



Derby Refugee Forum and Derby Refugee Advice Centre ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Chair's Report - Joan Stannard

Derby Refugee Forum has been in existence since the year 2000, and Derby Refugee Advice Centre (DRAC) since 2002. It is thanks to the generosity of the Bosnia Herzegovina Community, our many successful funding bids and charitable donations over the years that we have been continuously operating. I would also like to thank all the groups, individuals and churches for both financial donations and support in keeping our foodbank well stocked. DRAC was set up to provide advice, signposting and help for asylum seekers dispersed to Derby. Since those early beginnings we have had over 35,000 advice sessions and provided help to individuals, families and children from a multitude of nations. In the thirteen years that I have volunteered, there have been many changes. Initially the largest group of people we saw were single young Kurdish men. These are still in Derby in significant numbers, but we now have a high number of Sudanese, Eritreans and Iranians too. As political leaders and systems change, conflict areas spring up and the need for asylum remains. Our work is still highly valued by those who come for our support.

We have been fortunate this year to recruit another part-time worker to support our many activities. Welcome Caroline! We have also recruited new volunteers in our kitchen, as well as interpreters and advisors. Thank you to all our volunteers for giving of your time so ably and freely.

English classes and workshops take place each week to relieve the tensions of those waiting for Home Office decisions and also to enable integration into the local community, prepare them for work and for life in the UK. These sessions have been incredibly successful, thanks go to our great team of project managers and volunteers, with a special thank you to all the other partnership organisations we work with.

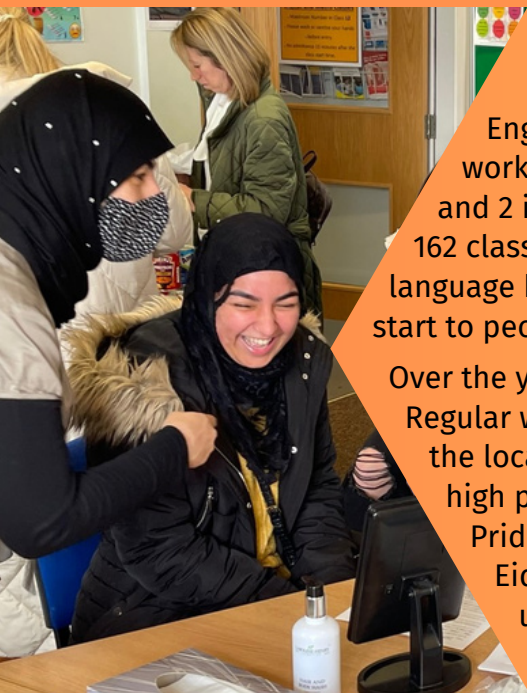
Whilst a need remains, long may our work continue!

Joan Stannard.



Thank you to all those who support us.

Derby Refugee Advice Centre has 44 volunteers who support all the work that we do in the Centre and the people who visit us for our help. Without their skills, expertise and enthusiasm, we simply couldn't do the work that we do. Following the Covid Pandemic we continued to see people re-evaluate their spare time, with some volunteers leaving us and others deciding to join us. We really are grateful for all their hard work, commitment and time given.



Classes and Workshops at Derby Refugee Advice Centre

English classes at Derby Refugee Advice Centre are an important part of our work and we have held 4 sessions each week - beginners, conversation and 2 improvers classes, taught by 4 volunteers. Over this last year we've had 162 classes with over 1000 attendees. These classes not only help with the language barriers, but also with adapting to life in the UK. They are an important start to people's language journey while they wait on accessing official ESOL classes.

Over the year we have also held 60 workshops/activity sessions with 777 attendees. Regular workshops with the local Police have been well received, and talks from the local housing team are always well attended with housing issues currently a high priority. We took 33 people to watch women's football at Derby County Pride Park Stadium and Lush donated toiletries for our Bingo prizes. Our first Eid celebration was a huge success, with many clients and donors joining us in the Centre to celebrate this special occasion. Thanks to all the local organisations who help, support and deliver our activities

Lottery Update

Our Gardens and Green Spaces work has continued with sessions in the Centre garden, supported by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, ensuring our planters at the back of the building provided herbs and salads, while those at the front and sides looked beautiful with colourful flowers. We donated tools so people could maintain their own gardens and worked with the Green Prescribing team at Derby City Council.

Health information and advice is always sought after at the Centre, so working with local health providers has been appreciated. The health checks with Well 4 Life, discussion and feedback sessions on urgent care pathways and the Royal Derby Hospital, along with regular Sexual Health clinics and talks on Healthy Life Choices and bowel cancer have been well attended by our service users.

Working with Schools has been a pleasure as usual, with talks given to children at St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Academy assemblies and to teachers at Castle Ward Spencer Academy. Jasmin House school have joined us for some of our activity sessions and provided us with donations of books, with other schools in the area choosing to donate their harvest festival collections to us.

