

# BRISTOL REFUGEE RIGHTS

Safety – Solidarity – Action for Change

## Strategic Plan

2019-2022

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## About Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR):

### Our Vision

A society where refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are welcomed, feel safe, live free of poverty and are able to positively build their lives. A society where everyone's rights and entitlements are respected.



A word cloud of various services provided by BRR. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The largest words are 'Referrals', 'Wellbeing Classes', 'Advice', 'Campaigning', and 'Education'. Other visible words include 'Volunteering', 'Signposting', 'Arts', 'Lunch', 'Drinks', 'Creche', 'Speaking', 'Games', 'Support', 'Welcome', 'English', 'Food', and 'Games'.

- BRR is a place of solidarity and trust; being member led is fundamental; members are supported to participate throughout the organisation.
- BRR prioritises welcome, safety, wellbeing and equality.
- BRR services are holistic; complimentary and integrated.
- Many BRR services are unique in Bristol: an Advice Service which includes asylum support advice; an Early Years Project for refugee and migrant children; an LGBT+ group specifically for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- BRR works in partnership; convening city-wide fora, bringing organisations together and working strategically to meet the needs of members and tackle root causes of the problems they face.

Bristol Refugee Rights is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. In 2019, BRR's doors will have been open for 13 years and during that time BRR has developed into the largest provider of services to asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol.

**This Strategic plan sets out how we intend to develop services over the course of 2019-2022.**

### Running the organisation:

- BRR has a Board of Trustees made up of a maximum of 12 elected Trustees; we aim to have 50% of the Trustees from refugee or migrant background.
- A Member (beneficiary) Consultation Group are consulted each month on governance and operational issues.
- BRR has a comprehensive list of policies which are an active part of governance and running of the organisation.
- BRR complies with the requirements of Bristol City Council Baseline Standards for Voluntary Organisations, Ofsted Childcare Register and OISC.

Bristol Refugee Rights is run by a Director who is supported by a Strategic Management Team. Around 140 volunteers support staff to deliver front line services. Around 125 regular donors support the organisation financially.

Policies are drafted in consultation with staff and where relevant, with members (service users) and volunteers. Policies are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees at least every 3 years. A Member Participation Strategy sets out how we meet our aim to be member-led.

Risks are managed through BRR's Risk Register which is regularly reviewed by Trustees.

## Partnerships:

BRR works in partnership to learn from others, provide the best service to our members and because we believe it will make us more sustainable. To the partnerships we are part of we bring: knowledge, experience and expertise; an ability and aspiration to make the partnership a success; organisational infrastructure; and our unique services and approach to being member led.

## Context:

- *Local Authority (LA) funding and EU funding is reducing; competition for trust and foundation as well as LA funding is increasing.*
- *The need for advice is increasing.*
- *The political environment is increasingly hostile to people seeking asylum and migrants.*

In 2015, the worldwide refugee crisis shone the limelight on the plight of the world's refugees and by extension, on the needs of BRR's members. A number of new services developed in Bristol aimed at tackling increased need. In 2018, the problems faced by the Windrush Generation brought attention onto the difficulties faced by other migrants. Fast-forward to 2019 and the numbers of asylum seekers arriving in the UK has settled but there are now an increasing number of services in Bristol competing for funding at a time when all charities are finding it increasingly difficult to raise sufficient funds. The availability of free advice has been decimated by the closure of Bristol's branch of Refugee Action in 2016 and the cuts to legal aid in 2013. Our members face ever more harsh immigration laws and report to us an increasing sense of hostility and hate crime.

## Purpose:

- *BRR was formed in 2006 by asylum seekers, refugees and professionals with the aim of filling a gap in services; it continues to hold an ethos of solidarity today.*
- *Asylum seekers, refugees and increasingly other migrants face poor treatment in the UK; the hostile environment represents a package of measures designed to make life hard.*
- *The needs, rights and entitlements of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are increasingly difficult to secure as government seeks to erode them.*

In 2018, our Charitable Objects were broadened to enable us to work with migrants as well as asylum seekers and refugees. We purposely did not define "migrants", recognising that any and all migrants have rights and entitlements which we may enable them to secure and providing us with the flexibility to change services in response to changes in law.

Our charitable objects include:

- The provision of information, advice and support;
- Helping and protecting those with physical and mental health conditions;
- Public education about the issues facing our members;
- The provision of recreation or leisure activities;
- Education and training; and
- Promotion of human rights.

Based on a range of factors including need, availability of other services, our Vision, Aims and Values, we currently prioritise the needs of those without immigration status, with an insecure immigration status and those who are destitute. Services are designed in line with our Objects and taking into consideration the original aim of the organisation to fill gaps where other services do not exist or are unable to meet the specific needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

## Values:

- *Our values shape what we do and how we do it.*

- **Respect:** We are committed to equality and treating everyone fairly.
- **Shared humanity:** We are all human beings; we are all global citizens.
- **Integrity:** We have strong moral principles and act in the interests of people we work with.
- **Collaboration:** We build, support and encourage partnerships between individuals, teams and organisations.
- **Empowerment:** We encourage people to be stronger, more confident and to claim their rights.
- **Innovation:** We are adaptable, respond to the changing world around us and strive to be the best we can.

