



# IMPACT REPORT 2015 - 2016

**Bristol Refugee Rights**

**Safety • Solidarity • Action for change**



# Chair's Report

It has been a privilege for me to have been Chair of Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR) for another year. I continue to be impressed by the energy and commitment of all our staff and volunteers, who work way beyond what would normally be expected, and give so much of themselves to the organisation. I am also always humbled to hear the stories of our members, and the horrific circumstances so many of them have endured to reach the solidarity and safety of our Centre.

The reality, however, is that although we now offer a wide range of quality services, this still does not always make the next stage of their asylum journey easy or smooth. With an increasing number of asylum cases being turned down, persistent draconian immigration legislation with threats of detention and forced destitution, cuts to Legal Aid, and dire housing shortages, so many people are finding themselves still in traumatic situations for many years after their arrival in Bristol. Although I am amazed at many members' resilience, I am really pleased that, as well as practical support, we are increasingly focussing on trying to improve their wellbeing, and are developing more expertise and partnership working in this area.

The global refugee situation is clearly catastrophic, and has led to a huge increase in the numbers of people locally wanting to help in any way they can. The generosity of our Friends and community fundraisers this year has enabled us to build up our reserves. However, we are having to use them to fund basic services, so need to develop a more sustainable long term business model. We operate in the context of public funding cuts, impacting on key areas such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support, social care and youth provision, which has led to a diminishing of statutory services and a contracting of the

refugee voluntary sector, and we have sadly seen Refugee Action closing its local service and their final worker transferring to BRR. In the light of this, we were really pleased to gain further funding for our range of ESOL provision (from Henry Smith charity) and our Advocacy and Information work (from Big Lottery).

The national and local policy context in which we are working is getting increasingly challenging, and we have identified the need to work more strategically with local partner agencies to develop services that are coordinated and responsive, and fill the gaps. An example of this is the increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving at our Centre, which is not set up to meet all young people's needs. We therefore also need to act as a catalyst and work with statutory agencies so they develop a more strategic approach to meeting the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. We were therefore pleased to be able to second a member of staff to support Bristol City Council to set up the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

Finally, I would like to thank our amazing staff and volunteers for all they do to make the organisation work so effectively, and in particular Katie Hope, who came in as Director to cover for Beth Wilson's maternity leave, and has done a brilliant job. I would also like to commend my fellow Trustees for their commitment and expertise, and in particular, Malcolm Jenner, (who has been such a committed Treasurer over the years), and Nasim Dumont, who both stepped in to help us when we were without a Finance and Admin staff member at the end of the financial year.

**Ruth Pickersgill MBE**

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*One of our members said this about Bristol Refugee Rights: "Most important place in Bristol. No other place like it. They make you feel human again. It offers a 'home' and welcoming place to people who have no other place to go. They open the doors to strangers. It's a great place to feel welcomed, learn skills, make friends and feel at home. They direct you when you feel hopeless and don't know where to turn. They make you smile again."*

# Vision:

People coming to Bristol to seek sanctuary are welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.

# Mission Statement:

Our mission is to welcome asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol. Together we create a place of solidarity and trust. We challenge the injustices that we experience and witness in the UK. Learning from each other we develop partnerships and links with the wider community to promote equality of opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees.

# Members:

Throughout the report reference is made to our members. Members are:

People who are in the asylum process or who have recently been granted Refugee Status.

They are seeking sanctuary in UK, often having fled some of the world's bloodiest conflicts and terrible human rights abuses.

Newcomers to BRR have an initial interview to establish eligibility and how we can help. Once a member, they can access all of our services and are encouraged to participate in the running of the organisation.

- Since opening in 2006 we have welcomed approximately **2700** members from more than **70** different countries
- **421** new asylum seeking and refugee members joined Bristol Refugee Rights in 2015/2016 - the highest number since we opened
- An average of **75** members attended the Welcome Centre each day it was open

## THE WELCOME CENTRE

### AID

Advocacy and Information desk; Asylum Support Project; help with money; housing; solicitors and referrals

Services delivered by The British Red Cross; Fountain Solicitors; and Migrant Legal Project

### VOICE

Training & supporting community interpreters. Public speaking; awareness raising events

### MAIN HALL

Drop in social space open 3 days a week; cooked meal & refreshments; free shop clothes & household items; mini food bank; haircuts arts & crafts; massage; games; working with The Bristol Bike Project; The Haven; Trauma Foundation South West; Bristol MIND

PRIDE WITHOUT BORDERS for LGBTI people

LARA Refugee musicians & arts

REFUGEE WEEK; HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

### BRILL

British life & language classes at 6 levels; computer classes; college referrals; careers advice & trips

In partnership with Refugee Women of Bristol; Ashley Community Housing

### CRECHE

For 0-4 year olds; supporting parents and families; OFSTED registered

# The Welcome Centre and Wellbeing



Members receive a warm welcome at reception

The Welcome Centre hosts a vibrant mix of people from a wide range of countries and cultures, at different points in their life in the UK, brought together by shared practical and emotional needs.



