

# Derby Refugee Forum and Derby Refugee Advice Centre Annual Report May 2019 - May 2020

## Chair's Report - Mrs. Joan Stannard

**This year has been as busy as ever with staff and volunteers working hard to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Derby.**

The financial year began well, with progress being made on our projects linked to our successful National Lottery bid. There have been a large number of individuals and families supported through the difficult period when leave to remain has been granted - this includes liaising with housing providers, applications for Universal Credit, obtaining bank accounts and signposting to job clubs.

Social activities and workshops have been well attended and enjoyed, including some out in the community and schools, spreading understanding and encouraging integration.

English and Maths classes have enabled asylum seekers to access free tuition at an early stage before they are eligible for state funding.

Partnership working and links with other organisations such as British Red Cross, Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity, Upbeat Communities, City of Sanctuary, Derby City Council and various Housing Associations

remain strong, which is a mutual benefit to us all. This enables us to provide a much wider service throughout the City with better facilities, services and opportunities. We would like to say a big thank you to all those organisations who we work with and help offer support to our clients.

Unfortunately, through Corona virus lockdown many of our activities have had to go on hold, but our work has never stopped. A core staff have dealt with emergencies

and developed an enhanced foodbank thanks to local donations and funding from Martin Lewis. Key workers have also taken the opportunity to update computer systems, paperwork and look into a new website. Do check this out very soon!

I would like to thank the Bosnia Herzegovina Association once

again for their wonderful contribution to the work we achieve. Thanks also to our amazing workers, interpreters and volunteers who are always cheerful and determined to overcome the most challenging of situations. The care shown to each person coming into the centre and for each other is an inspiration. Long may that continue!

*Joan Stannard*



Visit to Derby County Football Club to watch the Under 18s.





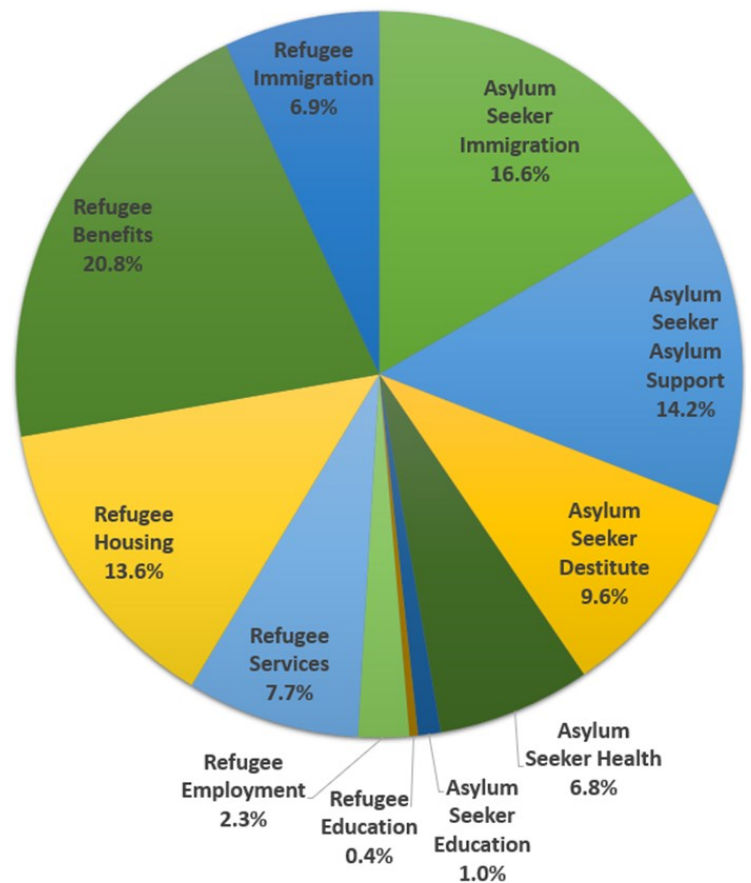
<b>Total Advice Sessions 2019/2020</b>	<b>1622</b>
<b>No. Service Users</b>	<b>657</b>
<b>No. New Service Users</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>Days Open for Advice Sessions</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Average Sessions per Day</b>	<b>21.3</b>
<b>No. Service User Nationalities</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Total Sessions since 2002</b>	<b>31503</b>

This has been a complex and demanding 12 months for many reasons. Staff and volunteers have worked really hard to maintain an atmosphere of safety, security and respect to ensure positive and productive advice sessions. This year the statistics are more difficult to analyze and to compare with last year because we effectively closed from March 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 until the end of the report period because of Covid 19. The analysis therefore reflects approximately a 20% reduction in the 2019/2020 figures, other than

the advice session table, which has been adjusted.