A variety of activities have taken place as part of our Theatre Work. Maison Foo, with our volunteers and service users, produced a fantastic event called 'A Seat At Our Table', telling stories and sharing recipes around a dining table, and followed this later in the year with a lovely Persian Tea event. Ava Hunt Theatre, with some undergraduate theatre students, held a much enjoyed Theatre and Games workshop in the Centre and Deda provided us with free dance classes for 14 families. Derby Theatre have also continued to offer free tickets to various performances.

We are grateful to those we work with for giving our service users some fantastic opportunities.





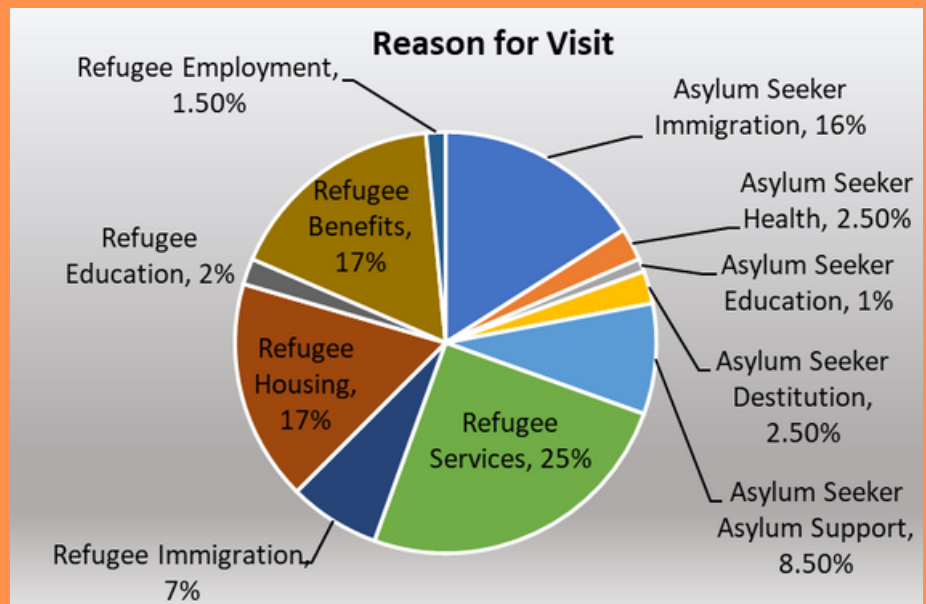
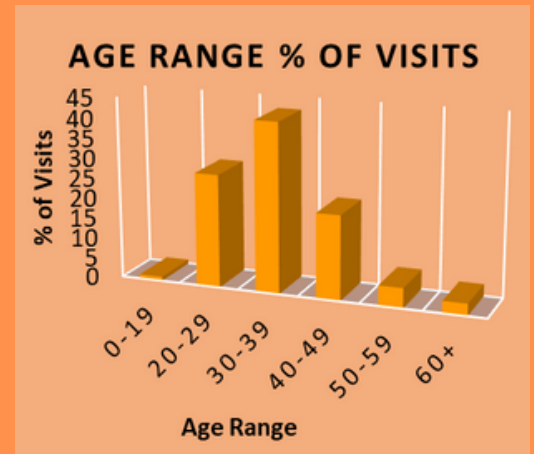
May 2022 to May 2023 was a year of rebuilding our services following the covid pandemic. We were able to fully open the building to activities, classes and workshops and to move to 'drop in' advice sessions, first come first served, rather than appointment based. This enabled us to have a more welcoming environment with drinks and snacks available for those waiting.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Total advice Sessions 2022/23 | 1436 |
| No. Service Users | 486 |
| Average Sessions Per day | 14 |
| No. Service Users Nationalities | 46 |
| Total Sessions Since 2002 | 35805 |

Overall, the number of advice sessions rose by 325 and the average number of sessions per day increased substantially from 5 to 14. This meant that we were able to offer greater support to a similar number of people and families as in the previous year but whose problems, often associated with the cost of living crisis, were more complex and long term. Almost 70% of those who attended an individual advice session were refugees compared to asylum seekers. This was a significant increase from the previous year and largely in response to our partnership and referrals policy with the British Red Cross (BRC). Post pandemic the BRC restarted outreach sessions at our Centre to support with asylum destitution and other issues. The largest increase in reasons for requesting an advice session was 'refugee services'. A winter where utility bills rose massively led to many individuals and families experiencing debt and generally major worries and stress over the increasing cost of living. We applied for 64 energy and cost of living grants through the local authority which made a significant difference to those low income households. Over 40 individuals and families received weekly destitution food support.

Housing was another expanding area of support requests. Single males who do not have priority for council housing may not be able to access emergency accommodation through the Council when they have to leave Serco accommodation. Trying to find privately rented housing was equally difficult and an area that we have been working on with Derby City Housing Options, plus Upbeat Communities and Metropolitan Housing to try to mitigate if not resolve.