Knitting skills are shared

People come to attend English classes, get help with their asylum cases, access support such as the food bank or free shop and use the crèche, but also to relax, socialise and engage with various therapeutic activities, from arts and crafts to talking through their worries with trained volunteers. We know that this is hugely important for people's wellbeing.

The Welcome Centre was expertly coordinated during the year by Alice Cutler (on maternity leave from June 2015), Matt Bass and then Andrew McCarthy, with additional support from Danny Vincent and Mohammed Osman.

*"BRR help people to forget their worries. When I am here I feel comfortable, safe and in peace."* BRR member

The New Economics Foundation promote five ways to wellbeing: connecting with others; keeping active; taking notice of the positives; giving to others; and learning. All these things happen in the Welcome Centre. A walking group was set up by volunteers with a focus on wellbeing. We continue to work with the Bristol Bike Project so that members can access a refurbished bicycle. At the end of each shift we reflect on positive moments from the day and celebrate when there is good news. We also know from volunteer supervisions that volunteering increases confidence, skills and self-esteem, and builds social and professional networks.

Learning happens not just in English classes but also through the social side of the Centre, where people from a wide range of countries and cultures meet. For example, members and volunteers share knitting



Members at the Arts Table

skills, learn new words over a game of scrabble, and paint pictures of places from memory which then spark conversations.

A new development this year is a partnership with Bristol Mind, who have been coming to the Welcome Centre to offer therapeutic listening to members. We also have regular visits from an Arabic speaking mental health outreach project from ACE (Assertive Contact and Engagement), who help people access services which improve wellbeing.

In our Annual Survey of just under **100** members,

- **82%** said coming to the Centre makes them feel a lot better
- **42** of our members volunteered at the Welcome Centre this year
- **63%** of members told us they have met many more people to talk to through the Welcome Centre



Young men enjoy a game of pool

# Advocacy and Information Desk (AID)

AID offers asylum seekers and refugees support, signposting and referrals to enable them to access the national and local services to which they are entitled. We help people obtain high quality asylum support; access appropriate health care; find accommodation; find ways out of destitution; navigate the complex asylum procedure; and protect their human rights.

AID saw a marked increase in the number of people who were homeless in the second half of the year – both destitute asylum seekers and those with refugee status who chose to move to Bristol.



AID team volunteers

The AID team is made up of a full-time Manager, Tony Jaffray, a part-time Volunteer Coordinator, Chrys Kelson and a dedicated and skilled team of volunteers. This year we held a service review to collectively improve our service, cope with increased demand and increase support for volunteers. Following this, we held bimonthly 'inset days' for training and planning.

One of the AID volunteers was a law student during the time he volunteered. He said this about his experience:

*"I have gained excellent experience through BRR. I conducted casework and real (and often challenging) client conferences on a weekly basis, as well as liaising with solicitors and the Home Office. The experience helped me enormously with Conferencing and the Refugee and Asylum Option on the Bar Professional Training Course."*

In the year from April 2015 to April 2016:

- 293 people accessed 1084 different appointments
- 33% were women and 67% were men
- 32% were 25 years of age and under
- Average number of members supported by AID Triage weekly was 25
- 28% of new people seen during the year were destitute



AID team service review day

The team work closely with partner organisations including British Red Cross, Bristol Hospitality Network, Refugee Action

(whose Bristol Office closed in the spring of 2016), Migrant Legal Project, and The Haven.

**Mr H** is a young Kurdish man from Iraq. He fled Iraq in 2015 and claimed asylum in the UK. His whole family had been killed by ISIS. He stayed briefly in Birmingham where he was befriended by a man who appeared to want to help him but subsequently robbed him of the few things he had. He arrived in Bristol with no contacts and was sleeping rough when someone told him about Bristol Refugee Rights.

He was extremely despondent when he first visited. He met with AID volunteers on three occasions and they assisted him in applying for government support, gave details of hot food outlets and linked him to the BRR destitution team who provided him with warm clothes and a sleeping bag. AID also made a referral to a local solicitor to take on his asylum case and to British Red Cross

for financial assistance. He was briefly housed by our partner organisation Bristol Hospitality Network until government funded housing in South Wales was arranged.

On his last visit to BRR before being moving to South Wales he was queueing up for lunch and talking with another member. For the first time he broke into a smile and laughed with the other members for several minutes.

