embracing digital transformation and AI to improve efficiency and impact; and securing financial sustainability through diversified fundraising. Underpinning all of this is a commitment to lived experience, user-led service design, and maintaining RSG's role as a trusted, resilient organisation in an increasingly hostile and uncertain environment.

Conclusio

The challenges before us are considerable, but so is our determination. On behalf of our Board, I am deeply grateful for the dedication and compassion of our team, our Board, our volunteers, our partners, and our supporters. Together, we have made a tangible difference in the lives of those seeking refuge in our community. The coming year presents an opportunity not only to continue this vital work but to innovate and lead in the pursuit of justice and inclusion.

I am excited to see what this years throws at us!

Sarah Vawda



RSG Staff and Volunteers

Thank you to all the hard work of our dedicated staff team. We could not do the incredible work we do without them all.

We would also like to thank our volunteer team who tirelessly support us each week during our different weekly activities.

We also cannot go without thanking our Board of Trustees. Without your support the charity would not be the organisation it currently is.



CEO Report

This has been a tough year for the refugee and asylum-seeking community. The rise in anti-migrant sentiment, fuelled by increasingly hostile rhetoric and public demonstrations, has created a climate of fear and uncertainty for many of the people we support. It's been hard to witness, but it's also made our work feel more urgent than ever. We've stood shoulder to shoulder with other organisations across the country, speaking out and showing solidarity wherever we can.

Refugee Support Group has had a whirlwind of a year, we started by celebrating our 30th Birthday with a big party at the Town Hall with Lord Alf Dubs in attendance. RSG organised a number of different events and activities for our clients including a trip to Bournemouth Beach, a weekly women's only yoga class, an Eid party and a Christmas party which both included lots of incredible food made by our clients. Our casework team studied hard, with two caseworkers passing their IAA level 1 and 2 exams. Our resettlement teams said goodbye to many old families whilst welcoming their new families.

Not only was the resettlement team adjusting to a change, as a charity we have been putting together our 2025-2028 Business Plan, focusing on resilience, impact and long-term sustainability. This year we have been consolidating our services and tightening our operations to make sure RSG can weather the financial pressures we're facing but excited to start exploring a fee-paying service model to help us reach more people sustainably, while staying true to our values.

Through it all, our staff and volunteers have remained incredibly committed. Whether it's helping someone navigate the asylum system, supporting families in crisis, or simply being a calm and trusted presence, their work continues to make a real difference.

We've also welcomed a new trustee board this year, bringing in a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives—including lived experience of displacement. Their energy and insight have already strengthened our governance and helped shape our direction for the 2025-2028 Business Plan.

We're not pretending it's easy, but we're in a strong place. With the support of our community, our partners, and everyone who believes in what we do, we're ready to keep going—step by step, person by person.

Finally, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all our donors, funders, and supporters. Your belief in our mission and your continued generosity make everything we do possible. We simply couldn't do



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Harbome', is written over a light blue grid background.

Community Engagement Team

It's been a challenging year across the charity sector, with many organisations sadly closing under financial strain. In July, RSG faced an even greater test when the UK riots broke out. This was an incredibly difficult and frightening time for both our clients and our staff. Yet we were deeply heartened to receive an outpouring of supportive messages and generous donations from both existing and new supporters; including seven new monthly donors who joined us in the week following the riots.

In 2024, RSG also celebrated a remarkable milestone: 30 years of supporting our refugee community. We marked our anniversary with an evening of entertainment and meaningful conversation, featuring an exceptional panel which included our patron, Lord Alf Dubs. This year also saw Cllr Tony Page appointed as the Mayor of Reading. We were honoured that Cllr Page chose RSG as one of his charities of the year, together, we raised an incredible £6,120!

April:

We kicked off the financial year with the Reading Marathon. At Mayor Page's request, we put together a team to run on behalf of RSG — another fantastic demonstration of local support.

May:

Our 'Kind to Mind' match-funding campaign raised an amazing £5,543. We supported the campaign by sharing inspiring stories from some of our incredible volunteers about why they give their time and the impact it makes.

June:

Always one of our busiest months! An amazing group of supporters took part in Endure24 — a 24-hour relay race — and smashed their target by 25%, raising £2,136 for RSG.

June is also when we join the UK's biggest celebration of refugees: Refugee Week, which recognises the contributions of refugees and people seeking asylum to our communities. This year, we partnered with local organisations for events including a football tournament, a film screening and the launch of 'Be Seen in Green'. 'Be Seen in Green' takes place on International Refugee Day. We visited local schools to deliver assemblies and workshops about our work and pupils showed their support by wearing green — RSG's colours and making donations. We held our 30th anniversary celebration at Reading Town Hall as part of the Mayor's charity of the year programme. The evening brought together a packed audience for an inspiring showcase of international talent and thought-provoking discussion with our expert panel, an unforgettable milestone for RSG.



Community Engagement Team

July:

We were delighted when St Joseph's College presented us with a cheque for £4,596 after choosing RSG as their charity of the year – an incredible show of support.

