Bristol Refugee Rights

Impact Report

2018/2019

Safety • Solidarity • Action for Change
Welcome to Bristol Refugee Rights’ Impact Report for 2018/19. In 2019, BRR’s doors have been open for 13 years. During that time BRR has developed into the largest provider of services to asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol. This is the final report relating to our 3 year Business Plan 2016-2019 and once again I am extremely proud of the progress we have made as an organisation and the impact we have had on individual lives.

At our AGM in 2018, Legal Members of BRR voted wholeheartedly in support of a change to our Charitable Objects, allowing for an expansion in our membership to include other migrants. This was in recognition of the fact that many other migrants are suffering from the hostile environment and face difficulties as a result of the potentially precarious nature of having any status other than British citizenship.

Following on from the constitutional change in 2018, we have developed a new vision for the organisation and a new Strategic Plan for 2019-2022. Throughout this report, we have sought to put the last year in the context of our plans for the future, as it helps to explain the decisions that we have made and our direction of travel.

Despite changes, BRR continues to be a place of solidarity and trust. We also continue to strive to be a member led organisation and to prioritise welcome, safety, wellbeing and equality. Services we provide are unique, holistic, complimentary and integrated. Our unique advice service continues to work alongside other services to prioritise preventing homelessness and destitution. In 2019 we reviewed our values as an organisation and agreed to adopt six going forward: Respect; Shared Humanity; Integrity; Collaboration; Empowerment; and Innovation.

I personally would like to say a huge thank you to all of the people that make BRR the amazing organisation that it is and without whom, the achievements of the last 3 years would not have been possible: staff, volunteers, trustees, members, partners, funders and supporters.

Beth Wilson, Director
Early Action

We believe we can significantly reduce the crises experienced by people in the asylum system by reaching them as early as possible in their asylum journey, and as soon as possible when problems arise.

Over the year we became a partner in a national project: The Early Action Charter Programme. Working with Refugee Action and six other local charities across England, we are transforming the way we support people through the asylum process. We want to ensure that people seeking asylum are able to navigate the asylum application process more confidently, by having information and resources as early as possible and by continuing to offer good quality and timely advice.

Our overall aim is early identification of need. Members will be able to access the right service at the right time. That means being proactive rather than reactive; focusing on prevention, de-escalation and identifying and learning from interventions that have the most impact.

The Early Action Principles

Participatory Service Design
Experimentation
Services that Empower
Belief in Long-Term Change
Collaboration

Chair’s Report

“...a combination of determined fundraising and restructuring of our services has meant that we have been able to continue our work for asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants in precarious situations”

This has been a challenging year for Bristol Refugee Rights and for the charity sector as a whole. We faced a difficult funding environment alongside increased demands on our services. Although things have looked daunting at times, I am proud to be able to say that under the leadership of our Director, Beth Wilson, our members, volunteers, staff and supporters, have done a superb job in pulling us through.

We faced a particular threat to our advice services, including the unique service we offer in the area of asylum support. I am pleased to say that a combination of determined fundraising and restructuring of our services has meant that we have been able to continue our work for asylum-seekers, refugees and – thanks to having expanded our aims at the last AGM - other migrants in precarious situations.

In partnership with our members and staff, we have adopted a new Vision and Strategic Plan for 2019-22. This stresses participation, inclusion, the delivery of high-quality services, whilst giving voice to the concerns of members and enabling them to access their rights and entitlements. Our innovative Early Years Project, which does so much to help the children of our members overcome the disadvantages they face, received a positive OFSTED report in February and the team there deserve our congratulations. We continued to do great things through classes, through public speaking and interpreters, and through our ground-breaking Pride Without Borders project; in addition to providing a place of safety and welcome for members every week.