He said this about the AID team:

*"AID helped me. I didn't know anyone in Bristol or where to go and they sorted things out for me. It was very good to come somewhere and know people were on my side."*

# British Life and Language Project (BRILL)

## English Classes

BRILL had a fantastic boost this year; we were awarded a further three years funding from the Henry Smith Charity who have financed BRILL since 2010. We are extremely grateful as it enables us to sustain and develop this vital service.

The programme is managed by Karen Davies who supports and supervises a highly talented and dedicated volunteer teaching team.

Our classes are about language learning and much more! They offer a safe and supportive space for students to build confidence, meet new people and find out about life in the UK.

Our weekly drop in English classes run year round. They cater for complete beginners through to university level learners, with our on-site preschool crèche for parents.



An English class

Students can start immediately, without waiting on a list. BRILL meets an essential need as many of our members are unable to access accredited ESOL (English) classes.

Our service is really needed in the city as asylum seekers must wait for 6 months before they are eligible to attend College to learn English; refused asylum seekers are ineligible altogether. There are very few on-site crèche spaces offered by local education providers.

Numbers of people joining BRILL and attendance over the past year has been the highest since the programme began:

- 19 classes run over three days per week over 44 weeks per year:
- 200 new students this year
- 30 volunteer teachers and assistants
- Up to 70 students each session
- Certificates of Attendance for 90 students
- 75 students moved up a level
- 73% of members said English classes are the most important service at the Welcome Centre

Government cuts of 40% to ESOL over 5 years have reduced statutory provision and increased waiting lists.

One third of members who come to our English classes said they can't access classes elsewhere. Cost is a big factor but also members say, 'The teachers understand me here.'



Trip to Folly Farm – apple press



Trip to Folly Farm – lighting a fire

When **Mehdi** first arrived in Bristol in 2015, he spoke only a little English and knew nobody in the city. He heard about BRR through word of mouth and initially came to the Welcome Centre because he wanted to learn English. Through the support of BRILL, Mehdi now attends English classes at the Welcome Centre and City of Bristol College at Entry level 2; his English has greatly improved. He enjoys taking part in our educational trips; cooking over a fire at Folly Farm reminded him of doing the same in his

## Supplementary Classes and Trips

In addition to English classes, we run weekly computer and literacy classes and regular partnership courses. This year we have held Everyday First Aid Training with the Red Cross, Food Hygiene Training with Virtual College and a Humanities Taster Course with Bristol University.

We organise trips throughout the year, extending learning beyond the classroom. Highlights this year have been an outdoor education day with the Avon Wildlife Trust and a visit to the Houses of Parliament.



Trip to Parliament with members

country, Iran. Without BRR he and his family wouldn't be able to go on day trips, as it would be too expensive. Mehdi now has the confidence to volunteer at the Welcome Centre in the free shop and serving lunch. He says,

*"I was very shy at first; now I like to talk to English people, learning is about talking with other people and I have found new friends."*

# Community Crèche



Children enjoying a story in the crèche

The Crèche offers high quality drop-in childcare to members' children from birth to five years. We have also provided weekly term time crèche's for Refugee Women of Bristol. This year we have been developing staff skills so we can we best support children's social and emotional needs. We have also been making sure that the Crèche best supports children's communication, language and physical skills.

The Crèche had staff changes during the year as manager Laura Hamilton was replaced by Gill Davies, with a period of our Deputy Crèche Manager, Katalin Abdi acting up.

The team have been using our special garden space to allow children to explore and discover in new ways. The sense of togetherness between team members has grown and staff have developed skills in written observations; led on enhancing play areas; thought holistically about children in their family context.

- The crèche has run at least **5** weekly sessions
- During the year, **111** different children benefited from the crèche
- More than **two** new children registered per week



Taking steps in the crèche garden



Children exploring in the crèche garden

Looking forward, we would like to seek funding to pilot a part time Family Advocate role and grow links with other organisations. We are particularly excited to be working with the Children's Scrapstore which promises to be a great learning journey for the team, parents and children. However, as the restricted grant for the crèche has ended, our priority is to raise funds for this vital and increasingly rare service in Bristol.

*During a focus group with parents held in 2015-16, parents said the children teach us English that they learn from books and songs at the crèche.*

*"They are happy there. We give it 100%"*

**Serine** joined the crèche aged 1 year and 2 months in April 2015 and has been a regular attender. Serine found it particularly difficult to settle and her mother was supported to stay and play until she was comfortable enough to be left. Serine's mother did not speak English and has been going to English classes through the BRILL project and Refugee Women of Bristol 3 to 4 times a week. She has also had help from AID. This has only been possible because she has been able to leave Serine in the crèche.