August:

RSG enjoyed a wonderful day at Reading Pride, where so many people stopped by to say hello, show their support and take photos for our social media.

September:

Our team for the Reading Legal Walk smashed their fundraising target and enjoyed a relaxed 10km walk around Reading. We closed the month with the inaugural World Groove Festival in aid of RSG – a fantastic night of live music at Reading Minster attended by over 200 people.

October:

We were thrilled and honoured to receive the Pride of Reading 'Welcome All' Award – a true testament to the dedication of our staff and volunteers.

December:

We wrapped up the year on a high. For the first time, our Christmas Carol Concert sold out completely! The church was packed, the atmosphere was festive with a tombola, mulled wine and heartfelt speeches. We also achieved a record-breaking result for the Big Give Christmas Challenge, surpassing our target and raising an incredible £20,800!



Community Engagement Team



With heartfelt thanks to all our partners and supporters, of which include:

- Enterprise Cars - who provided Christmas presents for our clients
- Rank & File – who performed at our 30th anniversary.
- Tomson @ World Groove / Sanctuary Strikers – who helped to organise & perform at the music festival and also organised the football tournament.
- The Biscuit Factory – hosted a film for Refugee Week.
- 2024 Mayor Cllr Tony Page – who chose RSG as his charity of the year.
- St Joseph's College – who chose RSG as their charity of the year.
- Balamuty Dance/ Kryla Choir – performed for our 30th anniversary & other events.
- Reading Community Gospel Choir entertained a packed church for free at our Christmas Carol Concert.
- The Reading Minster, Richard and his team – for their generosity, hosting and unwavering support.
- Rotary who sponsored a new branded gazebo.
- The local schools who participated in Refugee Week.
- Our 24 new monthly donors.
- The hundreds of people who donated to the campaigns and appeals we ran throughout the year!
- The amazing people who took part in community/sporting events to raise money & awareness for RSG.
- All the unsung heroes who tirelessly give their time, effort and donations to support our work.

Thank you so much for all of your support.

Grants Team

This year our grant funding increased by 109%. We secured £500,499 in grant funding; this was a mixture of restricted project funding and unrestricted core funding. We applied to 24 grants throughout the year and was successful in 12 of them. Some of the biggest grants we secured was from the Henry-Smith Charity and Reading Borough Council. We were awarded a 3-year grant from Henry Smith Charity for over £70,000 a year (£210,000 total). This covers RSG core costs and helps us to deliver core services over the next three years. Reading Borough Council continued to support us with grant funding for the Ukrainian Support and the Casework Team and have committed to ongoing funding in 2025-26.

With thanks

to:

NACCOM
Henry Smith Charity
Sport England
Reading Integration Board
D'Oyly Carte Trust
David Brownlow Charitable Foundation
Garfield Weston
Awards for All
Souter Charitable Trust
CAF Keystone Fund
Reading Borough Council - Casework Support
Reading Borough Council - Ukraine Support

Finances

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Sarah Vawda Chair	Appointed 20/11/24
Prof. Mary Richardson	
Mr Thabo Makuyana	
Ms Samantha Lee	
Harriet Parfitt	Appointed 20/11/24
Andrea Cleaver	Appointed 20/11/24
Doon Lovett	Appointed 20/11/24
Natalie Marsden	Appointed 20/11/24
Yasmine Summers	Appointed 20/11/24
Mr Mike Martin MBE Chair	Resigned 20/11/24
Ms Fiona Zeneli Treasurer	Resigned 07/11/24
Mrs Emily Lloyd	Resigned 14/04/24
Ms Sarah Seddon	Resigned 25/11/24
Mr Simon Price	Resigned 14/04/24

Chief Executive Officer

Mr Nick Harborne

Deputy CEO

Ms Flora Roshi

Charity number 1098058

Company number 04515238

Principal address and Registered office

First Floor, R.1.5.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 INH

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank 13 New Road
Oxford OX1 1LG

MetroBank

One Southampton Row London
WC1B 5HA



FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Team

**For the year ending
31st March 2025**

	2025	2024
	£	£
Income Resources		
Contract income	392,464	271,498
Grants donations	558,094	352,345
Legacies		-
Other Income	22,326	15,745
Total Income	972,884	639,588
Expenditure		
Wages and salaries	576,723	453,492
Staff training and development	5,189	5,404
Freelance and consultancy	28,847	39,080
Volunteer costs	690	1,433
Cost of delivering services	45,839	68,833
Administration costs	39,232	45,245
Publicity and marketing		-
Meetings and events	328	837
Travel and subsistence	3,683	1,390
Funding Costs	21,908	12,479
Membership and subscriptions		-
Premises	36,194	27,704
IT & Communication	18,624	13,739
Office equipment		-
Professional fees	767	3,161
Depreciation	3,363	1,954
Total Expenditure	781,388	674,751
Net income / (expenditure)	191,495	-35,163

In Memory Of



**“Try to be good to each other, all of
you.**

**Be brave, and be the kindest
human beings you can be.”**

Alice Driver

13 DEC 1990 - 6 JAN 2019