Finally, we need to say a big thank you to those trustees and staff who have moved on after years of dedicated service. In particular, Tony Jaffray who led our advocacy services for several years. We wish him well for the future. We would also like to thank long-term trustees: Richard Henderson and James Jatta, who have stepped down from the Board. New people have joined the Board: Mano Candappa, Natasha Carver, Christina Stokes and Maria Williams who bring a range of expertise from education, law and finance.

Chris Bertram, Chair of Trustees
**Impact Summary**

**Status in the UK of our Members**

*Based on monitoring all members who visited us during 1 week in March 2019

**Country of Origin of new Members**

- Syria 11%
- Afghanistan 11%
- Sudan 11%
- Bangladesh 10%
- Iraq 8%
- Iran 5%
- Pakistan 4%
- Eritrea 4%
- Albania 3%
- Nigeria, China and Ethiopia 2% each
- Egypt, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, India, Turkey 1% each

*Based on new members who joined BRR during 2018-19

**Gender of our Members**

- 65% Male
- 35% Female
- Less than 1% Gender fluid/non-binary/other

*Based on new members who joined BRR during 2018-19

**Ages of our Members**

- Under 18 2%
- 18-25 24%
- 26-49 24%
- 50+ 59%

*Based on new members who joined BRR during 2018-19

**1 Providing a community hub of appropriate services to those most in need**

**Welcome Centre**

Open 3 days a week

49 weeks of the year

10,459 visits

made by 1147 different people

428 new members

visited from at least 46 different countries

213 people

came through the doors each week

99% of members said that they found it easy to get the support they needed at the Welcome Centre

**Early Years Project (EYP)**

4 sessions on average per week

190 sessions held in total

94 children benefitted from the project including 55 who registered for the first time

34 children attended regularly

4 regular volunteers and 6 key staff

**OFSTED inspection**

February 2019 confirmed that the EYP continues to meet the requirements of the Voluntary Childcare Register

- Parents are able to reserve a guaranteed space
- 1 x per week

**Pride Without Borders**

41 members attended meetings (with an average of 15 attending each meeting)

**“I really appreciate all your help and support”**
## Asylum seekers and refugees are better integrated into Bristol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcome Centre</th>
<th>Early Years Project</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>60%</strong> of members found more information about other support services or activities through BRR</td>
<td><strong>74%</strong> of people using the crèche said that it helps prepare their child for nursery or school.</td>
<td><strong>13 classes per week</strong> for 44 weeks per year (Pre-entry to Entry 3, IELTS and computer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>21 members</strong> have participated in monthly Member Consultation Group Meetings</td>
<td><strong>36%</strong> of Trustees are of asylum seeker, refugee or migrant background</td>
<td><strong>369 members</strong> engaged with our Education programme (classes/trips/partnership courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23 new member volunteers</strong> were trained</td>
<td>A Member (beneficiary) Consultation Group are consulted each month on governance and operational issues. Their views are fed into the decision making process.</td>
<td><strong>275 students</strong> in total attended classes / 168 new students during the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>61 members</strong> volunteered with different BRR projects during the year (+ 85 non-member volunteers) including 1 regular volunteer in the advice team of refugee background.</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>of students said coming to classes made them feel more confident speaking English</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18 members</strong> volunteered as community interpreters in 11 different languages</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>80%</strong> of students said our Education programme has helped them to go to College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hassan’s story

Before Hassan claimed asylum he studied and worked as an engineer in the UK. However, on a visit to his home country he was imprisoned and tortured. He managed to return to the UK and claimed asylum. This meant he could no longer work or rent a house. He and his wife and children were made homeless and were housed in temporary accommodation by Bristol City Council. It took over a year to get the accommodation for asylum seekers that they were entitled to. This caused a lot of problems for the family; they went through some desperate times.

When Hassan found out about BRR he signed up as a volunteer interpreter; he also joined the public speaker training course which helped him gain back some confidence. Now that he has been granted refugee status he is able to work again and started to earn his own livelihood.