Over the last year, we have watched Serine grow – she now uses key words in English and is starting to copy short

sentences. At circle time, Serine makes choices for the songs she likes to sing by using the song signs or actions. She also anticipates the animals in our favourite stories 'Dear Zoo' and 'Walking through the Jungle', making animal sounds and shouting out their names.

Serine is fascinated by water and loves pouring, running water and squirting it out of bottles. Serine knows our routine well and at 'Tidy up Time' she joins in the song and matches resources to their boxes. The beaming smile Serine has when she arrives at the crèche door energises the whole room; we remember just how far she has come.

# Volunteers



Member and non-member volunteers work together to sort clothes and household items for the free shop



Volunteers prepare refreshments for students between classes

We rely on an amazing team of volunteers to deliver every bit of our work. We have a great mix of people in the team, from those who helped set up the organisation 10 years ago to those who recently moved to the UK to seek sanctuary.

Volunteers frequently tell Volunteer Coordinators Andrew McCarthy and Mohammed Osman how rewarding volunteering with BRR is: meeting new people, learning about different places and cultures, making a real difference. However, the work is not always easy and this year we have worked hard to increase our support for volunteers.

All new volunteers attend a two day training which includes a section on responding to distress, as members of BRR are often

going through difficult times. We have also set up monthly support sessions in partnership with the Trauma Foundation South West. Both of these promote resilience and allow people to share strategies for dealing with stress. We also ran a series of training sessions on understanding vicarious trauma, so that volunteers are better able to notice the effects of working alongside people who have experienced trauma and who are facing the deeply antagonistic UK asylum process.

It is through the strengths, skills and warmth of volunteers that the Welcome Centre remains such a special place, so it's really important we all look after ourselves and each other!

- **157** people volunteered their time during the year 2015-16
- **30** were new member volunteers
- **12** were member volunteers carrying on from previous years
- **115** were non-members, **28** of whom were new
- Volunteers gave approximately **24,000** hours to make BRR's services happen this year!

# Thank you

“Thanks so much for giving your time to give happiness to others!” BRR member.

## To all of our amazing volunteers in 2015/16:

Abdullah Bash, Adil Ahmed, Ahmed Shemy, Aimee Feika, Alessia Dalceggio, Ali Al Mubarak, Aly Vernon, Andrew May, Angela Hill, Ann Brook, Anna Schiff, Asia Yousif, Aster Rose, Bashir Barrow, Beryl de Stone, Bukky Onabanjo, Carmen Guajirro, Caroline Black, Cat Dowle, Cathy Salisbury, Charly Ramuz, Chloe Woods, Christina Shewell, Christine Lambert, Claire Chislett, Claire Herford, Claudio Lurati, Dammy LeGrand, Danny Vincent, Darren Baker, Dee Mushonga, Derris Whitson, Deshira Shehu, Dory Wainwright, Enas Almansory, Ekhlash Ahmed, Emmanuel Nsofwa, Esam Amin, Fariba Bayat, Filemon Fshaye, Foulanisana Djane, Frances Annan, Hadas Zekarias, Hamidreza Mohammadi, Hannah Duff, Harry Covill, Hiba Gamil, Hijazi Sharif Ali, Hui Li, Ibrahim Abdallah, Ibrahim Yahya, Ihor Slynko, Isy Schultz, Jalaladin Abdolahi, Jane Katsonga, Jane Cullen, Jane Silver-Corren, Jill Hazell, Jo Cutts, Julia Gresty, Kamal Alhaj, Karen Bruni, Kate Walker, Katharine Abbot, Katja Durrani, Katrina Wong, Khaled Abdulaziz, Kirsty Johnson, Kitty Odell, Laura Chester, Laura McCarthy, Laurence Daly-Rossin, Leila Radmard, Lucy Boyle, Lyn Goh,

Magbula Ali, Magda Mosy, Margaret Cooper, Marianela Barrios, Marta Kanarkiewicz, Mary Sergeant, Mary Todd, Maryam Hamami, Maureen Prior, Mawada Osman, Melina Irvine, Milgo Hersi, Mina Ghadiri, Mirfat Mustafa, Mirfat Shamat, Missa Osman, Mohammed Hamed, Mohuedeen Zakreya, Moira Byrne, Monsurat Ayodele, Muhsin Al Najim, Naomi Roberts, Nathalie Jaifar, Ned Edwards, Negla Abdul Hadi, Neil Walker, Nick Shipton, Nikki Jones, Niru Prajapati, Owen Cranshaw, Patricia Ogri, Pauline Marshall, Penny Clarke, Penny Gray, Poppy Firmin, Poppy Hobbs, Qaali Abdi, Rachel Russel, Ravit Kumar, Reda Mahmud, Richard Lawrence, Richard Henderson, Rob Porteous, Ron Griffiths, Rosa Potter, Rosemary Andoh, Rosie Merson, Ross Mallon, Safaraz Ascam, Said Abdi, Sammy Devonald, Sara Barna, Sandi Dheensa, Selam Nazgi, Senait Abreham, Shafiqullah Noori, Shantha Arulanatham, Sharon MacDonald, Silu Pascoe, Sophia Darweish, Sophia Dutton, Sue Caporn, Sue Smailes, Susanna Revolti, Sylvie Plannel, Silvia Jimenez Cruz, Taban Othman, Taiwo Gbaye, Tej Bhandal, Teresa Long, Teresa Thornhill, Thomas Richardson, Tilly Vacher, Titi Oloayo, Ullubiy Isaev, Wael Bey, Yana Matuienko, Yohanse Issak, Zahra Azari