We saw service users from 46 different countries. The highest number came from Sudan, with Iran, Iraq and Eritrea also featuring strongly and for the first time Kuwait appearing in the top 5.



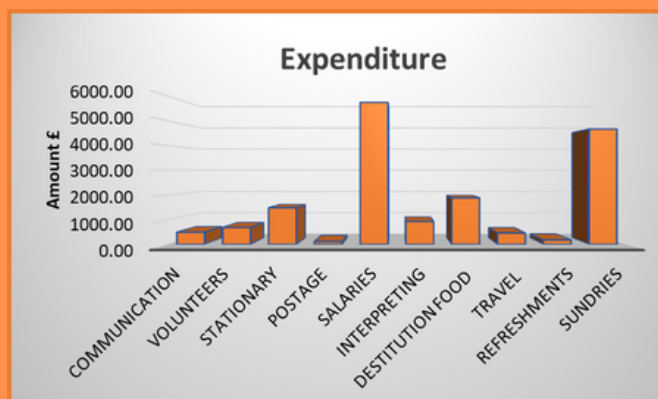
Brief on finances 2022-2023

All of the Project core costs have been covered by the joint funded project with DBHCA, Big Lottery Reaching Communities programme that's in its fourth year. This combined approach to funding has given stability to both Charities for the last 9 years: providing a place of work, Centre management, part of fundraising activities and continuation of salary for the Project Coordinator post, which has been funded 100% instead of 65% according to the Project. This year we spent less than was raised. We have been supported by the local Warm Welcome and Household Support funds. At the end of the financial year, further funding applications have been made. This year our reserves have been less than the annual expenditure, reducing barriers to apply for further funding.

I wish to thank all those volunteers who publicised our work via presentations and made it possible to receive donations from many churches, community organisations and individuals. Without them and our volunteers, we would not be able to deliver our vital services to our clients.

Ferid Kevric, Treasurer

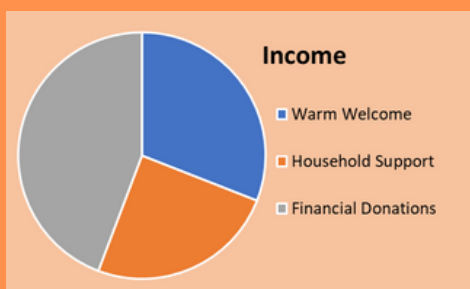
| <u>Income</u> | | <u>2022-2023</u> | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <u>2021/2022</u> | | <u>Unrestr.</u> | <u>Restr.</u> | <u>Total</u> |
| 0 | Grants | 0 | 11250 | 11250 |
| 6361 | Donations | 8932 | 0 | 8932 |
| 6361 | TOTAL | 8932 | 11250 | 20182 |
| Expenditure: | | | | |
| 2650 | Office Cost | 1623 | 459 | 2082 |
| 3883 | Salaries Contrib. | 5652 | 96 | 5748 |
| 0 | Rent & Room Hiring | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 903 | Interpreting Cost | 924 | 0 | 924 |
| 1660 | Destitution Cost | 1263 | 1075 | 2338 |
| 562 | Manag. Vol. cost | 855 | 0 | 855 |
| 0 | Equipment Cost | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 575 | Sundry | 2683 | 1984 | 4667 |
| 10233 | TOTAL | 10233 | 3614 | 16615 |
| -3872 | Year movement | -4069 | 7636 | 3567 |
| 21446 | Start of period | 17575 | 0 | 17575 |
| 0 | Transfer between | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17575 | Carr. Forward | 13505 | 7636 | 21141 |
| Assets and Liabilities | | | | |
| 17575 | Bank | 21141 | | |
| 300 | Cash | 300 | | |
| 17875 | Total assets | 21441 | | |
| 17875 | Net Assets | 21441 | | |



Expenditure

The expenditure for this financial year doesn't reflect activities of the Derby Refugee Forum and DRAC. The level of activities and work delivered are much higher than the expenditure shows. Our contributions towards staff salaries, volunteer travel, interpreting costs, destitution food, and service user travel are relatively low to what we deliver. The rest of the expenditure is volunteer expenses and stationary. The office space, some salary, insurances and room for activities have been covered through joint funding bids with DBHCA. Banking costs continue to rise with additional charges for using the bank and to pay by cheque. A priority for the next year is to proceed with online banking to save money. A new Policy for this must be adopted by the Management Committee.

Expenditure for year 2023-2024 is expected to increase by around £10k as result of changes in how staff salaries are paid.



Income

The income came from three sources - Warm Welcome, Household Support Fund, and from fundraising raising activities inc. donations from churches and groups, event collections, and individual donations, either through bank transfers or cash. Donations via bank transfer have increased this last year., which reduce banking charges. There were 57 donations from £10 to £1200. Thanks to all those who gave so generously and supported us on a regular basis.

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