## Monitoring Impact

- *Our Vision, Aims, Ways of Working, Values and Strategic Priorities are used to plan and monitor the impact of services.*
- *Member Consultation and feedback is key to measuring and monitoring impact.*

Our performance as an organisation is monitored against our Aims and Ways of Working and Strategic Priorities with regular reports to the Board of Trustees and the publication of an annual Impact Report. An Action Plan for achieving our Strategic Priorities is developed annually and used to monitor progress.

We monitor outputs through collecting information about the users of our services. We regularly gather feedback from members and non-members through questionnaires, surveys, at events, focus groups, Member Consultation Group meetings, volunteer meetings, and regular strategy planning with all stakeholders.

Specific projects within BRR have monitoring requirements developed in partnership with funders. In 2019, we are working with external evaluators on two projects to look at our methods of monitoring and evaluation and to evaluate our impact in the wider context.

Bristol Refugee Rights has an Income Generation Strategy and Theory of Change which are reviewed annually. Detailed information about our outputs and methods used to monitor and evaluate our services can be found in our Theory of Change (available on request).

Bristol Refugee Rights is also monitored through our compliance with:

- Bristol City Council's Baseline Standards for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations aimed at ensuring organisations are well managed and provide good quality services.
- Our Early Years Project Voluntary Registration with Ofsted.
- Our Advice Service Level 3 OISC accreditation. We are also working towards obtaining an Advice Quality Standard quality mark.

In 2019, our focus will be on working towards more outcome focused monitoring and improving how we demonstrate our impact.

## Bristol Refugee Rights' Aims and Ways of Working



### 1. We work in partnership with others to combat poverty and destitution and to promote social and legal justice:

We will use an **EARLY ACTION** approach to working with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants; we will focus on preventing and de-escalating crises through the provision of good quality, early advice, support and information using methods which build resilience, support networks and well-being; as an organisation we will provide stability and strive for sustainability.

### 2. We empower people; promote inclusion and equality of opportunity through the breaking down of societal barriers:

We will **EMPOWER** asylum seekers, refugees and migrants by giving them information and confidence to access their rights and entitlements and to build their lives; asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will have opportunities to develop and share their talents; we will provide support for them to learn and develop personal and professional transferable skills through a range of opportunities both within and outside of the organisation.

### 3. We ensure the rights and entitlements of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are respected:

We use **ADVOCACY** to challenge injustice for individuals, and for all asylum seekers, refugees and migrants; members will receive high quality and timely advice aimed at achieving their rights and entitlements and a fair outcome; we will lead and support campaigns for better treatment and for a fairer society; we will never accept the status quo.

## Bristol Refugee Rights' Strategic Priorities:



### Everyone will have the opportunity to take part

#### Key Priorities:

- People of refugee and migrant background will have opportunities to participate at all levels of the organisation; to use and develop existing skills and learn new ones
- Members views will be gathered regularly, listened to and used to plan and design services
- Participation will be meaningful and collaborative; adjustments will be made to enable participation

#### Key outcomes:

- People of refugee and migrant background will be represented at all levels of the organisation – as volunteers, staff and Trustees
- Member Participation Strategy reviewed at least 3 yearly by Trustees; annual action plan developed in line with Strategy and actions completed



### A hub of high quality and specialised services

#### Key Priorities:

- Ensuring that BRR's services enjoy a sustainable future
- Long term premises; fit for purpose from which we can provide a community hub of high quality, accessible and unique services
- Developing and expanding advice services in line with local need; and which focus on crisis prevention
- Early identification of need; members being able to access the right service at the right time

#### Key outcomes:

- Members experience less crises/shorter periods of crisis
- Obtaining Advice Quality Standards and Investing in Volunteers quality marks
- Sustainable and appropriate services and premises



### We will work together to achieve the best outcomes

#### Key Priorities:

- Provide a hub from which others may provide outreach
- Facilitate and participate in sharing of best practice, knowledge, expertise and resources
- Develop a range of formal and informal partnerships of benefit to members including joint funding bids and joint delivery of services
- Working with others to campaign for better treatment for our members and against injustice

#### Key outcomes:

- Opportunities for collaboration are maintained or increased
- New partnerships are developed outside of the refugee sector
- Improved sharing of communication, best practice, expertise and resources



### **Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will have improved opportunities in their communities and society**

#### **Key Priorities:**

- Through volunteering and language development, members will feel part of a community
- All volunteering roles should provide opportunities for members to use and develop existing skills and to learn new skills
- Members will be empowered to take a full part in society

#### **Key outcomes:**

- The non-member volunteer team will be more diverse; with an increased number of volunteers of, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- BRR services will be accessible
- Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants feel part of the community



### **Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant voices will be heard**

#### **Key Priorities:**

- Members will be empowered and enabled to ask for and secure their rights and entitlements
- Members will be empowered and enabled to use their voices to influence public policy and practice
- Members will be trained to use their voices to talk to others about their experiences; they will support and lead the delivery of training to other organisations

#### **Key outcomes:**

- Members will feel more confident about speaking about their situation and experiences and asking for their rights and entitlements
- Members will have improved wellbeing and autonomy



### **Services will be provided to those who need support**

#### **Key Priorities:**

- The human rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will be promoted and protected through the provision of high quality, timely advice
- Services will get people out of poverty and reduce the impact of destitution whilst campaigns tackle its root causes
- Eligibility for services will be based on need, rights and entitlements and not defined by immigration status

#### **Key outcomes:**

- Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will experience less food and financial poverty
- Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will be more able to move on and re-build their lives

**\*An Action Plan for achieving these Strategic Priorities will be developed annually.**