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have also fundraised for BRR over the year.



# Community Engagement and Interpreters

Asylum seekers are excluded from being able to work, to speak out and to contribute to society in many ways. The VOICE Project aims to address this by training and supporting them to volunteer as interpreters and as public speakers.

Funded by Big Lottery until 2019, VOICE enables our members to speak out, to contribute and to learn new skills. It was managed by Qerim Nuredini and now Tom Daly. Longstanding volunteers, Mary Todd and Richard Henderson have been invaluable for their help on the project.

We support our volunteer interpreters to use their existing language skills to help others. In doing so they gain experience and understanding of British society and work. We also offer interpreting training courses and continual support and development for our interpreters.

## Interpreters:

Muhsin, Misaa, Abdullah, Hijazi, Magda, Allawia, Asia, Abdulfadil (Arabic), Jaladin (Azeri, Farsi and Sorani), Nasim (Farsi), Hui Li (Chinese), Mahmat (French, Arabic, Zakhava), Jehan, Rajiv (Tamil), Khaled (Kurmanji, Arabic), Yanina (Ukrainian and Russian).



**Khaled** is a refugee from Syria. He arrived in Bristol in September 2012 and within 3 days of arrival had thrown himself into a voluntary role with Bristol Refugee Rights. He told us, "I can't bear not doing something".

Khaled speaks Kurmanji, Arabic and English, and quickly became an invaluable interpreter with the AID (Advocacy and Information Desk) Team.

*"Volunteering helped me settle down mentally, and also understand the English bureaucratic system and culture."*

- **23** members have completed the Interpreter Training Course
- **3** members who completed the training have found employment as interpreters since

# Public Speaking

We offer training and support through our VOICE project so that asylum seekers and refugees can be empowered to tell their story and share their perspectives. We organise public events where the audience can learn more about our members' experiences and the issues. We also bring speakers to a wide variety of groups and institutions such as schools, universities, faith groups, community organisations and conferences.

- **6** members were trained on a Public Speaking Course
- They participated in **18** public events



**Emmanuel** is from Zambia and is a familiar face at the Welcome Centre. He attended a VOICE Public Speakers Course in July 2015. Since then he has been a regular speaker at VOICE events.

Emmanuel says:

*"I was a public speaker back home but I have not been able to use my skills for years. This is helping me to keep my skills up."*

He is also involved with the Members' Consultation Group and takes on the role of Welcomer in the Main Hall, where he is a friendly and soothing presence.

Tom Daly, VOICE Manager, has been working with Emmanuel on preparing for public events. He says:

*"Working with Emmanuel is always a pleasure. He is such a good speaker and he always has a heartfelt message that is thoughtful and considered. He is a great ambassador for BRR."*

# Campaigns and Communications

BRR's new Media, Communications and Campaigns Sub Committee made up of staff, Trustees and volunteers worked together to increase our reach through

increased media and public awareness work and to create action for change through campaigning, particularly against measures in the new Immigration Bill.

# Refugee Arts (LARA)



The Lorraine Ayensu Refugee Arts fund has continued to enable the promotion of refugee and asylum seeking musicians with the dedicated coordination of Danny Vincent. During the past year we were able to support musicians from Iran, Kurdistan, Sudan and Senegal. This has included performances at St George's, collaborations with local music groups such as the Bristol Reggae Orchestra, and one of the highlights of the year was the showcase during Refugee Week in June at La Ruca, which marked the first time that BRR member Ali Mulbarak and local musician Knud Stuwe performed as an Oud duo.

*Ali says: "Without LARA, I would not have met Knud, and Nabra would not exist. Being part of Nabra has got me back to playing music again, and Knud has taught me many things, including how to read music."*

With LARA support, Ali and Knud have adopted the name Nabra for their duo and have performed in and around Bristol.