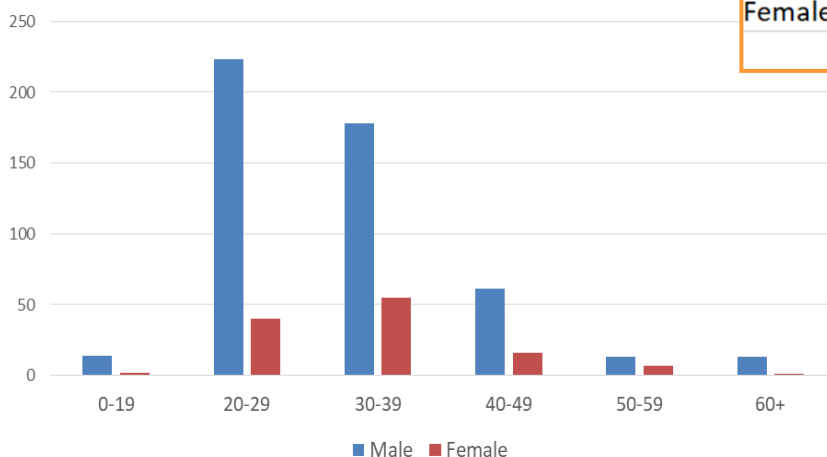
Another significant factor that affected our service was the change in the government contract from G4S to Serco for asylum seeker accommodation, and the new contract given to Migrant Help, where all enquiries for NASS support, both accommodation and financial, as well as immigration issues for asylum seekers would go through their Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) facility. Whereas we would previously have contacted G4S directly for any housing concerns, we are now unable to do so. There were significant teething problems with this new system during 2019 leading to very lengthy waits on the phone to Migrant Help. Consequently advice sessions often took much longer to conclude, resulting in 180 fewer sessions.

Migrant Help were also contracted to follow through the 28 day 'moving on' period for those granted leave to remain along with Reed in Partnership. We continued to work with Derby City Council to provide local moving on support.



	Visits	Visit %	Clients	Client %
Male	1318	81.3%	518	80.2%
Female	304	18.7%	128	19.8%
	1622		646	

