



Bristol Refugee Rights 

# Impact Report

2019/20

Safety • Solidarity • Action for Change

# 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.

## Strategic Priorities

<b>Participation</b>	Everyone will have the opportunity to take part
<b>Quality</b>	A hub of high quality and specialised services
<b>Partnership</b>	We will work together to achieve the best outcomes
<b>Inclusion</b>	Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants will have improved opportunities in their communities and society
<b>Voice</b>	Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants voices will be heard
<b>Rights &amp; entitlements</b>	Services will be provided to those who need support

## Chair's Report

This has been a difficult year for all charities, and Bristol Refugee Rights is no exception. Refugees and other migrants were already facing an uncertain future with changes around Brexit before the Covid-19 crisis took off. We have at the core of our mission the need to provide a place where the basic needs of asylum-seekers can be addressed and where their poverty and social isolation can be overcome.

For the past few years we have run most of our services from the Malcolm X Centre in St Pauls and the big decision that we have taken this past year is to move to new premises from which we can operate more effectively. We would like to thank our landlords at St Pauls Learning Centre and Malcolm X for the support they have provided to us over the years.

Thanks to all of our staff, volunteers and members for enabling BRR to keep going and to our Director, Beth Wilson, for her leadership. Finally, I would like to thank Ruth Baker, who has stepped down from the board, for her service.

**Chris Bertram, Chair of Trustees**



# Director's Introduction

Welcome to Bristol Refugee Rights' Impact Report for 2019/20.

I would like to start by personally thanking all of the people that make BRR the amazing organisation that it is and without whom, the achievements of the last year would not have been possible: staff, volunteers, Trustees, members, partners, funders and supporters. As you will read in this Report, it has, as ever, been a busy year for BRR. Our members continue to experience the negative effects of the hostile environment and present to us with increasingly complex issues. As we embed our Ways of Working, developed in 2018/19, we are finding creative responses to these challenges:

- **Early Action:** We work in partnership with others to combat poverty and destitution and to promote social and legal justice
- **Empowerment:** We empower people; promote inclusion and equality of opportunity through the breaking down of societal barriers
- **Advocacy:** We ensure the rights and entitlements of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are respected

The Covid-19 crisis which presented itself as 2019/20 drew to a close, brought into sharp focus the importance of the role of partnership working. Partnership working is at our core – being both a strategic priority and represented in our values – and throughout the year we have worked closely with local asylum seeker/ refugee support partners, to improve coordination and collaboration. The Covid-19 crisis brought us together in ways none of us would have thought possible as our organisations demonstrated trust, resilience and a willingness to do what it takes to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol. We have also worked with national partners (through the Early Action Partnership led by Refugee Action); Bristol City Council; and other VCSE partners e.g. disability/advice to name but a few. In January we were awarded a Golden Key Practice Award 2020 for Inspiring Learning, in partnership with Bristol Hospitality Network which we were very pleased to receive.

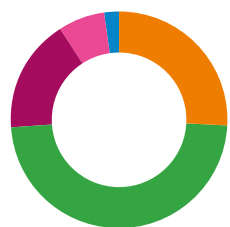
Also this year we have been working on deepening our understanding of racism and working with our members to tackle it. We stand in solidarity with black people and all who are oppressed and discriminated against. The UK immigration system is inherently racist. We are committed to tackling institutional racism; we are committed to being inclusive to all. We will do better, we will encourage others to do better and in 2020/21 will continue to reflect on how we can do this as an organisation

**Beth Wilson, Director**

## Our members


Our members came from  
**54+ different countries** and  
spoke **32+ different languages**

**260** new members  
from more than  
38 countries




**26%** Refugees/people who have been granted leave to remain\*  
**48%** Asylum Seekers\*  
**17%** Refused Asylum Seekers\*  
**7%** Came to the UK under Family Reunion provisions\*  
**2%** People attending for one off advice\*