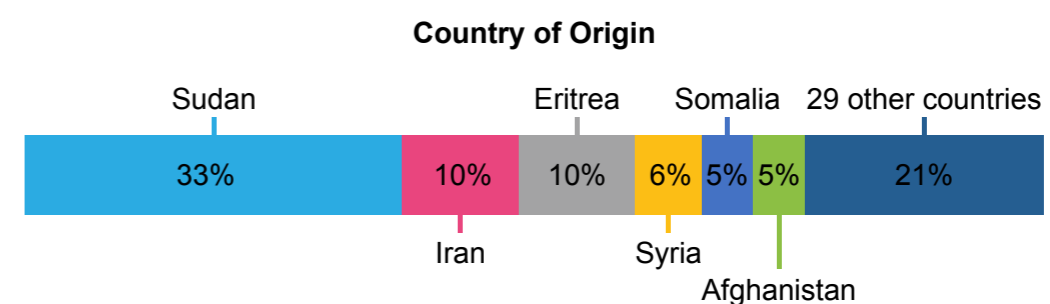
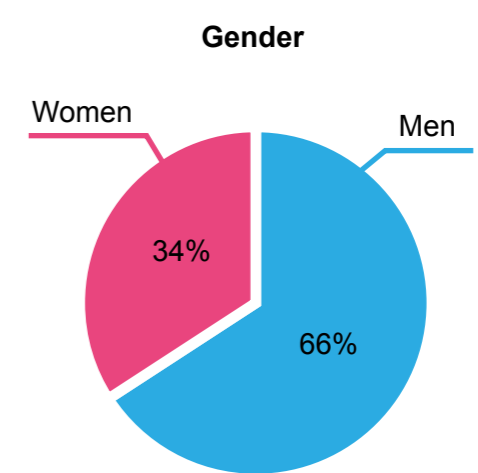
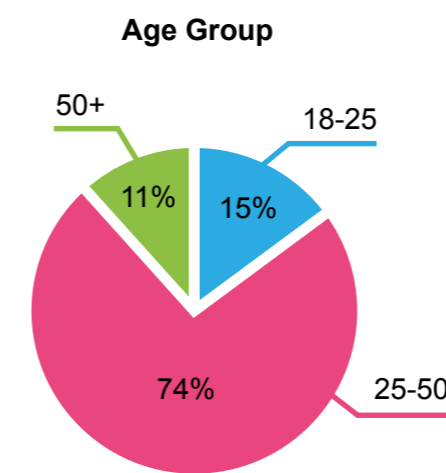
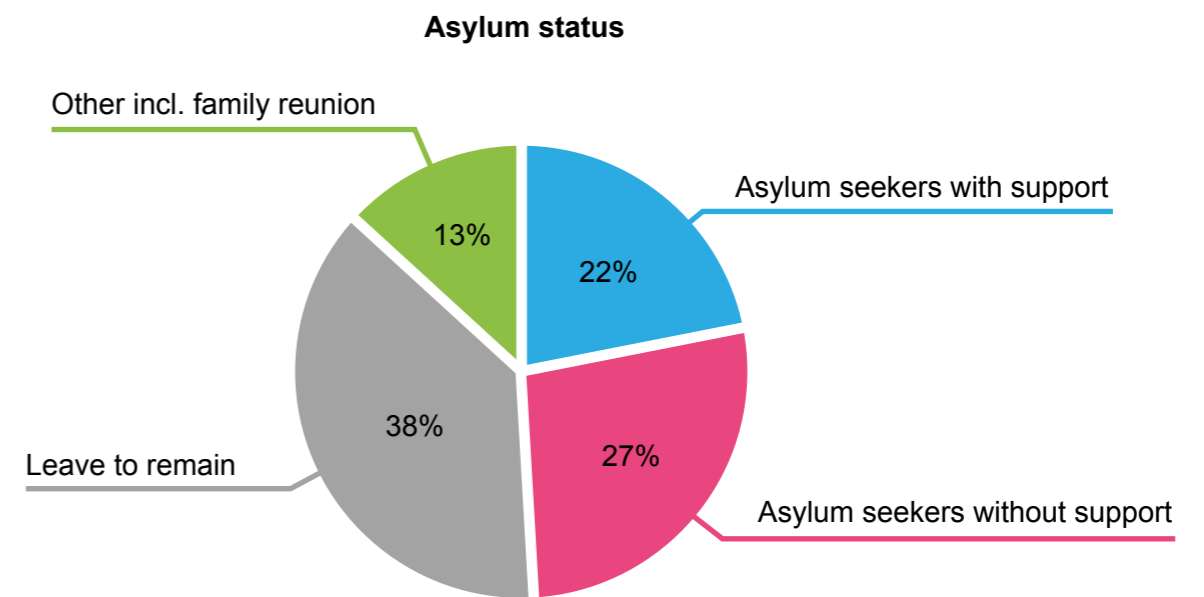
Ali's family are from Sudan and during the year the family were interviewed by Points West for a short documentary for BBC Children in Need. His 10 year old daughter told the family's story for the documentary. If you want to see it visit <https://www.facebook.com/pointswest/videos/897453817016429/>

*Knud says: "The collaboration with Ali has been a real highlight for me this year. We've had plenty of gigs and musically we are getting better all the time, and Ali has become a good friend of mine. I think we are both benefiting: playing with Ali has forced me to improve my right hand technique, and I am introducing Ali to different scales and musical notation."*

# Asylum Status Review

During a week in March 2016, BRR surveyed all the users of the Welcome Centre. We conducted a survey of members' opinions on the services we provide and of their asylum status, gender and country of origin.

