

# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

England & Wales · Charity number 1093033

## Details

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**Other names** MRSN

**Status** Registered

**Legal form** Other

**Registered** 2002-07-18

**Register** [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

## Contact

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**Address** St Anne's Centre  
7 Overbury Street  
Liverpool  
L7 3HJ

**Phone** 01517097557

**Email** [info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

**Website** [www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

## Activities

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**Objects:** The relief of persons who are refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside by providing practical support and advocacy and bringing together different groups concerned with their welfare to network, share information and improve awareness of the issues impacting on refugees and people seeking asylum.

**Activities:** Bringing together all refugee & asylum support agencies across Merseyside to network, share information, raise issues, campaign, and provide signposting. We also provide welfare/housing advocacy case work, we offer health and well being support and employment and training advice for individual refugees and asylum seekers to help with integration and settlement for life in UK.

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups

## Geography

- **Area of benefit:** MERSEYSIDE
- Knowsley
- Liverpool City
- Sefton
- St Helens
- Wirral

## Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£96,226	£88,298	-	-
2024-03-31	£110,834	£76,124	-	-
2023-03-31	£89,435	£55,843	-	-
2022-03-31	£75,886	£57,707	-	-
2021-03-31	£63,963	£52,024	-	-

## Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
CARMEL DERSCH		2015-01-15
Dr HARRIET GRAY		2013-01-23
EWAN ROBERTS		
Jannatul Chowdhury		2026-01-15
MO TAHER		2014-01-15
MRS JAN LUFF		
SHELAH SEMOFF		2022-03-02
Sarah Buaye		2024-02-29
Susan Newall		2024-02-29

**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**

England & Wales - Charity number 1093033

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# Accounts

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# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2025



St Anne's Centre  
7, Overbury Street  
Liverpool  
L7 3HJ

0151-709-7557

[info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

[www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1093033

Liverpool City of  
Sanctuary 

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## GOVERNANCE

The following have served the Network as Trustees during the year:

- S. Buaye (Independent)
- C. Dersch (Independent)
- H. Gray (Independent)
- J. Luff (Independent) - *Treasurer*
- S. Newall (Independent)
- E. Roberts (Asylum Link Merseyside)
- S. Semoff (Independent) - *Chair*
- M. Taher (Independent)

THE TEAM - SESSIONAL & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- S. Roberts – Director/Case Management
- A. Ahmed – Interpreting/Casework/Community Health Champion
- M. Tooghchi – Finance/Monitoring
- M. Rahimpour – Trainee Interpreting/Casework
- E. Walsh – Integration/Development casework

Thanks to the numerous and talented volunteers who have supported our work in 2024-25:

Araya; Clare; Di; Elhadi; Margaret; Mike; Jules, Ludo, Erin, Sarah, Mohammed.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Network seeks to establish, through its Membership Policy, two principles. The first is that the Network supports the local refugee and asylum support sector members and wider network partners in order to support the needs of our collective service users. The second is that we continue to work in partnership with the public and private sector partners to support the accessibility for service users to their provision, and to address issues when they arise.

Membership of the Network represents your/your organisation's good will and intent to support the work of the charity, its members and membership organisations through the principles of partnership working and a Community of Practice to enable shared learning, problem solving and information sharing.

Full membership is open to any interested organisation or individual making an application to the Network whose application is accepted.

Full members are able to vote at meetings and to nominate a person to stand for election as a Trustee.

This Annual Report & Accounts for the financial year 2024-25 demonstrates the hard work and continuing developments in the past year. Now in the Charity's 23<sup>rd</sup> year of supporting refugees and other sanctuary seekers in the Liverpool City Region and beyond, we are preparing the final stage in our transition to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The small but important strategic change demonstrates our core values and commitments to the refugees and sanctuary seekers we support, as well as our team and the wider Network members and associates across the Merseyside refugee and asylum support sector.

The Annual Report provides an important opportunity to reflect on the past financial year and assess how the charity worked to meet its charitable aims and objectives, as required by the Charity Commission.

We continued to experience exceptional demand for our work, and have provided to help mitigate an ever-changing refugee immigration landscape as well as coping with the political and media pressures of hostility, exacerbated by the threat of the far-right riots during the summer of 2024.

In spite of the ongoing impact of the backlog clearance, rising homelessness and the pressures of an increasingly anti-immigration environment, we have resolutely continued to support the wellbeing and integration of our clients through our combined actions of: crisis support; integration casework; health & wellbeing projects and; awareness raising/myth busting work, in balance with our network role and partnership ethos.

We continue to build our sessional and volunteer team, strengthening the charity for strategic growth and sustainability.

### Context

The overall objects of Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN), as updated in October 2024 are - *The relief of persons who are refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside by providing practical support and advocacy and bringing together different groups concerned with their welfare to network, share information and improve awareness of the issues impacting on refugees and people seeking asylum.*

In meeting our aims, we provide a combination of networking and information sharing services, supported through the email newsgroup and Network and or thematic meetings. We previously also managed a directory of refugee and asylum support agencies and diaspora groups. This was removed from the website in August 2024 due to far-right riots and threats on the charity.

Over the past 20+ years, we have also offered “relief” through crisis, advocacy and integration casework support with refugee clients moving-on from the asylum system, including help with applications for housing and housing needs assessments; benefit applications and appeals, as well as other integration matters such as employability skills, access to education and language support and, access to and engagement with health and wellbeing projects and services.

The shared asylum/refugee “sanctuary hub” at St Anne’s continues to enable MRSN to work in close partnership and provide reciprocal asylum and refugee client support and signposting in a very effective way with colleagues from Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

As ever, we continue to maintain and develop our close working relationships with Network Members to collectively help and support our vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking clients, as well as each other. As in previous years, these relationships have continued to develop and have been enhanced as the need for cross-agency working and complex casework has never been so demanding in our working world.

We are delighted in this context to present our 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report.

The number of people fleeing war or persecution and seeking sanctuary across the UK and Europe has not abated in the history of the charity and our service is constantly working to keep or build resources to help refugees granted leave to remain and, in the years beyond, to support their onward integration journey.

Per previous reports, it cannot go unsaid that various politicians, press and media outlets continue to regularly conflate the facts around immigration and reinforce the “hostile environment”. On too many occasions lies have been told to the public along with the use of derogatory language and misinformation. This is seen most notably in the perception that the proportion of people seeking asylum is a significant element of overall UK immigration (in fact, for 2024 it was less than 5%), popularising phrases such as “illegal migrants” and “stop the boats.” The principles of the Geneva Convention do not seek to demonise anyone seeking sanctuary or their methods of escape. Our work to raise awareness and understanding, therefore, continues through our daily advocacy casework, regular information sharing, networking activities and connecting people.