“I came to BRR when my case was refused. Since I joined my life has got better; I understand my options. Although I am an educated person … I did not understand my rights at all in this country. I was so happy to find something to be able to help others, be busy, and use my skills. If I had known about this support earlier, I think my life would have been absolutely different. Thank you BRR.”

### Employment Pathways Project

- **49 individuals** visited at least 1 employer to find out what work is like in the UK
- **99 different individuals** benefitted from the project

### Being a member led organisation

- **21 members** have participated in monthly Member Consultation Group Meetings
- **23 new member volunteers** were trained
- **61 members** volunteered with different BRR projects during the year (+ 85 non-member volunteers) including 1 regular volunteer in the advice team of refugee background.
- **18 members** volunteered as community interpreters in 11 different languages

### Before Hassan claimed asylum

Before Hassan claimed asylum he studied and worked as an engineer in the UK. However, on a visit to his home country he was imprisoned and tortured. He managed to return to the UK and claimed asylum. This meant he could no longer work or rent a house. He and his wife and children were made homeless and were housed in temporary accommodation by Bristol City Council. It took over a year to get the accommodation for asylum seekers that they were entitled to. This caused a lot of problems for the family; they went through some desperate times.

When Hassan found out about BRR he signed up as a volunteer interpreter; he also joined the public speaker training course which helped him gain back some confidence. Now that he has been granted refugee status he is able to work again and started to earn his own livelihood.

“I came to BRR when my case was refused. Since I joined my life has got better; I understand my options. Although I am an educated person … I did not understand my rights at all in this country. I was so happy to find something to be able to help others, be busy, and use my skills. If I had known about this support earlier, I think my life would have been absolutely different. Thank you BRR.”
Asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol have improved wellbeing

4

What difference does Member Volunteering make?

98% said that coming to the Welcome Centre makes them feel better

63% of people said they come to classes to meet new people and make friends

Therapeutic massages for members weekly by volunteers
Weekly yoga classes in partnership with Yoga Roots

44% made new friends
43% improved confidence
39% learnt new skills
35% were able to keep busy
33% improved their English
15% said it had helped them to get a job

Mukhtar’s story

BRR’s Young People’s Immigration Project (YPIP) met Mukhtar when he was 17. He had recently arrived in the UK. He felt very alone separated from all of his family. Unfortunately the Local Authority did not believe he was under 18. They denied him access to the care and support he was entitled to, including a social worker and safe place to live.

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker supported him to find a solicitor. With the help of an interpreter he was able to communicate what he needed. BRR helped him understand the complex legal system and the process for claiming asylum. They helped him challenge his age assessment and won!

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker arranged a mentor who helped him get to know the city. His Caseworker supports him to attend the YPIP Wellbeing Group where he learns different tools and skills to manage his emotions.

Mukhtar did not know if any of his family were still alive. His YPIP Caseworker linked him up with Red Cross’ family tracing service. They helped him search for his lost family and amazingly, Mukhtar was reunited with his two brothers. They are all now living in Bristol and see each other regularly. BRR’s YPIP Caseworker said:

“It has been fantastic to see the transformation in Mukhtar. Initially he was very anxious and depressed. Now that Mukhtar is supported and feels safe in Bristol he often greets me with a beaming smile on his regular visits to the Welcome Centre.”

Reducing the impact of poverty and destitution for asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol

5

95 cooked meals* served each week
15 people* had their hair cut each week
18 food bags* given out each week, including:
3.9 tonnes of food received from Fareshare, with estimated retail value of £6236, saving 1.5 tonnes of CO₂
400 bus tickets distributed to access appointments and report at Patchway police station – a result of a partnership with City of Sanctuary and First Bus

What difference does Member Volunteering make?

98% said that coming to the Welcome Centre makes them feel better

63% of people said they come to classes to meet new people and make friends

Therapeutic massages for members weekly by volunteers
Weekly yoga classes in partnership with Yoga Roots

44% made new friends
43% improved confidence
39% learnt new skills
35% were able to keep busy
33% improved their English
15% said it had helped them to get a job

Mukhtar’s story

BRR’s Young People’s Immigration Project (YPIP) met Mukhtar when he was 17. He had recently arrived in the UK. He felt very alone separated from all of his family. Unfortunately the Local Authority did not believe he was under 18. They denied him access to the care and support he was entitled to, including a social worker and safe place to live.