During the week, 225 individual members used the Centre. Many of these people came on more than one day, with a total of 314 visits to the Centre by members during the week. The charts below show who the members were who visited us that week:



# Staff and Governance

## Trustees

The following people were Trustees for all or part of the year from April 2015 to the end of March 2016:

Ruth Pickersgill, Chris Bertram, Malcolm Jenner, Mary Griggs, Andrew May, Forward Maisokwadzo (resigned at AGM), Abdi Mohammed (resigned at AGM), Nasim Dumont, John Patrick Njau, (resigned), Emmanuel Adim (resigned), Adam Mohamed, James Jatta, Richard Henderson, Asia Yousif.

## Staff

The following people were employed by Bristol Refugee Rights for all or part of the year from April 2015 to the end of March 2016:

Beth Wilson, Katie Hope, Alice Cutler, Matt Bass, Andrew McCarthy, Mohammed Osman, Danny Vincent, Karen Davies,

Qerim Nuredini, Tom Daly, Tony Jaffray, Chrys Kelson, Laura Hamilton, Gillian Davies, Katalin Abdi, Djedje Ngele, Afrah Hussein, Angela Smith, Hanna Koryna, Ruth Nott, Isy Schultz, Ruth Soandro-Jones.

## Member Consultation Group

The Member Consultation Group (MCG) continued to meet monthly with the Director over the year to consult on a wide range of issues affecting BRR, from developing a premises hub for all asylum seeker and refugee support services in Bristol, to approving a range of research projects about refugees. MCG members act as member representatives, gathering views to raise at the meetings and giving out information to others. There were 13 participants over the year from 10 different countries, with regular attendance by Esam Amin, Emmanuel Nsofwa, Jane Katsonga, Aimee Feika, Niman Sharif Obsiyeh, Bashir Barrow and Emmanuel Adim.

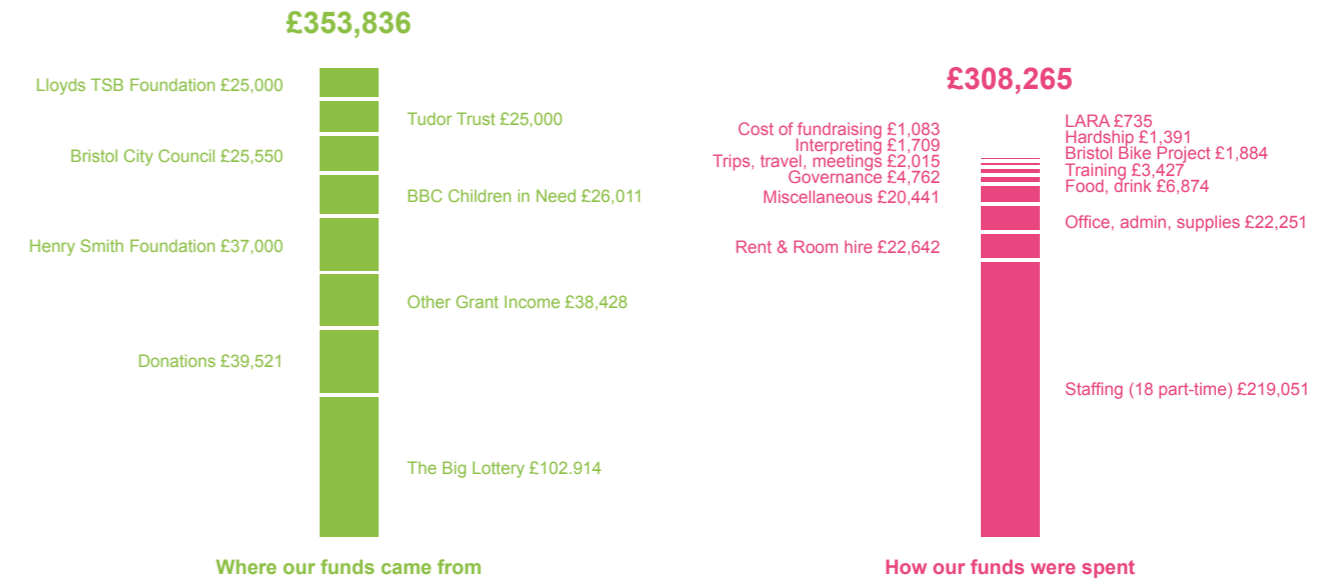
**A special thankyou to those people who have stepped in, or stepped up, to help cover absences during the year. Also we wish to thank Julia Stafford, Alba Network, who has helped with all of our service reviews over the year.**

## Public Benefit

BRR is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and abides by the requirements set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Trustees reviewed their compliance with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Commission. Our annual report indicates how BRR meets the public benefit guidance.