Our *Fact Not Fiction* publication remains an organic document, which we update regularly, to raise awareness and share factual information to the wider public and communities of Merseyside and beyond. [https://mrsnliverpool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/facts\\_not\\_fiction\\_trifold-leaflet\\_2025a.jpg](https://mrsnliverpool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/facts_not_fiction_trifold-leaflet_2025a.jpg)

In other work, we continue to service the Liverpool City of Sanctuary group communications and support other groups with thematic applications for City of Sanctuary award status.

## Our Work

During 2024-2025 our casework was as busy as the previous financial year, in excess of 475 clients in the reporting year. A further 237 one-off advice/information sessions were given and 260+ external advice requests, referrals and other information enquiries were dealt with for local, regional and national VCSE organisations and statutory services.

Key nationalities of the refugee people seeking our support included: Sudan; Yemen; Kuwait; Iran; Eritrea; Afghanistan, Syria and Ethiopia.

Our core casework included crisis intervention, destitution and wider integration support – including applications and follow up on welfare benefits; housing referrals and applications; family reunion arrival and integration support; DV/DA support; referral to counselling/therapeutic services.

Our health and wellbeing awareness and accessibility projects, both with the Public Health Community Champions programme and others in partnership with Asylum Link and ICB included adult and child vaccine and immunisation awareness; women's health; cancer awareness; blood pressure checks and healthy heart awareness; mental health awareness; access to dental health and liver/Hepatitis screening and Stop Smoking.

Offering 1-2-1 advocacy and practical casework, supports the psycho-education needs of clients diagnosed or experiencing symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety disorders and PTSD. In house and external referrals to social and physical activities (Women's ESOL @MRSN or gardening; choir; music therapy and bike rides @Asylum Link and other activities run @ActionAsylum have all provided important and purposeful activity and wellbeing incentives for hundreds of clients over the year.

The impact of the ongoing "backlog" asylum clearance continued with significant homelessness and destitution presentations for those not in priority need or for others for whom the system had failed.

The local, regional and national networks collectively raised their voice to advocate and challenge the government's actions as well as the local and regional housing and homeless services on their legal responsibilities, accuracy of data reporting and delayed actions. In the background, there continues to be a risk that refugees are being blamed as the cause of national failures in housing services rather than the lack of investment in social housing.

In over 25+ years, no-one in the sector had experienced anything like this. The press picked up on this too per last year and sought our comments and perceptions of the issues of refugee homelessness including.

- The Guardian – followed up on previous national report
- Liverpool Echo – local/regional follow up report
- Big Issue – Awarded MRSN as one of their "Change Makers 2025"

Following the threat of a far-right attack on our charity and our hosts Asylum Link in August 2024, we had to shut the centre for a 4-6 week period in summer 2024 to ensure our clients, volunteers, sessional staff and the local church and residential community were kept safe.

The power of the Liverpool community support and local and national TV News coverage (BBC Newsnight; Liverpool Echo and ITV Granada Reports) brought a crowd of over 1000 supporters to protect our work and our place of work – our “peace line” became a street filled with peace and hope. Many people felt this became a turning point in quelling the ongoing threat of the summer riots. In the months following we were invited to meet the then Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper at Spellow Lane Library re-opening event and the Lord Chancellor.

The services offered through MRSN have been developed and sustained to meet client requests and needs and this continues to be possible thanks to new and existing support and/or grants from:

Lloyds Bank Foundation; Big Lottery Awards for All; PH Holt Foundation; The Fore; Liverpool Council - Public Health and Our Liverpool; LCVS/ICB (in partnership with Asylum Link); SAS/CTMR; NW Housing; and, an anonymous grant funder.

Our integration and advocacy support work has been extended and enhanced through these various grants and donations which often span accounting years. In addition to those funders named above, we have had amazing additional support from public donations. Together with existing project funds and programmes we were able to:

- Increase our sessional team hours and recruit to new or vacant sessional roles to increase our capacity for refugee client move-on casework.
- Increase our opportunities for people with lived experience.
- Provide emergency cash grants (via SAS/CTMR and other donations) as well as commission food store supplies (via ALM).
- Provide emergency accommodation for street homeless clients without other options.
- Continue to support clients with integration and employability skills.
- Provide insight into refugee community access and engagement with health services.
- Continue to develop our data capture and evaluation systems and trial of the Integration Outcome Star.
- Regularly share information across the Network with MRSN members, partners and City of Sanctuary partners (n=500 recipients)
- Respond to wider calls for client support, information and advice locally, regionally and nationally.

We continue to work hard as a Charity organisation and Network, highlighting the ongoing need to change hearts and minds and address media myth and anti-immigration hype. We have also helped different refugee diaspora communities reaching out for help, as well as helping to connect statutory services to various refugee cultural communities.

Our combined advocacy casework, wellbeing, integration and refugee community support services and projects are not limited in time or scope. We work with clients until they feel able or empowered to move-on themselves.

Widening our reach and maintaining partnership arrangements is crucial in the support work we offer to both clients and sector colleagues alike.

The MRSN trustees meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance and administration of the Charity and to discuss and respond to matters of urgent concern that are directly affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

At time of writing, we can report that our current caseload has already doubled during 2025.

We have started the process to register with the Immigration Advice Authority and we are in the final administration stages of preparing to submit an application to incorporate the charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, as previously discussed.

All of our work fulfils our charitable objectives and once again we are so grateful to our grant funders, donors, supporters and Network Members who trust in our work, our experience and ethics.

The summary "Receipt and Payment" Accounts have been approved through external and independent examination and are attached with this Annual Report.

## RESERVES POLICY STATEMENT 2024-2025

The Trustees recognise that the MRSN reserves should be used appropriately and with due diligence to maintain the sustainability of the charity.

During the period, for many reasons we have been highly fortunate in receiving further significant donations from the public and a grant from an anonymous funder. Increasingly a number of funders are also offering unrestricted grants for the delivery of the charitable activities. As such, some reserves are deemed to be “free” and unrestricted and used for general purposes in delivery of the work of the charity, governance costs and other compliance expenditure (such as insurances, official registration costs etc), including a 6-month buffer to meet financial commitments and obligations and/or contracts should the charity have to close.

Certain donations and grants have been specifically assigned as “designated project funds” to ensure service delivery for casework, crisis support and Network functions, in the spirit of the grants or donations given.

The receipts and payment accounts which are prepared for the annual return to the Charity Commission show all income received and whether this is restricted per funder, unrestricted donations and income or designated funds for the financial year.

This policy and its effectiveness are reviewed and developed on an annual basis.