Service Users by age and gender

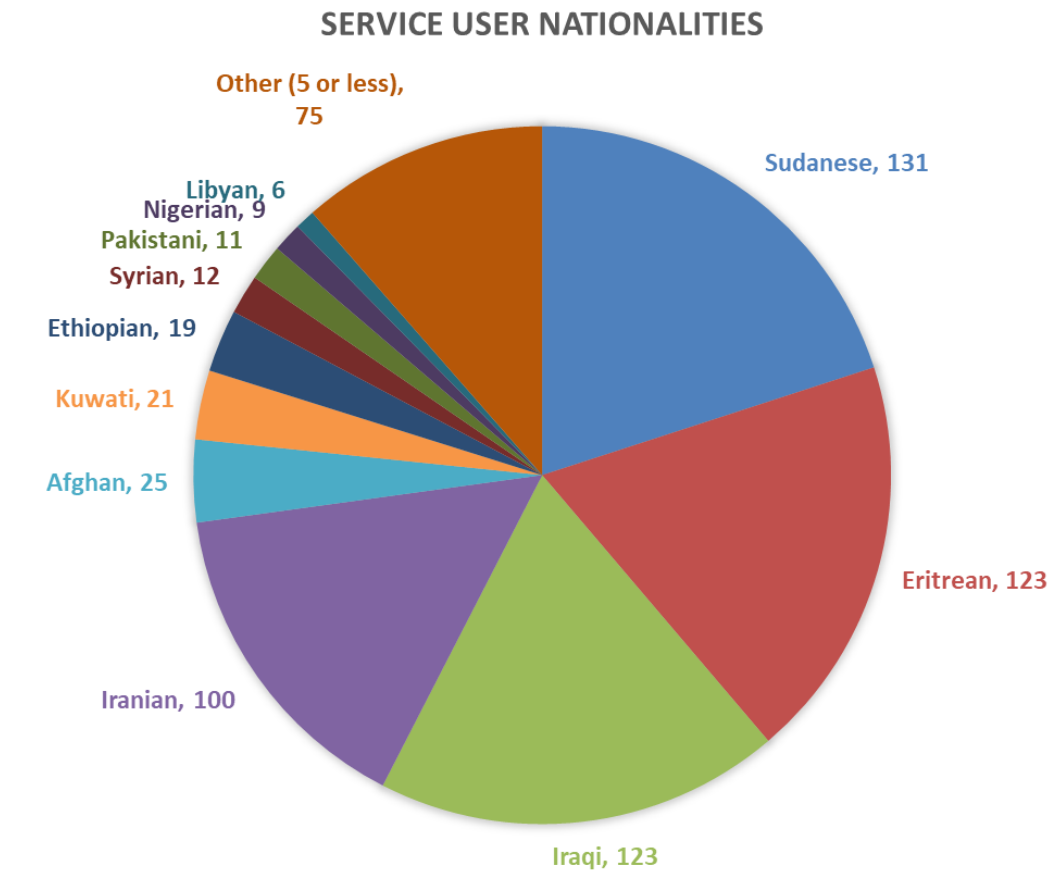


The ratio of males to females seen in the Centre has seen a slight rise in female visits this year although the percentage of female clients is slightly less. The age ranges that we have seen remain consistent with other years, with the 20 - 29 year old males making up the biggest proportion of people seen, followed by the 30 - 39 year old males.



Iran, Iraq, Eritrea and Sudan continue to dominate the nationality table, both for new and longer term service users. War, Human Rights abuses and instability in these countries has led so many to attempt the desperate journey to Europe and the UK.

**Other Nationalities Include:** Algerian, Angolan, Bangladeshi, British, Burmese, Buundian, Cambodian, Cameroonian, Chadian, Chinese, Congolese, Dutch, Egyptian, Estonian, Gambian, Guyanese, Indian, Irish, Jamaican, Malawian, Mexican, Moroccan, Motswana, Namibian, Palestinian, Qatari, Russian, Rwandan, Salvadorian, Somalian, Spanish, Sri Lankan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Yemeni, Zimbabwean.



The reasons for refugee visits were proportionately similar to last year other than those for refugee housing which showed an increase of 4%. Our agreement with Derby City Council involved working with 84 new refugees, including those with families. For single men in particular, finding appropriate housing was becoming increasingly difficult, leading to a need for more advice session input. For the first time the number of visits by refugees was greater than those by asylum seekers.

Worryingly destitution, having almost doubled for asylum seekers in last year's figures, was again by up by another 0.2% this year. This led to 300 plus food parcels being given, to which we have recently added an Aldi or Tesco voucher to enable people to buy fresh fruit and veg or other items such as nappies. Asylum seeker immigration and asylum support visits both fell by 2% reflecting our agreement to refer Section 4 Asylum applications to the British Red Cross (BRC). Bereket from BRC attending our Centre on a Thursday morning has been really positive. Thank you Bereket.



### **Martin Lewis Corona Virus Emergency Fund**

This spring we were successful in gaining an award for £6000 from the Martin Lewis Corona Virus Emergency Fund. This money helped us provide an extra 300 food parcels and vouchers for asylum seekers living in Derby who have been struggling during the Corona Virus outbreak. As well as our usual basics of rice, oil, tinned tomatoes, tuna fish and toiletries, the extra funds have enabled us to also include little 'luxuries' such as coffee, mayonnaise and chocolate biscuits - much appreciated by the recipients. Having these extra funds has also allowed us to include those residents stuck in initial accommodation while they wait until the housing restrictions are eased. A big thank you to the Martin Lewis Corona Virus Emergency Fund for the generous grant allowing us to do this.