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker supported him to find a solicitor. With the help of an interpreter he was able to communicate what he needed. BRR helped him understand the complex legal system and the process for claiming asylum. They helped him challenge his age assessment and won!

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker arranged a mentor who helped him get to know the city. His Caseworker supports him to attend the YPIP Wellbeing Group where he learns different tools and skills to manage his emotions.

Mukhtar did not know if any of his family were still alive. His YPIP Caseworker linked him up with Red Cross’ family tracing service. They helped him search for his lost family and amazingly, Mukhtar was reunited with his two brothers. They are all now living in Bristol and see each other regularly. BRR’s YPIP Caseworker said:

“It has been fantastic to see the transformation in Mukhtar. Initially he was very anxious and depressed. Now that Mukhtar is supported and feels safe in Bristol he often greets me with a beaming smile on his regular visits to the Welcome Centre.”

Reducing the impact of poverty and destitution for asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol

5

95 cooked meals* served each week
15 people* had their hair cut each week
18 food bags* given out each week, including:
3.9 tonnes of food received from Fareshare, with estimated retail value of £6236, saving 1.5 tonnes of CO₂
400 bus tickets distributed to access appointments and report at Patchway police station – a result of a partnership with City of Sanctuary and First Bus

What difference does Member Volunteering make?

98% said that coming to the Welcome Centre makes them feel better

63% of people said they come to classes to meet new people and make friends

Therapeutic massages for members weekly by volunteers
Weekly yoga classes in partnership with Yoga Roots

44% made new friends
43% improved confidence
39% learnt new skills
35% were able to keep busy
33% improved their English
15% said it had helped them to get a job

Mukhtar’s story

BRR’s Young People’s Immigration Project (YPIP) met Mukhtar when he was 17. He had recently arrived in the UK. He felt very alone separated from all of his family. Unfortunately the Local Authority did not believe he was under 18. They denied him access to the care and support he was entitled to, including a social worker and safe place to live.

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker supported him to find a solicitor. With the help of an interpreter he was able to communicate what he needed. BRR helped him understand the complex legal system and the process for claiming asylum. They helped him challenge his age assessment and won!

Mukhtar’s YPIP Caseworker arranged a mentor who helped him get to know the city. His Caseworker supports him to attend the YPIP Wellbeing Group where he learns different tools and skills to manage his emotions.

Mukhtar did not know if any of his family were still alive. His YPIP Caseworker linked him up with Red Cross’ family tracing service. They helped him search for his lost family and amazingly, Mukhtar was reunited with his two brothers. They are all now living in Bristol and see each other regularly. BRR’s YPIP Caseworker said:

“It has been fantastic to see the transformation in Mukhtar. Initially he was very anxious and depressed. Now that Mukhtar is supported and feels safe in Bristol he often greets me with a beaming smile on his regular visits to the Welcome Centre.”

Partner feedback

‘Especially since the cuts in Legal Aid and also the diminishing number of immigration lawyers, the BRR advisory teams are a unique source of expert, reliable and sensitive support.’ Bristol Signing Support

‘BRR is a lifeline for asylum seekers in Bristol... They deliver a very professional service, and are great partners to work with. There is no other organisation able to fill the gap.’ Borderlands

‘No other local organisation has the same level of experience in providing wrap around practical and emotional support together with an expertise in asylum issues. The services at BRR are extremely well managed and all the systems have been designed with very rigorous regular service reviews.’