# RECEIPT AND PAYMENT ACCOUNTS 2024-2025

## MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

Receipts and Payments Accounts 2024-2025 HSBC ACCOUNT  
Year to 31st March 2025



#	Project	Income/Funder/Donor	£ B/F	£ Income	£ Exp	£ Balance
<b>Unrestricted Reserves/Donations</b>						
1	General - unrestricted/non designated	VARIOUS	40,455.31	6,972.58	12,042.94	35,384.95
<b>Designated Funds</b>						
1a	General - designated project funds (Grants/income awarded for the work of the charity)	VARIOUS	19,043.11	25,427.92	4,844.86	39,626.17
1b	Online donations - inc homeless funds	VARIOUS	7,476.93	3,035.00	3,036.54	7,475.39
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>66,975.35</b>	<b>35,435.50</b>	<b>19,924.34</b>	<b>82,486.51</b>
<b>Restricted Funds/Grants</b>						
7	NEW_SAS client support	SAS	2,120.00	4,535.00	6,636.90	18.10
18	LCC Community Champions ROLL ON	LCC	1,620.53	30,000.00	4,264.75	27,355.78
20	LCCG_Health and Wellbeing with ALM	ALM +	98.24	6,000.00	1,355.12	4,743.12
23	Merseycare/Liferooms 23/24	Liferooms	21,450.58	0.00	21,450.58	0.00
24	Awards for All(Big Lottery 2024)	A4A	20,000.00	5.76	20,005.76	0.00
25	PH Holt new	PH Holt	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00
26	NW Housing	NW Housing	0.00	400.00	400.00	0.00
27	The Fore	The Fore	0.00	15,000.00	4,260.75	10,739.25
28	Our Liverpool_Fact not Fiction	LCC	0.00	4,850.00	0.00	4,850.00
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>55,289.35</b>	<b>60,790.76</b>	<b>68,373.86</b>	<b>47,706.25</b>
<b>Balances Per Bank Statement to 31.3.2025</b>			<b>£ 122,264.70</b>	<b>96,226.26</b>	<b>88,298.20</b>	<b>130,192.76</b>

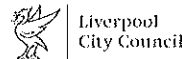
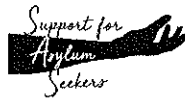
CLOSED  
CLOSED  
CLOSED

I have examined these accounts and they are consistent with the books and records kept by Merseyside Refugee Support Network

Mr B. Gray, ACCA

Signed:

Date: 13/01/26



**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**

England & Wales - Charity number 1093033

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# Accounts

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# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2024




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Registered Charity No 1093033

Liverpool City of  
Sanctuary 

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## GOVERNANCE

The following have served the Network as Trustees during the year:

- S. Buaye (Independent) - appointed 29.2.2024
- C. Dersch (Independent)
- H. Gray (Independent) - *Chair*
- J. Luff (Independent) - *Treasurer*
- S. Newall (Independent) – appointed 29.2.2024
- E. Roberts (Asylum Link Merseyside)
- H. Santamera (Independent) – resigned 30.1.2024
- S. Semoff (Independent)
- M. Taher (Independent)

THE TEAM - SESSIONAL & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- S. Roberts – Director/Case Manager
- A. Ahmed – Integration, Interpreter Caseworker/Community Health Champion
- M. Lucas – Integration Caseworker
- E. Melling – Integration & Wellbeing Caseworker

Thanks to the numerous and talented volunteers who have supported our work from April 2023-March 2024 and ongoing, in particular:

Abdul; Araya; Ashkan; Clare; Di; Elhadi; Maryam and Mike.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Network seeks to establish, through its Membership Policy, two principles. The first is that the Network supports the local refugee and asylum support sector members and wider network partners in order to support the needs of our collective service users. The second is that we continue to work in partnership with the public and private sector partners to support the accessibility for service users to their provision, and to address issues when they arise.

Membership of the Network represents your/your organisation's good will and intent to support the work of the charity, its members and membership organisations through the principles of partnership working and a Community of Practice to enable shared learning, problem solving and information sharing.

Full membership is open to any interested organisation or individual making an application to the Network whose application is accepted.

Full members are able to vote at meetings and to nominate a person to stand for election as a Trustee.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT APRIL 2023-MARCH 2024

This Annual Report & Accounts for the financial year 2023-24 demonstrates how our work has continued and developed over the last year and, in celebration of the Charity's 22<sup>nd</sup> year of supporting refugees and other sanctuary seekers in the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Moreover, it represents the continuing benefits of the Network and support for the member organisations of the local refugee and asylum support sector.

Each year, our annual report provides an important opportunity to reflect on the past financial year and assess how the charity worked to meet its core charitable aims and objectives, as required by the Charity Commission.

We experienced an exceptionally busy working year, leading to an upscaling of our refugee crisis and integration casework to meet increasing demand. In addition, we have continued with our health & wellbeing support projects and awareness raising/myth busting work. We have consolidated our staff and volunteer teams strengthening the charity and its onward strategic growth and sustainability.

### Context

The overall aim of Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN) includes *"the relief of refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside.."* and, as a Network, to bring together local and regional organisations concerned with their welfare, to share information and good practice, discuss and address issues across the sector.

In meeting our aims, we provide a combination of networking and information sharing services, supported through the email newsgroup, directories of refugee and asylum support agencies and Network and or thematic meetings.

Over the past 19+ years, we have also offered "relief" through integration casework support with refugee clients moving-on from the asylum stream benefits and housing systems, as well as other integration matters such as employability skills, access to education and language support and, access to and engagement with health and wellbeing projects and services.

The shared asylum/refugee "sanctuary hub" at St Anne's continues to enable MRSN to work in close partnership and provide reciprocal asylum and refugee client support and signposting in a very effective way with colleagues from Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

As ever, we continue to maintain and develop our close working relationships with Network Members to collectively help and support our vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking clients, as well as each other. As in

previous years, these relationships have continued to develop and have been enhanced as the need for cross-agency working and complex casework has never been so demanding in our working world.

We are delighted in this context to present our 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report.

The numbers of people fleeing war and persecution, seeking sanctuary across the UK and Europe has not abated and our service is constantly working to keep resources in place to help new refugees granted leave to remain and, in the years beyond, to support their onward integration journey.

It cannot go unsaid that certain politicians, press and media outlets continue to regularly conflate the facts around immigration and reinforce the “hostile environment”. On too many occasions lies have been told to the public along with the use of derogatory language and misinformation. This is seen most notably in the perception that the proportion of people seeking asylum is a significant element of overall UK immigration (which it is not, in fact it is less than 5%), popularising phrases such as “illegal migrants” and “stop the boats.” (The principles of the Geneva Convention do not seek to demonise anyone seeking sanctuary or their methods of escape). Our work to raise awareness and understanding, therefore, continues through our daily advocacy casework, regular information sharing, networking and connecting people.

The *Facts Not Fiction* publication remains an organic document, which we update regularly, to raise awareness and share factual information to the wider public and communities of Merseyside and beyond.

We continue to also service the Liverpool City of Sanctuary group communications and the amazing work within the Schools of Sanctuary in Liverpool and the wider LCR. We are also delighted by the commitment from City of Liverpool College in its work to become a College of Sanctuary.

## **Our Work**

During 2023-2024 our casework continued to grow, now in excess of 500 clients annually. A further 171 one-off advice/information sessions and 300+ external advice requests, referrals and other information enquiries were provided.