## Workshops, Activities and Trips

The Covid 19 outbreak had a big impact on our events calendar, with all activities being cancelled from March 2020. Pre lockdown we had had a great year with a good mixture of new and old events. We started to follow Derby County Football Clubs Under 18's team in the European cup, watching them at Loughborough University and then at 2 home games in Derby. We had 59 attendees over the 3

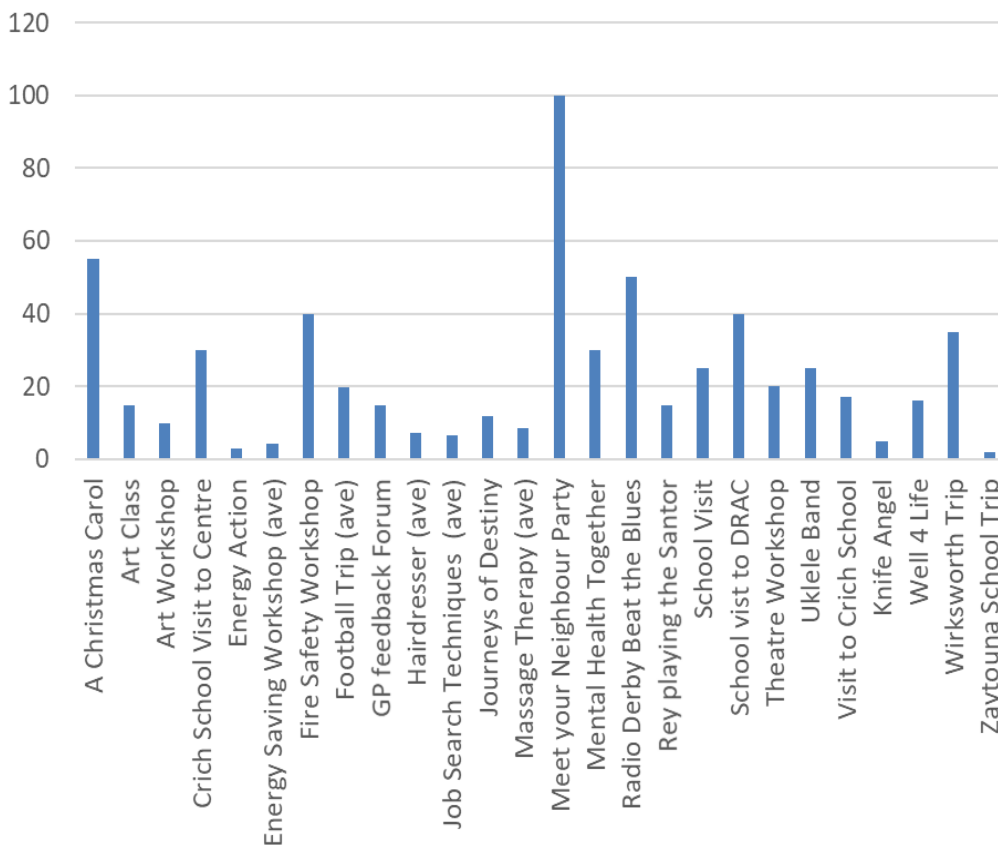


matches, all enjoying the football immensely and getting over excited when Derby scored. We have also been pleased to start providing workshops with Energy Action, supporting our clients to get better deals on their utility bills and claim any help they are entitled to. Art workshops continued to be popular, as did our massage therapy and hairdressing sessions. Music at the Centre is always well received and we have been happy to host our local Ukelele band 'Wuzalele', Rey playing his Santor and various acts from Radio Derby during their 'Beat the Blues' campaign in January. Dancing always follows in the Centre when the music begins!

We continued with our school trips, both us visiting the various schools and them visiting us. We've played football, dodge ball and curling with the pupils, painted national flags on stones to put in our garden and been taught new games. We've also taught the children to write their names in a variety of different languages, always a popular activity.

We took a large group of people to Wirksworth Community Gardens via a trip on the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway and made visits to the Knife Angel and Moon on their stop at Derby Cathedral.