# Finance Report

Our total **income** for the year was **£353,836**.  
Our total **expenditure** was **£308,265**.



These figures summarise a lot of detail, which is available in the accounts to be submitted to the Charity Commission. At the end of the financial year our reserve had increased to £82,073 thanks largely to the generosity of many individual donors. Our reserve policy sets a target of 15% of our expected total annual expenditure to enable the organisation to deal with a shortfall of income. In 2015/16 this target was about £46,000. The reserve we held at the end of the year was prudent given the uncertainty of replacing some grants but it should allow us to continue in operation without major problems in the next year.

Our main work is covered by grants from trusts, foundations and Bristol City Council. We are extremely grateful to these

organisations, many of whom have funded BRR for multiple years and are essential to the continuation of our services. Our BBC Children in Need grant ended in March 2016. Our longstanding support from the Tudor Trust will also end in the autumn of 2016 and we are actively looking for replacement funds and means of diversifying our income further.

This is my last report as Treasurer as I will complete my permitted term of office at the AGM 2016. I would like to thank staff past and present and my fellow Trustees for their support over the period of nearly seven years during which it has been my privilege to serve as the Treasurer of BRR.

**Malcolm Jenner**

## Thanks to Supporters and Partners

The Welcome Centre works closely with many other local organisations and individuals without whom we would not be able to deliver the services that we do.

To each and every one, whether you have helped in a small or big way, we send our sincere thanks.

# A Year in the Life of BRR

April  
2015

**4 week interpreter training course for members**  
**New Community Engagement and AID projects started with Big Lottery funding**

May  
2015

**Stretch and relax yoga sessions for members at the Welcome Centre**  
**De-escalation training for volunteers**  
**Visit from Bristol University Medical Students**

June  
2015

## Refugee Week:

Welcome Centre Open Day was well attended. We met many new people through the Queen's Square Celebrating Sanctuary Day.



July  
2015

**End of term awards day in BRILL**  
**TB Awareness Training for volunteers**

August  
2015

**Beach Trip to Ogmore-by-Sea**  
with 75 members, volunteers and staff.  
**Stalls at Redfest, Amnesty Garden Party, and the Islamic Cultural Fayre**

September  
2015

## Pride without Borders

Working with partner agencies we created a regular meeting space for LGBT service users, starting a new group - Pride without Borders.

## Lots of media interest about BRR

Director on a live BBC radio Bristol interview with John Darvall; article about BRR and Welcome Centre in The Guardian newspaper; BBC Points West interview with Director and Member Volunteer Coordinator at Welcome Centre.

October  
2015

**Annual General Meeting** with guest speaker, Mike Kaye, Advocacy Manager at Still Human Still Here.

**Speaking engagements** at Mothers' Union, Business Community and Refugees Conference for members and volunteers.

**BRR in Bristol 24/7 magazine**  
**Trip for members to Folly Farm**



November  
2015

**Everyday First Aid training** for members run by the Red Cross.  
**BBC Children in Need appeal airs a film** about the BRR crèche with members Missa and Ali narrated by their daughter, 10-year old Reem.

December  
2015

**Human Rights Day** event very successful in central Bristol attended by 100 people, half of whom were new to refugee issues, highlighting '5 things you can do to help refugees':

1. Raising awareness;
2. Campaigning;
3. Volunteering;
4. Offering accommodation;
5. Fundraising



Kiris Riviere performed his song 'Swarm' live. There were presentations by 7 organisations and 12 groups had stalls.

January  
2016

**Natalie Bennett, Green Party Leader and Tony Dyer, Green Party candidate for mayor** visit the Welcome Centre and talk to members and staff.

**BRR Community Engagement Manager** seconded to Bristol City Council for Syrian refugee resettlement for three months.

**BRR BRILL Manager awarded** Learning Ambassador for Bristol.

February  
2016

**Vicarious Trauma Awareness training** for staff and volunteers run by Trauma Foundation Southwest.

**Volunteer thank you party at Hamilton House**

March  
2016

**Held our annual member survey and status review**



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# Bristol Refugee Rights

**Safety** • **Solidarity** • **Action for change**



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