Key nationalities of refugees seeking our support include: Sudan; Yemen; Kuwait; Iran; Eritrea; Afghanistan.

Our core casework included crisis intervention, destitution and wider integration support – including applications and follow up on welfare benefits; housing referrals and applications; family reunion arrival and integration support; DV/DA support; referral to counselling/therapeutic services. Our in-house health and wellbeing awareness and accessibility projects, both with Community Champions programme and others in partnership with Asylum Link included adult and child vaccine and immunisation awareness; women’s health;

cancer awareness; blood pressure checks and healthy heart awareness; mental health awareness; access to dental health and liver /Hep C screening.

Offering 1-2-1 advocacy and practical casework, supports the psycho-education needs of clients diagnosed or experiencing symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety disorders and PTSD. In house and external referrals to social and physical activities (Women's ESOL @MRSN or gardening; choir; music therapy and bike rides @ALM and other activities run @ActionAsylum have all provided important and purposeful activity and wellbeing incentives for hundreds of clients.

By August 2023 the "everyday" refugee support landscape dramatically shifted when we first experienced the increase in refugee homelessness and destitution, as the government started to clear their "asylum backlog".

Decisions were being made in bulk and the local, regional and national housing systems came to breaking point. In any previous year, we had not seen more than a handful of street homeless cases amongst our recently granted refugee cohort. Changes in government interpretation of rules led some folk being given 7 days or less to apply for benefits and housing, an impossible task and immediately leading to destitution amongst newly granted refugees. We also witnessed issues with local authorities not applying their statutory housing duty, which led us to closer working with legal housing professionals to appeal and challenge more and more cases of housing need across the city region.

The local, regional and national networks collectively found their voice, challenged the government's actions as well as the local and regional housing and homeless services on their legal responsibilities, accuracy of data reporting and delayed actions - a picture emerged of many statutory services failing or not fit for purpose. In the background, there was a risk that refugees would be blamed as the cause of national failures in housing services rather than the lack of investment in social housing.

In over 25+ years, no-one in the sector had experienced anything like this. The press picked up on this too and sought our comments and perceptions of the escalating refugee homelessness crisis.

- The Guardian – various national reports, followed by a video documentary @MRSN
- Liverpool Echo – local/regional report
- Big Issue – national report
- RTE – Ireland

BBC News, ITV News and Le Monde also sought our comments and experience on the issues.

The services at MRSN have been developed and sustained thanks to new and existing grants or commissions from Lloyds Bank Foundation; Big Lottery Awards for All; PH Holt Foundation; Liverpool Council - Public Health; Former Liverpool CCG; MerseyCare NHS - Liferooms; SAS/CTMR.

Our integration and advocacy support work has been extended and enhanced through various grants and donations which often span accounting years. In addition to those funders named above, we have had amazing additional support from public donations. Together with existing project funds and programmes we were able to:

- Increase our staff hours and recruit to new or vacant roles for casework, finance and management.
- Provide emergency cash grants (via SAS/CTMR and other donations) as well as commission food store supplies (via ALM).
- Continue to support clients with integration and employability skills.
- Provide insight into refugee community access and engagement with health services.
- Continue to develop our data capture and evaluation systems and trial of the Integration Star.
- Regularly share information across the Network with MRSN members, partners and City of Sanctuary partners (n=500 recipients)
- Respond to wider calls for client support, information and advice locally, regionally and nationally.

We continue to work hard as a Charity organisation and Network, highlighting the ongoing need to change hearts and minds and address media myth and hype. We have also helped different refugee diaspora communities reaching out for help, as well as helping to connect statutory services to various refugee cultural communities.

Our combined advocacy casework, wellbeing, integration and refugee community support services and projects are not limited in time or scope. We work with clients until they feel able or empowered to move-on themselves.

Widening our reach and maintaining partnership arrangements is crucial in the support work we offer to both clients and sector colleagues alike.

The MRSN trustees meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance and administration of the Charity and to discuss and respond to matters of urgent concern that are directly affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

At time of writing, we can report that our updated charitable objects have been approved by the Charity Commission and we continue our goal to take forward the work to incorporate the charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation as soon as possible, and as previously discussed.

All of our work fulfils our charitable objectives and once again we are so grateful to our grant funders, donors, supporters and Network Members who trust in our work, our experience and ethics.

The summary "Receipt and Payment" accounts have been approved through external and independent examination and are attached with this Annual Report.

## RESERVES POLICY STATEMENT

The Trustees recognise that the MRSN reserves should be used appropriately and with due diligence to maintain the sustainability of the charity.

During the period, for many reasons we have been highly fortunate in receiving new and significant donations from the public. Increasingly funders are also offering unrestricted grants for the delivery of the charitable activities

Some reserves are deemed to be free and "unrestricted" and used for general purposes in delivery of the work of the charity, governance costs and other compliance expenditure (such as insurances, official registration costs etc), including 4-6 month buffer to meet financial commitments and obligations and/or contracts should the charity have to close.

Certain donations and grants have been specifically assigned as "designated project funds" to ensure service delivery for casework and Network functions, in the spirit of the grants or donations given.

The receipts and payment accounts which are prepared for the annual return to the Charity Commission show all income received and whether this is restricted per funder, unrestricted donations and income or designated funds for the financial year.

This policy and its effectiveness is reviewed and developed on an annual basis.

## RECEIPT AND PAYMENT ACCOUNTS 2023-2024

**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts 2023-24**  
**Year ending 31st March 2024**  
**HSBC ACCOUNT**



#	Project	Income/Funder/Donor	£ B/F	£ Income	£ Exp	£ Balance
<b>Unrestricted Reserves/Donations</b>						
1	General - unrestricted/non designated	Various	43,331.74	4,055.10	6,931.53	40,455.31
<b>Designated Funds</b>						
1a	General - designated project funds <i>inc. Lloyds Bank Foundation yr2, inc. C Cerkett Trust</i>	Various	36,100.50	0.00	17,057.39	19,043.11
1b	<i>Online donations - inc homeless funds</i>	Various	0.00	10,197.43	2,720.50	7,476.93
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>79,432.24</b>	<b>14,252.53</b>	<b>26,709.42</b>	<b>66,975.35</b>
<b>Restricted Funds/Grants</b>						
7	NEW_SAS client support	SAS	3,675.00	1,920.00	3,475.00	2,120.00
15	CLOSED_Our Liverpool	closed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	LCC Community Champions	LCC	4,454.52	18,750.00	21,583.99	1,620.53
19	WEA_ESF 22	closed	-0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00
20	LCCG_Health and Wellbeing with ALM	CCG_LCVS	-7.05	3,000.00	2,894.71	98.24
22	MPCC_LCC Community Cohesion	MPCC/LCC	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
23	Merseycare/Liferooms 23/24	Liferooms	0.00	39,911.80	18,461.22	21,450.58
24	Awards for All(Big Lottery 2024)	A4A	0.00	20,000.00	0.00	20,000.00
25	PH Holt new	PH Holt	0.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>8,122.37</b>	<b>96,581.90</b>	<b>49,414.92</b>	<b>55,289.35</b>
<b>Balances Per Bank Statement to 31.3.2024</b>			<b>£ 87,554.61</b>	<b>110,834.43</b>	<b>76,124.34</b>	<b>122,264.70</b>