Despite closing down our activities in March we still organised and hosted 95 activities, workshops and events with 1145 participants!



## Maths and English classes

Volunteers at Derby Refugee Advice Centre run 3 English classes and 1 Maths class on a weekly basis during school terms. Lessons concentrate on life in the UK and although they aren't certified, people can join as soon as they arrive in Derby rather than waiting to access college. Over the last year we have run 128 English/Maths classes with a total attendance of 1431. Our weekly attendance average for weekly classes combined is 44.7 with a session average of 11.2. Thank you and well done to our tutors for keeping the classes interesting, informative and fun.



## Lottery Update

Part of the National Lottery Community funding for the next 5 years covers project work in several different areas that we have previously been piloting. Working with schools throughout the County has continued to be important and we've kept old links with Crich Junior, Anthony Gell, Ashover Primary and Bonsall CE Primary Schools, as well as developing new links with Long Eaton Academy and organising new activities and visits with the children at Zaytouna Primary School Derby.

The theatre work, including the Meet Your Neighbour events with Maison Foo has gone from strength to strength. We've had workshops to help produce a new art installation and finished 2019 with a fantastic party at the Theatre for around 100 people, with 54 attending 'A Christmas Carol' afterwards.



## Gardens and Green Spaces

Our gardens and green spaces project got off to a great start with our first garden success. One of our volunteers spent an enjoyable day doing gardening clearance with one of our clients and her children. All thoroughly enjoyed getting 'stuck in' and having the garden to use afterwards. Tools have been left so they can continue the good work which prompted many happy memories from their home. Good practice guidance has been written, tools have been donated and collected ready for when we can start gardening again safely.

## Healthcare Work at Derby Refugee Advice Centre - Jill Rapoport

My volunteer role at DRAC has developed to encompass all matters related to health, due to my experience being a retired GP. Initially I started to help clients registering with GPs and dentists, or obtaining HC2 certificates. I was also asked to assist clients who have specific health issues and may need help communicating with their GP or hospital department. Clients with health-related issues can now book an appointment with me and we ask Volunteers to log all health-related issues that arise during the general advice sessions which I then follow up. In the first three months there were 73 recorded issues and we are now starting to build up a database to show the range of problems we deal with. The most common being help with GP registration, assistance with HC2 certificates and help in communicating to their GP.

Although everyone in the UK is entitled to register with a GP, there are instances of asylum seekers being turned away because they do not have the correct ID or documentation. This suggested that closer liaison with the GP practices our clients use would be of benefit and a meeting with one of the local practices was set up to discuss possible problems and solutions. Via Healthwatch Derby and St.Thomas Street surgery, there are plans to set up training sessions for practice staff to find out more about the asylum seeker process here in the UK and issues around access to healthcare. This idea grew out of a workshop offered at DRAC by Healthwatch Derby to find out what problems our clients were having with regard to health services. As well as offering training to GP practice staff, for the second year, a small group from the GP Training Scheme opted to find out more about asylum seekers and refugees by requesting such a session at DRAC. All found the sessions informative and we would like to continue this work by offering it to larger groups of GP trainees.

Health-related topics have been used during the Thursday English classes. This has helped clients with speaking to health professionals and in finding their way around the health service. Classes have covered a wide range of scenarios that clients might face, including discussions on how to manage common ailments at home, how to access medicines via a prescription or at the pharmacy and help in understanding terms such as medicine, capsule or suspension. We have focussed on the language connected with operations and describing how you might feel afterwards. A skeleton was used in one session to help with naming of body parts and I was most impressed by the knowledge shown by the class.





## Volunteers at Derby Refugee Advice Centre.

Derby Refugee Forum and Derby Refugee Advice Centre has almost 50 volunteers giving their spare time, skills and expertise to help refugees and asylum seekers in the City. We are incredibly grateful to our volunteers for the work they do each year to support our clients and we know our clients feel the same. This year all of our volunteers were given a certificate of appreciation from the Sudanese Derby Voices Ambassadors.

Here are two of our volunteers to explain why they keep volunteering...