Anne James, Bristol City Council
The human rights of asylum seekers and refugees are promoted and protected

Advice

450 individual members assisted through individual appointments
1339 individual appointments carried out
90% of people who used Advice felt supported
92% of people assisted better understand the asylum process
49% of people received referrals to other services

Public speaking

8 members trained in public speaking
Over 1,000 people heard a BRR member speak about their experiences of claiming asylum in the UK
9 members spoke at 14 public events
Human rights were promoted and members spoke to media for campaigning and fundraising purposes

Advice

30% needed help with a legal matter relating to their immigration status
18% needed help with health services
33% needed advice about housing, finance, or to prevent or end destitution

“There is no other group doing what BRR do in the South West. They plug the lacuna. Their services are absolutely vital and specialist.” Deighton Pierce Glynn

A look into the future

In 2018/19, we reviewed our vision and mission statement. Our new vision and aims for 2019–22 better represent the context we are working in and what we are currently trying to achieve.

Our New 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.

We’ve adopted 3 new Aims and Ways of Working to help us achieve our Vision

Early Action

We work in partnership with others to combat poverty and destitution and to promote social and legal justice; our focus is on preventing and de-escalating crises

Empower

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

Advocacy

We challenge individual and systemic injustices; we aim to ensure the rights and entitlements of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are respected

We’ve also adopted 6 new Strategic Priorities for 2019–2022:

1. Participation: Everyone will have the opportunity to take part.
2. Quality: A hub of high quality and specialised services.
3. Partnership: We will work together to achieve the best outcomes.
4. Inclusion: Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will have improved opportunities in their communities and society.
5. Voice: Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant voices will be heard.
6. Rights and entitlements: Services will be provided to those who need support.

BRR gained OISC level 3 accreditation in Asylum

New 2 year project started working with young people subject to immigration control. The project works with young people with insecure immigration status to access good quality legal support in a way they can understand. We work closely with Refugee Council Children’s Panel Advisor.
Financial Review

BRR’s total income in 2018/19 was £575,250 (an increase of £86,838 compared to the previous year). This includes restricted funding raised with the purpose of using it in 2019/20. BRR’s total expenditure in 2018/19 was £490,286 (an increase of £76,356 compared to the previous year).

Most of our funding came from trusts, foundations, and Bristol City Council, while close to one fifth of income came from individual donations, subscriptions and gift aid.

Support us

As a charity we rely on the support of our donors and funders. To set up a regular donation, make a one off donation, or fundraise for BRR, please visit:
localgiving.com/charity/brr

£5 pays the volunteer expenses of an interpreter to support members to access BRR services

£20 enables an LGBT+ member to attend a Pride Without Borders meeting and get vital and unique support

£75 funds an advice appointment for an asylum seeker at which they can gain a better understanding about the asylum process

“They have been so helpful to me and the staff here are so welcoming and friendly. Great place to be.”

Contact us

Bristol Refugee Rights, St Paul’s Learning Centre, 94 Grosvenor Road, Bristol, BS2 8XJ
0117 914 5480  info@bristolrefugeerights.org  bristolrefugeerights.org
twitter.com/bristolrefugeer  facebook.com/bristolrefugeerights

Registered Charity no: 1126646  Registered Company no: 5669208

Sign up to BRR’s Supporter’s Newsletter via our website.

Further detail on 2018/19 finances can be found in our Annual Accounts 2018/19, which are submitted to the Charity Commission and are freely available on our website.
Thank You

Thank You to all the dedicated volunteers, to the generous donors and many more people who made the delivery of a wide range of services possible over the year!

In particular we would like to extend thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund and Henry Smith Charity who funded key services for many years. Those grants ended in March 2019.

Over the year, BRR employed 26 staff [with a maximum of 21 at any one time] and 146 volunteers [61 member volunteers and 85 non-member volunteers]. Thank you to you all!

Our Funders

Thank you to all the donors who wish to remain anonymous.

Partner Organisations

Thank you to all the organisations in Bristol and other parts of England, who have worked with us over the year to deliver quality services.

Photography by Andy Morgan and Bnar Sardar.