I have examined these accounts and they are consistent with the books and records kept by Merseyside Refugee Support Network

Mr B. Gray

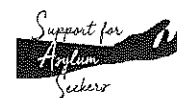
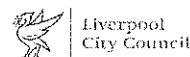
Signed: 

Date: 27/01/25



EMILY SPURRELL  
 MERSEYSIDE POLICE  
 & CRIME COMMISSIONER

**P. H. HOLT**  
 FOUNDATION



**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**

England & Wales - Charity number 1093033

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# Accounts

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# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2023




St Anne's Centre  
7, Overbury Street  
Liverpool  
L7 3HJ

0151-709-7557

[info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

[www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1093033

Liverpool City of  
Sanctuary 

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## GOVERNANCE

The following have served the Network as Trustees during the year:

- Carmel Dersch (Independent)
- Harriet Gray (Independent) - *Chair*
- Jan Luff (Independent) - *Treasurer*
- Ewan Roberts (Asylum Link Merseyside)
- Helene Santamera (Independent)
- Shelah Semoff (Independent)
- Mohammed Taher (Independent)

### THE TEAM - SESSIONAL & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- S. Roberts – MRSN Manager
- A. Ahmed – MRSN Refugee Advocacy Officer
- M. Lucas – MRSN Support Worker

Thanks to the numerous and talented volunteers who have supported our work from April 2022-March 2023 and ongoing, in particular:

Abdulrahman; Maryam; Ashkan; Ehsan; Clare; Mike H, Gill and Jen.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Network seeks to establish, through its Membership Policy, two principles. The first is that the Network supports the local refugee and asylum support sector members and wider network partners in order to support the needs of our collective service users. The second is that we continue to work in partnership with the public and private sector partners to support the accessibility for service users to their provision, where appropriate.

Membership of the Network represents your good will and intention to support the work of the charity and its members and membership organisations through the principles of partnership working, shared learning, expertise and information sharing.

Full membership is open to any interested organisation or individual making an application to the Network and whose application is accepted.

Full members are able to vote at meetings and to nominate a person to stand for election as a Trustee.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

This annual report and accounts for the financial year 2022-23 captures how our work has continued and developed over the last year and, in celebration of the Charity's 21st year of supporting refugees and other sanctuary seekers in the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Moreover, it represents the continuing benefits of the Network and support for the member organisations of the local refugee and asylum support sector.

Each year, our annual report presents an important opportunity to reflect on the past financial year and as a means to assess how the charity has continued to work to meet its core charitable aims and objectives, as required by the Charity Commission. We had another busy working year, which has been very productive enabling us to offer more refugee casework sessions along with our projects to support health & wellbeing and employability support projects. In addition, we have also increased staff and volunteer teams as well as strengthening the charity and its sustainability.

### Context

The overall aim of Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN) includes *"the relief of refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside.."* and, as a Network, to bring together local and regional organisations concerned with their welfare, to share information and good practice, discuss and address issues across the sector.

In meeting our aims, we provide a combination of networking and information sharing services, supported through the email newsgroup, directories of refugee and asylum support agencies and, in normal times, regular Network meetings.

Over the past 18+ years, we have also offered "relief" through casework support with refugee clients moving-on from the asylum support system. The biggest need is met through our advocacy casework to help clients access and cope with the mainstream benefits and housing systems, as well as other integration matters such as employment support, education, language support and health services.

The shared asylum/refugee "sanctuary hub" at St Anne's continues to enable MRSN to work in close partnership and provide reciprocal asylum and refugee client support and signposting in a very effective way with colleagues from Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

As ever, we continue to maintain and develop our close working relationships with Network Members to collectively help and support our vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking clients, as well as each other. During the past year, these relationships have continued to develop and have been enhanced as the need for cross-agency working and complex casework continues to increase in our post-pandemic and "hostile environment" working world.

We are delighted in this context to present our 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report, as we celebrate our Charity's formal 21<sup>st</sup> birthday during 2023.

As per previous reports, the numbers of people fleeing war and persecution and seeking sanctuary across the UK and Europe has not abated and our service is constantly trying to keep resources in place to help new refugees when they are granted leave to remain and, in the years beyond, to support their onward integration journey. It cannot go unsaid that politically the landscape has continued to develop a deliberate "hostile environment".

Our work to raise awareness and understanding, therefore, also continues through our daily advocacy work, regular information sharing, networking and connecting people.

The *Facts Not Fiction* publication was again updated following the terrible incidents at the Suites Hotel in Knowsley and followed up with a poster campaign and awareness raising videos, kindly funded through the office of the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and Liverpool Council.

We continue to also service the Liverpool City of Sanctuary group communications and the amazing work within the Schools of Sanctuary in Liverpool and the wider LCR. During the year, we have also advised on bids from the Local Authority and Liverpool Museums in their applications for thematic Sanctuary status.

## **Our Work**

During 2022-23 our casework continued to grow, now in excess of 370 clients pa and a further 200+ one-off advice/information appointments. Key nationalities in the 22-23 period were from Sudan; Yemen; Kuwait; Iran; Eritrea; Ukraine; Afghanistan.

Our core casework included crisis support; applications and follow up on benefits; housing referrals and applications; family reunion arrival and integration support; DV client support; homelessness support; reporting of unfit housing conditions and/or referral to counselling and projects to support health and wellbeing and initiatives to improve awareness of public health.

The overall work has been sustained thanks to grants from Lloyds Bank Foundation and other related project specific funding with health and wellbeing projects funded via former LCCG and LCC-Community Champions and employability and volunteering projects funded through the last of European Social Funding.

The extension to our European Social Fund (ESF) work enabled us to offer additional project capacity to help build skills and confidence, to remove barriers to employment through job seeking skills and volunteer tasters and placements to clients, resulting in both job and long term volunteer outcomes.

Health & wellbeing and health-awareness projects have continued to be an important part of our work in the refugee communities.

Our Covid Champions and other health work, delivered in partnership with ALM, has enabled many hundreds of clients to understand and access covid and childhood immunisation vaccines over the past year, as well as general health, diabetes, cancer/mental health awareness. This work is set to continue to Spring 2024.

Our advocacy and support work has been extended and enhanced through various grants and donations which often span accounting years.

In addition to those funders named above, we had the amazing additional support of various local and national funders including a funding donation from the Catherine Cirket Discretionary Trust (CCDT) and Support Asylum Seekers (SAS Fund) via Churches Together in Merseyside (CTMR). The donation from CCDT was given in good faith to support and sustain our core refugee support work and we will honour this through assigning it as a designated fund within our accounts. The SAS fund enables us to provide ad hoc emergency and crisis cash support to clients in need and/or destitute – eg prior to benefits going into payment or when a significant change comes into effect.