### John...

I was originally attracted to help at the Centre because it provides a practical and effective service to the community of asylum seekers and refugees. I meet a variety of people - both clients and staff - who make my role there rewarding. The support I get at the Centre is professional - it needs to be, very often the cases facing us are very difficult.

One of the biggest challenges facing our clients is learning English and beginning the process of integrating into a society often very different for them. As a way of widening my involvement, I started Maths classes (with the emphasis on the language needed). This has been useful and fun at the same time - what a strange language English is!?

I have also helped with organising an annual trip for our clients and their families up to our hometown. They spend a day in the Community Garden with a walk around the town, and meet the locals. Transport is provided free by East Midlands Rail and the local hobbyists train EVR. The day usually involves a singalong and some dancing!



John ready in goals at a visit to Crich School.

### Ahlam...

I help in different sections when volunteering at the Centre. I use the computers to enter clients information on to the database and I also help people apply for bank

accounts. I interpret information for clients from different languages that includes English, Arabic and Farsi. This helps them understand and ensure that they receive the help and support they need. I also help in the kitchen where I prepare coffee and tea for everyone. I take part with the events, trips and parties.

I like to help and support with everything I'm capable to do. I enjoy doing all this because I'm helping and supporting others with what they need. I always keep going back to the organisation because I feel happy when offering help and support to others and I get to volunteer with the lovely and kind people there.



Ahlam at the Volunteer Party

## Awareness Raising

Along with helping clients in the Centre, our volunteers also help with raising awareness of our work and the situation of asylum seekers. Along with talks to schools, local churches and groups as well as charity stalls at events, this year has also offered some extra opportunities. We started the summer with an art display produced by refugees and asylum seekers for Refugee Week and followed this with our second successful year playing Human Fruit Machine at West Hallam Festival, raising laughs along with funds and awareness with our display. In September we were invited to talk at an International Conference in London with Monese, the online bank that we use with our clients. We spoke to around 100 people about the difficulties new refugees face in opening a bank account. In October we hosted a display in our local Lush store, chatting to shoppers about asylum seeker issues and raising just over £250 through the sales of their charity pot and donations.





<u>Income</u>		<u>2019-2020</u>		
		Unrestr.	Restr.	Total
11588	Grants	0	19735	19735
7661	Donations	6836	0	6836
<b>19249</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6836</b>	<b>19735</b>	<b>26571</b>
<u>Expenditure:</u>				
3261	Office Cost	774	1440	2214
12512	Salaries Contrib.	0	8361	8361
0	COVID-19	0	2826	2826
215	Interpreting Cost	68	0	68
2323	Destitution Cost	1498	0	1498
1702	Manag. vol. cost	62	1230	1292
924	Equipment Cost	0	50	50
2671	Sundry	165	2652	2817
<b>23608</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2567</b>	<b>16559</b>	<b>19126</b>
-4359	Year movement	4269	3176	7445
25261	Start of period	17185	3717	20902
0	Transfer between	0	0	0
21203	Carried Forwar	21454	6893	28347
<u>Assets and Liabilities</u>				
20903	Bank		28647	
300	Cash		300	
<b>21203</b>	<b>Total assets</b>		<b>28647</b>	
<b>21203</b>	<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>28647</b>	

## Finances June 2019 - May 2020

The combined project with Derby Bosnia Herzegovina Community Association (DBHCA) and funding from the National Lottery Reaching Communities programme is on its 1st year. This funding has given stability to our organisation by funding our place of work, contributing to work place management, fundraising activities and continued funding of staff and volunteer expenses.

The funding received this year was above expectation. Small grant applications have been made mainly related to COVID-19 and how this has changed or increased demands on our services. This year we had a balance which shows less expenditure than in reserves, which will affect our fundraising this following year.