### Country of Origin of new Members\*\*

 Sudan 13%

 Afghanistan 12%

 Iraq 10%

 Syria 9%

 Iran 8%

 Bangladesh 5%

 Albania 4%

 Eritrea 4%

 Pakistan 4%

 Somalia 4%

 Kuwait 3%

 China 2%

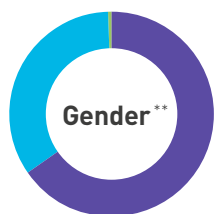
 Yemen 2%

 Cameroon 2%

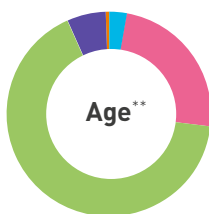
 Nigeria 2%

All 1%  
India, Jamaica,  
Libya, Senegal,  
Vietnam

<1%  
Algeria, Burma,  
Cuba, Egypt,  
Ethiopia, Gambia,  
Ghana, Ivory Coast,  
Kenya, Malawi,  
Mali, Sierra  
Leone, Sri Lanka,  
Tanzania, Trinidad,  
Zimbabwe



Male **64%**  
Female **35%**  
Gender fluid /  
non-binary / other **<1%**



Under 18 **3%**  
18-25 **24%**  
26-49 **66%**  
50-64 **6%**  
65+ **<1%**



Physical/mental  
impairment **16%**  
None **84%**

## Case Studies

### Sally – as told by an Advice Volunteer

When Sally came to the drop in for the first time, the volunteer who signed her up as a member was concerned about her. Sally became very distressed when asked about where she lived, so the volunteer referred her to the Advice Team. We met with Sally many times over the next few weeks. She gradually felt able to trust us, and told us that she had been persecuted in her country of origin due to her sexuality. She came to the UK as a nursing student, qualified, and got a job in the NHS. When her permission to stay in the UK expired, she couldn't go back to her country as she would still be persecuted. With no income and her savings exhausted, no right to work, and nowhere to live, she was forced into sexual slavery. With her consent, we ensured that she was referred for specialist trafficking support, found her a solicitor, helped her register an asylum claim, helped her apply for asylum support, and referred her to specialist healthcare. After a long battle to secure her accommodation in Bristol, where she had support from people she trusted, she is now safe for the first time in many years.

### Mahdi – as told by himself

I came to the UK from Iran in 2013. The Home Office gave me accommodation in Bristol. I was very lonely and felt isolated and depressed. I needed to be with other people. An Iranian friend at church recommended that I come to Bristol Refugee Rights. When I went there, it felt like a home. I started feeling much better and I felt there was hope. I had a lot of help, they gave me food, and I got advice on my case. I met a lot of friends from different nationalities. When I became destitute after 6 months, BRR helped me to find a place to live. Through BRR I joined English classes and volunteered in the Kitchen. Volunteering has made me more confident, helped me to improve my English and I have met more friends. In 2015, I got my Leave to Remain. BRR has continued to support me by signposting me to different organisations to access housing, careers advice and other courses. I am now looking for work and I feel confident because I have gained a lot of experience and skills through volunteering, including cooking and drawing. If there was not an opportunity to volunteer, I would be very isolated and probably depressed.





# Our Impact

More refugees, asylum seekers & people with insecure immigration status are able to positively build their lives in the UK

Those engaging with BRR are facing **poverty, poor health, social isolation, uncertainty, lack of English** and **a hostile environment**

Through our ways of working, we aim to create the following changes for those in need:

## Basic Needs Met

Basic physiological (food, water, shelter, money, clothing) and safety needs are met; crises are prevented

### Welcome Centre

A hub of information and support services; a space to connect and make friends

1,111

people visited the Welcome Centre

37%

were destitute and not receiving any financial support

### Destitution support

We supported our members weekly with hot meals, food bags, destitution payments, bus tickets, barber, referrals to the Bristol Bike Project, and with our Free Shop