Together with existing funds and programmes we were able to:

- offer additional staff and volunteer hours to meet the ongoing increasing demand for refugee advocacy casework
- provide emergency cash grants and vouchers (via SAS/CTMR), food supplies and clothing (via ALM).
- continue to support clients with integration and employability skills
- provide insight into refugee community access to health services and Covid support
- develop our data monitoring systems
- regularly share information across the Network with Members and City of Sanctuary partner (n=500 recipients)
- respond to wider calls for client support, information and advice locally, regionally and nationally (n=263 outside agency/organisation requests)

We continue to work hard as an organisation and Network - to highlight the ongoing need to change hearts and minds and address media myth and hype. We have also helped different refugee diaspora communities reaching out for help, as well as helping to connect statutory services to various refugee cultural communities

Our combined advocacy casework, wellbeing, integration and refugee community support services and projects are not limited in time or scope. We work with clients until they feel able or empowered to move-on themselves.

Widening our reach and maintaining partnership arrangements is crucial in the support work we offer to both clients and sector colleagues alike.

The MRSN trustees meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance and administration of the Charity and to discuss and respond to matters of urgent concern that are directly affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

We now have resources in place to take forward the work to incorporate the charity as soon as possible, as previously discussed.

All of our work fulfils our charitable objectives and once again we are so grateful to our grant funders, donors, supporters and Network Members who trust in our work, our experience and ethics.

The summary "Receipt and Payment" accounts at page 10 have been approved through external and independent examination and are attached with this Annual Report.

## RESERVES POLICY STATEMENT

The Trustees recognise that the MRSN reserves should be used appropriately and with due diligence to maintain the sustainability of the charity.

Some reserves are deemed to be “unrestricted” and used for general purposes in delivery of the work of the charity, governance costs and other compliance expenditure (such as insurances, official registration costs etc), including 4-6 month buffer to meet financial commitments and obligations and/or contracts should the charity decide to close.

Certain donations and grants have been specifically assigned as “designated project funds” to ensure service delivery for casework and Network functions, in the spirit of the grants or donations given.

The receipts and payment accounts which are prepared for the annual return to the Charity Commission show all income received and whether this is restricted per funder, unrestricted donations and income or designated funds for the financial year.

This policy and its effectiveness will be reviewed and developed on an annual basis.

**RECEIPT AND PAYMENT ACCOUNTS 2022-2023**

**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts 2022-2: HSBC ACCOUNT**  
**Year ending 31st March 2023**



#	Project	Income/Funder/Donor	£ B/F	£ Income	£ Exp	£ Balance
<b>Unrestricted Reserves/Donations</b>						
1	General - unrestricted/non designated	VARIOUS	50,528.59	1,447.50	-8,644.35	43,331.74
<b>Designated Funds</b>						
1a	General - designated project funds <i>inc. Lloyds Bank Foundation yr2, inc. C Cerkett Trust</i>	VARIOUS	0.00	37,250.00	-1,149.50	36,100.50
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>50,528.59</b>	<b>38,697.50</b>	<b>-9,793.85</b>	<b>79,432.24</b>
<b>Restricted Funds/Grants</b>						
7	NEW_SAS client support	SAS	1,195.00	4,320.00	-1,840.00	3,675.00
15	ALM/Our Liverpool	ALM	-250.50	1,400.00	-1,149.50	0.00
18	LCC Community Champions	LCC	4,465.95	25,000.00	-25,011.43	4,454.52
19	WEA_ESF 22	ESF/WEA	-1,976.00	17,017.00	-15,041.10	-0.10
20	LCCG_Health and Wellbeing with ALM	CCG_LCVS	0.00	3,000.00	-3,007.05	-7.05
<b>Sub Total:</b>			<b>3,434.45</b>	<b>50,737.00</b>	<b>-46,049.08</b>	<b>8,122.37</b>
<b>Balances Per Bank Statement to:31.03.2023</b>			<b>£ 53,963.04</b>	<b>89,434.50</b>	<b>-55,842.93</b>	<b>87,554.61</b>

I have examined these accounts and they are consistent with the books and records kept Merseyside Refugee Support Network

**Mr B. Gray**

Signed:



27/01/2024

Date:



**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**

England & Wales - Charity number 1093033

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# Accounts

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# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2022



St Anne's Centre  
7, Overbury Street  
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0151-709-7557

[info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

[www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1093033

Liverpool City of  
Sanctuary



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## GOVERNANCE

The following have served the Network as Trustees during the year:

- Carmel Dersch (Independent)
- Harriet Gray (Independent)
- Lynn Learman (Independent) - *Treasurer*
- Jan Luff (Independent) - *Chair*
- Nick McLaughlin – South Liverpool CAB
- Ewan Roberts (Asylum Link Merseyside)
- Helene Santamera (Independent)
- Shelah Semoff (Independent)
- Mohammed Taher (Independent)

### THE TEAM - SESSIONAL & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- S. Roberts – MRSN Manager
- M. McAdam – MRSN Senior Refugee Advocacy Officer (*retired 30/09/2021*)
- A. Ahmed – MRSN Refugee Advocacy Officer

Thanks to the numerous and talented volunteers who have supported our work from April 2021-March 2022 and ongoing, in particular:

Abdulrahman; Maryam; Ashkan; Selam; Ehsan; Di; Jan; Mike, Gill and Jen.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Network seeks to establish, through its Membership Policy, two principles. The first is that the Network has to remain firmly in the ownership of voluntary organisations. The second is that we have benefited enormously and intend to continue doing so from the involvement of public and private sector partners.

Membership of the Network represents your good will and intention to support the work of the charity and its members and membership organisations through the principles of partnership working, shared learning and expertise and information sharing.

Full membership is open to any interested organisation or individual making an application to the Network and whose application is accepted.

Full members are able to vote at meetings and to nominate a person to stand for election as a Trustee.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT APRIL 2021-MARCH 2022

This annual report and accounts for the financial year 2021-22 captures how our work has continued and developed over the last year and, in celebration of the Charity's 20<sup>th</sup> year of supporting refugees and other sanctuary seekers in the Liverpool City Region and beyond. Moreover, it represents the continuing benefits of the Network and support for the member organisations of the local refugee and asylum support sector.

Since the previous AGM, we have emerged from the constraints of the various Covid-19 lockdowns and have regained a sense of normal working.

Each year, our annual report presents an important opportunity to reflect on the past financial year and as a means to assess how the charity has continued to work to meet its core charitable aims and objectives, as required by the Charity Commission. We had another busy year, which has been very productive enabling us to offer more refugee casework sessions along with our projects to support health & wellbeing and employability support projects. In addition, we have also increased staff and volunteer teams as well as strengthening the charity and its sustainability.