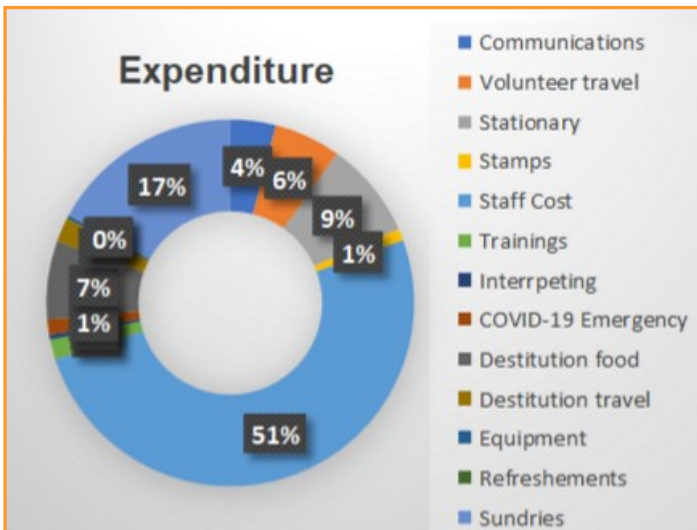
- Restricted funding this year has come from:
- YAPP Charitable Trust giving us a grant for the 3rd year of £3000, to help with running costs and work of the Volunteer Coordinator/ Admin.
  - Derby City Council with funding of £8588. This is the last payment in relation to improving our services around the 'Move on' period when gaining refugee status and integration of asylum seekers and refugees. All spent according to the Terms and Conditions.
  - Martin Lewis COVID Emergency Fund, with a grant of £6000

Thanks go to all the funders, volunteers who publicised our work, the many churches, community groups and individuals who make our work possible.

**Treasurer**

## Fundraising Income

Income this year has come from similar sources to previous years, donations from churches, schools and event collections, volunteers work and individual regular donations (all thanks to work of our DRAC volunteers). We had 637 individual donations ranging from £5.00 to £1000 along with donations from big organization like Central United Church, YAPP Charitable and Martin Lewis Emergency Fund. Thanks to all of our donors. This is their success too.



## Expenditure

The expenditure for this financial year reflect activities of the Derby Refugee Forum and DRAC. The main expenditure this financial year was associated with contributions towards staff salary, match funding for the Big Lottery Grant, stationary (copying) and destitution costs. All our accommodation costs have been covered through a joint funding bid with DBHCA, a part of the additional activities included in the project have been funded through small funding applications.

## Derby Refugee Forum - Our Mission:

To help support refugees and people seeking asylum in Derby and raise awareness of the difficulties they face.

### We provide:

- ✓ A safe and confidential environment for asylum seekers and refugees to share concerns and solve their problems.
- ✓ Basic food, toiletries and clothing for destitute asylum seekers.
- ✓ Signposting to legal advice, healthcare, education and benefits.
  - ✓ Creative activities, workshops and trips.
- ✓ Information about leisure and learning opportunities to enhance the self-esteem and well-being of service users.

### Legal Outreach Service

We are pleased to have been able to carry on building our relationship and providing a legal outreach service for our clients in the Centre with our regular solicitors - Burton and Burton and IAS, both with offices locally in Derby. After an initial appointment at the Centre, clients can then continue seeing the solicitor locally without the need to travel to offices around the country, saving on travel expenses and time. During the year we have made 81 appointments over 22 outreach days, enabling our clients to access legal help close to home, in an environment where they feel comfortable and safe.



### Thank You!

This year we have been lucky to get continuation funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to cover the basic running costs of the Centre and our projects. However, without the continued support from our local churches, individuals and organisations, far too many to mention individually here, we wouldn't be able to do the extra work we do and give the extra support to people in the way we do. We would like to say a huge thank you to each and everyone of you who has supported us, whether it be a financial donation, however large or small, donated food for our food bank, clothing, sanitary protection, household items and even furniture. Your support is not only much appreciated by ourselves, but also very much by our clients whose lives you help make better and just a little bit easier.



**With thanks to the following funding Organisations:**

**Martin Lewis Coronavirus  
Emergency Fund**



### Derby Refugee Forum & Derby Refugee Advice Centre

Bosnia & Herzegovina Centre, 99 Curzon Street, Derby, DE1 1LN.

Telephone: 01332 347497 07828 139266 Email: drac2@hotmail.co.uk

Website: [www.derbyrefugeeforum.org](http://www.derbyrefugeeforum.org) Registered Charity Number: 1121582