92

members received a hot meal each week, on average

£2800

distributed in hardship support

### Early Years Project

A place where children can be children, play, explore books, sing and learn

93

children were supported, through

209

sessions



### BRR Education Service

Small group ESOL and computer classes; 1:1 support; and support to access college and further education



### Safeguarding

15

families were referred to First Response due to concerns we had for them

## Engagement with the Asylum Process

People seeking asylum have a better understanding of the asylum process, their own rights, and are more confident and able to secure them



260

new members received information about other services in Bristol

You can see them transform. They come in downtrodden, like they have no hope, and they go out with encouragement. They've been listened to and enabled to do something. They go out energised. And so do we.

### Advice and Young People's Immigration Project

The asylum process is complex and confusing. Our Advice Team supports asylum seeking adults, families and young people to understand, navigate and engage with the process

468

people supported by the Advice Team

44

people supported by the Young People's Immigration Project



### Asylum Guides

Volunteers with lived experience deliver information in own language about the asylum process; it helps people develop understanding and confidence

5

volunteers were trained to deliver Refugee Action's Asylum Guides Programme in 4 different languages

## Wellbeing

Accessing support and information, being welcomed, included and valued has a positive impact on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing

78%

of members said they always feel better at the Welcome Centre

### Advice

75%

of members have better health, wellbeing or feel better as a result of advice received



### Member volunteering

Banned from working during the asylum process and with an indefinite wait for a decision, regular volunteering roles improve wellbeing

76%

had learnt new skills

94%

had improved confidence

At BRR, all staff and volunteers work with passion and are very helpful for asylum seekers and new refugees; that encourages and inspires me to work as a volunteer.

## New relationships

New connections, relationships and friendships; people are less isolated and feel part of a community

BRR is part of my life in Bristol and the help I get every time from BRR is unforgettable and will be recorded in my mind forever.



100%

of members feel part of a community at the Welcome Centre



### Family Lunch Together

Families with young children gather to talk, share food and get support from Family Support Workers

100%

of attendees feel more connected to other parents as a result of the family lunch

### Member volunteering

94%

of volunteers said it has helped them make new connections or friends



## English language and skills

People develop their English language & skills, learn new skills and engage with educational and volunteering opportunities; children are better prepared for nursery and school

### BRR Education Service

One of our Volunteer Teachers has created a bespoke phonics programme to unlock reading and writing for our adult learners

I have seen the way that learners' lives are transformed as they learn Roman script, and can begin to understand signs, letters, keyboards, labels everything around them!



### Early Years Project

92%

of parents said their child/ren has/have learnt new things at the Early Years Project and is/are better prepared for nursery/school

20%

of volunteers have gained employment or started education / training as a result of volunteering\*

Volunteering is helping me to build my skills. I get more and more confident.

## Confidence

Confidence to join in with activities, to speak out on broader issues and to take an active role in the community



### Voice Project

A short course and ongoing support helps people with lived experience to: talk publicly about their experiences, to raise awareness, and advocate for change

13 speakers were trained; who spoke at 19 events, reaching an audience of

1,100



### Member Consultation Group (MCG)

Every month members meet with the Director to inform decision making within our governance structure

9

members regularly attended the Member Consultation Group

I am very happy to be a member of the MCG, to be consulted shows that members are valued.

47%

of volunteers feel more confident to take part in things outside of BRR as a result of volunteering\*

## Supportive environment

Supportive environment: the local authority and wider community better understands issues and needs; voices are heard

It was amazingly powerful to hear the personal journey. Participant in BRR asylum training

98%

of members said that BRR helps them to feel more welcome in Bristol



### Pride Without Borders

A support group for LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees.