### Context

The overall aim of Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN) includes "*the relief of refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside.*" and, as a Network, to bring together local and regional organisations concerned with their welfare, to share information and good practice, discuss and address issues across the sector.

In meeting our aims, we provide a combination of networking and information sharing services, supported through the email newsgroup, directories of refugee and asylum support agencies and, in normal times, regular Network meetings.

Over the past 17 years, we have also offered "relief" through casework support with refugee clients moving-on from the asylum support system. The biggest need is met through our advocacy casework to help clients access and cope with the mainstream benefits and housing systems, as well as other integration matters such as employment support, education, language support and health services.

The shared asylum/refugee "sanctuary hub" at St Anne's continues to enable MRSN to work in close partnership and provide reciprocal asylum and refugee client support and signposting in a very effective way with colleagues from Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

As ever, we continue to maintain and develop our close working relationships with Network Members to

MRSN Report & Accounts 2021-2022

collectively help and support our vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking clients, as well as each other. During the past year, these relationships have continued to develop and have been enhanced as the need for cross-agency working and complex casework continues to increase in our post-pandemic working world.

We are delighted in this context to present our 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, as we celebrate our Charity's formal 20<sup>th</sup> birthday during 2022.

As per previous reports, the numbers of people fleeing war and persecution and seeking sanctuary across UK and Europe has not abated and our service is constantly trying to keep resources in place to help new refugees when they are granted leave to remain and, in the years beyond, to support their onward integration journey. It cannot go unsaid that politically the landscape has continued to develop a deliberate "hostile environment".

Our work to raise awareness and understanding, therefore, also continues through our daily advocacy work, regular information sharing, networking and connecting people. Our *Fact Not Fiction* publication has been updated again and helps in this process, alongside our work to support Schools of Sanctuary. During the year, we have advised on bids from the Local Authority and Liverpool Museums in their applications for thematic Sanctuary status and, we continue to administer the Liverpool City of Sanctuary group.

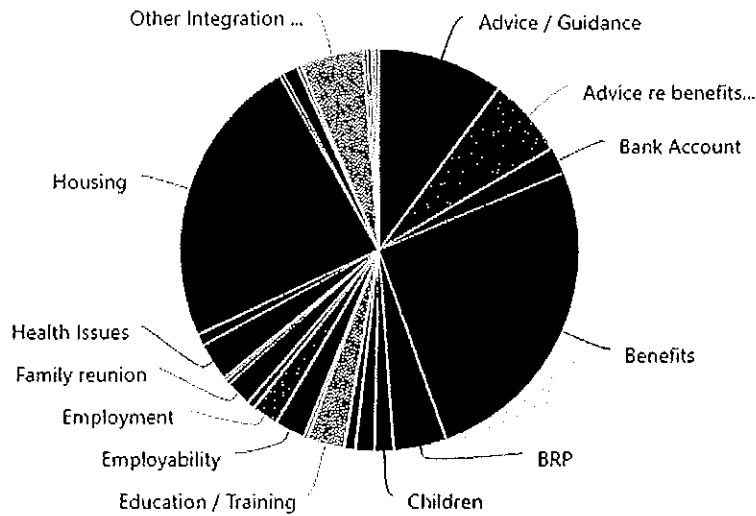
By summer 2021, the plight of the Afghan people very much brought the spotlight back to the reasons people flee their homelands, little did we know then that war would start in Ukraine in February 2022 following the Russian invasion. By March 2022, we were supporting some of the first Ukrainian refugees in Liverpool.

## **Our Work**

On an annual basis, and resource dependent, MRSN has traditionally worked with between 350-500 individual refugees and their families. Although numbers dipped due to the impact of the pandemic in asylum decisions, during 2021-22 our numbers were back up to 330 clients on caseload and a further 159 one-off advice/information or support appointments.

Our core casework included crisis support; applications and follow up on benefits; housing referrals and applications; family reunion arrival and integration support; DV client support; homelessness support; reporting of unfit housing conditions and/or referral to counselling and health services and initiatives.

This work has been sustained thanks to grants from Lloyds Bank Foundation; Allen Lane Foundation and PH Holt Foundation.



In addition, our European Social Fund (ESF) work has also focussed on building skills and confidence to help clients understand their rights and entitlements, to remove barriers to employment through job seeking skills, digital literacy and language support. In the last ever round of ESF funding we were delighted to deliver our employability project offering volunteer tasters and placements to clients, resulting in both job and long term volunteer outcomes.

Health and health-awareness projects have also been an important part of our work in the past couple of years. Our Covid Champions public health work, delivered in partnership with ALM, has enabled hundreds of clients to understand and access vaccines and boosters over the past year, as well as general health and mental health awareness. Going forward, the good practice learned from this project has led to a much broader health and wellbeing community based programme. It is well documented that poor health and poverty are inextricably linked, we have no doubt that our work to improve health awareness and access to health services will continue.

During the year, we jointly worked with Asylum Link and Faiths 4 Change and other Liverpool partners on a Liverpool CCG regional funded Diabetes Partnership project on Diabetes Awareness. Certain major health issues, such as diabetes and stroke are known to significantly affect people from Black and other ethnic minority communities at an earlier age. Our research and awareness sessions allowed us to share with over 40 participants the issues contributing to risk of diabetes, how to mitigate against them by seeking medical support and through life style and dietary changes. In a separate connection with the Stroke Association our advice for good practice on communications with people whose first language is not English has been adopted nationally.

Our work has been extended and enhanced through various grants and donations which often span accounting years. In addition to those funders named above, we had the amazing additional support of various local and national funders including: Support Asylum Seekers (SAS)/Churches Together in Merseyside and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

Together with existing funds and programmes we were able to:

- offer additional staff and volunteer hours to meet the service demand for refugee advocacy casework and health and wellbeing projects.
- provide emergency cash grants and vouchers (via SAS and Crisis), food supplies and clothing (via ALM), carpets/curtains/sportswear (via Crisis) – approx. total combined value of £10k.
- continue to support clients with integration and employability skills
- provide insight into refugee community access to health services and Covid support
- develop our data monitoring systems
- develop our website [www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)
- regularly share information across the Network with Members and City of Sanctuary partner (n=500 recipients)
- respond to wider calls for client support, information and advice locally, regionally and nationally (n=143 outside agency/organisation requests)

We continue to work hard as an organisation and Network - to highlight the ongoing need to change hearts and minds and address media myth and hype. We have also helped different refugee diaspora communities reaching out for help, as well as helping to connect statutory services to various refugee cultural communities, including EMTAS and Merseyside Police.

Our combined advocacy casework, wellbeing, integration and refugee community support services and projects are not limited in time or scope. We work with clients until they feel able or empowered to move-on themselves.

Widening our reach and maintaining partnership arrangements is crucial in the support work we offer to both clients and sector colleagues alike. Although many across the local refugee and asylum support sector were remote working for long periods of time, it often felt as if we had found new ways of supporting each other and checking-in on each other more than ever before and long may that continue.