46

people supported

23

meetings, with an average 20 people in each meeting

### ESOL in Bristol

BRR has been working on a number of projects to improve ESOL access across the city, including a citywide strategy, a website and an initiative with Community Learning to introduce a single ESOL assessment service

West of England ESOL Strategy – coordinated by BRR; also obtained pledges of support from 10 key ESOL providers

# Thank You

We want to say a huge Thank You to everyone who supports Bristol Refugee Rights: our experienced and committed staff team; our tireless volunteers; our extremely generous donors and funders; and our dedicated partner organisations. Thank you to you all!

## Our current funders

Thank you to all current funders; those who funded our work in 2019/20, including those who prefer to remain anonymous.

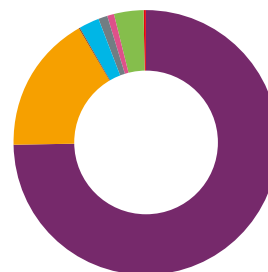


'I am extremely happy. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the gift you gave me ... I am really humbled and grateful. My heart is still smiling. Thank you very much.'

# Financial Review

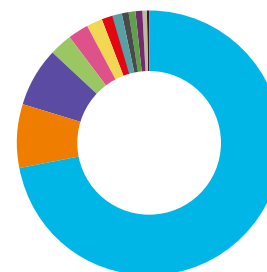
**BRR's total income** in 2019/20 was **£555,316** (a reduction of £19,934 compared to the previous year). This includes restricted funding raised for service delivery in the year 2020/21. **BRR's total expenditure** in 2019/20 was **£483,174** (a reduction of £7,112 compared to the previous year).

Most of our funding came from trusts, foundations, and Bristol City Council; 15% of income came from individual donations, subscriptions and gift aid.



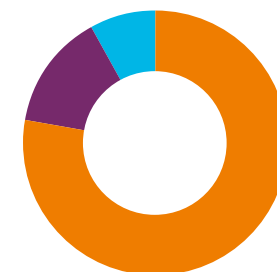
## Income

Grants **£416,319**  
Subscriptions and donations **£93,093**  
Membership fees **£505**  
Gift aid **£13,918**  
Gifts in kind **£5,500**  
Other trading **£5,605**  
Charitable activities **£19,407**  
Investments **£969**



## Expenditure

Staff costs (including training and recruitment) **£348,176**  
Premises costs **£37,433**  
Overheads **£34,573**  
Computer and internet expenses **£14,652**  
Interpreting **£11,948**  
Professional fees **£8,237**  
Fundraising **£6,342**  
Training **£5,923**  
Food and drink **£4,640**  
Evaluation **£4,485**  
Governance **£3,099**  
Hardship payments **£2,798**  
Events and trips **£868**



## For every £1 donated

Delivering services **78p**  
Support costs **14p**  
Fundraising **8p**

A full copy of our Chairs Report and Further detail on 2019/20 finances can be found in our Annual Accounts 2019/20, which are submitted to the Charity Commission and are freely available on our website.

# 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: **[bristolrefugeerights.org/support-us](https://bristolrefugeerights.org/support-us)**

## £10

could buy phone credit and data for a refugee or asylum seeker for a month

## £30

could help tackle loneliness and isolation and support refugees and asylum seekers to stay connected

## £100

could help an asylum seeker access advice and information to ensure they have essential items and support including food and accommodation whilst their asylum claim is reviewed

# Contact Us

Bristol Refugee Rights, Wellspring Settlement, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX

- ✉ [info@bristolrefugeerights.org](mailto:info@bristolrefugeerights.org)
- 🌐 [www.bristolrefugeerights.org](http://www.bristolrefugeerights.org)
- 🐦 [twitter.com/bristolrefugeer](https://twitter.com/bristolrefugeer)
- 📘 [facebook.com/bristolrefugeerights](https://facebook.com/bristolrefugeerights)

Registered Charity no: 1126646 / Registered Company no: 5669208

You have been of tremendous help to me and my family. If not for your love, I don't know what would have become of me

Sign up to BRR's Supporter's Newsletter via our website or using the following link: **[https://bit.ly/BRR\\_newssignup](https://bit.ly/BRR_newssignup)**