The trustees meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance and administration of the Charity and to discuss and respond to matters of urgent concern that are directly affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

We now have resources in place to take forward the work to incorporate the charity as soon as possible.

All of our work fulfils our charitable objectives and once again we are so grateful to our grant funders, donors, supporters and Network Members who trust in our work, our experience and ethics.

The summary “Receipt and Payment” accounts at page 10 have been approved through external and independent examination and are attached with this Annual Report.

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**RESERVES POLICY STATEMENT**

Reserves are unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend in relation to the charity's purposes. At MRSN we build up reserves through donations, training, events and other income or grants which are received, without restriction. These funds have been recorded as "general funds – unrestricted" within our accounts summary.

The receipts and payment accounts which are prepared for the annual return to the Charity Commission show all income received and whether this is restricted per funder or unrestricted donations and income in each financial year.

Unrestricted reserves may contribute to the future sustainability of the charity, although these will not be built up to excessive levels, it is our intention, in line with good practice and governance to achieve 3-6 months equivalent in running costs.


This policy and its effectiveness will be reviewed and developed on an annual basis.

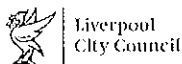
**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts 2021-22**  
**Year ending 31st March 2022**



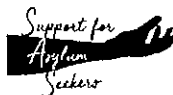
#	Project	Income/Funder/Donor	£ B/F	£ Income	£ Exp	£ Balance
<b>Unrestricted Funds/Donations</b>						
1	General Funds	MISC	17,368.46	35,203.00	-2,042.87	50,528.59
	Inc. Diabetes Awareness/LCCG					
	Inc. Lloyds Bank Foundation					
		<b>Sub Total:</b>	<b>17,368.46</b>	<b>35,203.00</b>	<b>-2,042.87</b>	<b>50,528.59</b>
<b>Restricted Funds/Grants</b>						
7	NEW SAS client support	SAS	1,025.00	4,700.00	-4,530.00	1,195.00
8	NEW ERASMUS - CREATE OPPORTUNITIES	ERASMUS + (Bialystok)	6,282.65	0.00	-6,282.65	0.00
9	TRANSFER CoS RESIDUAL GRANT	CoS Central	125.59	0.00	-125.59	0.00
10	NEW ESF 19/20	ESF/WEA	-69.56	7,900.00	-7,830.44	0.00
11	TRANSFER L'POOL WELCOMES RESIDUAL FUND	MRSN	99.19	0.00	-99.19	0.00
12	ALLEN LANE FOUNDATION	ALLEN LANE	4,490.50	0.00	-4,490.50	0.00
13	PH HOLT	PH HOLT	2,658.50	0.00	-2,658.50	0.00
15	ALM/Our Liverpool	ALM	2,800.00	0.00	-3,050.50	-250.50
17	BARROW CADBURY - Covid support	Barrow Cadbury/Covid	1,004.02	100.00	-1,104.02	0.00
18	LCC Covid Community Champions	LCC	0.00	25,000.00	-20,534.05	4,465.95
19	WEA ESF 22	ESF/WEA	0.00	2,983.00	-4,959.00	-1,976.00
		<b>Sub Total:</b>	<b>18,415.89</b>	<b>40,683.00</b>	<b>-55,664.44</b>	<b>3,434.45</b>
	<b>Balances Per Bank Statement to:31.03.2022</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>35,784.35</b>	<b>75,886.00</b>	<b>-57,707.31</b>	<b>53,963.04</b>

I have examined these accounts and they are consistent with the books and records kept by Merseyside Refugee Support Network

Signed:   
 Date: 23/01/2023



European Union  
 European Social Fund



City of Sanctuary  
 Liverpool



APPROVED BY MRSN TRUSTEES ON: 27/01/2023

**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**

England & Wales - Charity number 1093033

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# Accounts

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# MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS TO 31ST MARCH 2021



St Anne's Centre  
7, Overbury Street  
Liverpool  
L7 3HJ

0151-709-7557

[info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk](mailto:info@mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

[www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1093033



City of Sanctuary,  
Liverpool

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## GOVERNANCE

The following have served the Network as Trustees during the year:

- Carmel Dersch (Independent)
- Harriet Gray (Independent)
- Lynn Learman (Independent) - *Treasurer*
- Jan Luff (Independent) - *Chair*
- Nick McLaughlin – South Liverpool CAB
- Ewan Roberts (Asylum Link Merseyside)
- Mohammed Taher (Independent/MerseyCare)
- Helene Santamera (Independent)

### THE TEAM - SESSIONAL & SUPPORT COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- S. Roberts – MRSN Operations/Projects Manager
- M. McAdam – MRSN Senior Refugee Advocacy Officer/Project Coordinator
- A. Ahmed – MRSN Refugee Advocacy Officer

Thanks to the numerous volunteers who have supported our work from April 2020-March 2021 and ongoing.

## MEMBERSHIP POLICY

The Network seeks to establish, through its Membership Policy, two principles. The first is that the Network has to remain firmly in the ownership of voluntary organisations. The second is that we have benefited enormously and intend to continue doing so from the involvement of public and private sector partners.

Membership of the Network represents your good will and intention to support the work of the charity and its members through the principles of partnership working and information sharing.

Full membership is open to any interested organisation or individual making an application to the Network and whose application is accepted.

Full members are able to vote at meetings and to nominate a person to stand for election as a Trustee.

## TRUSTEES' REPORT APRIL 2020-MARCH 2021

When we presented our previous annual report and accounts in January 2021, by Zoom, we were reflecting on the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic across the refugee and asylum support sector and beyond. This annual report and accounts for the financial year 2020-21 captures how things progressed, how we responded and how we supported our clients and colleagues across the Network. Little did we know that Covid (omicron variant) would still be very much with us for this AGM.

Each year, our annual report presents an important opportunity to reflect on the past (financial) year and as a means to assess how the charity has continued to work to meet its core charitable aims and objectives, as required by the Charity Commission. It goes without saying that we had a very busy and challenging year as our work and working practices had to be entirely restructured in order to keep supporting our vulnerable refugee clients through: remote working; WhatsApp; email; text; VOIP phone, especially in periods of enforced lockdowns whilst following government legislation and face to face when guidelines allowed.

### Context

The overall aim of Merseyside Refugee Support Network (MRSN) includes the relief of refugees or asylum seekers in Merseyside and, as a Network, we also work to bring together local and regional organisations concerned with their welfare, to share information and good practice, discuss and address issues across the sector.

In meeting our aims, we provide a combination of networking and information sharing services, supported through the email newsgroup, directories of refugee and asylum support agencies and, in normal times, regular Network meetings.

Over the past 15+ years, we have also offered "relief" through casework support with refugee clients moving-on from the asylum support system. The biggest need is met through our advocacy casework to help clients access and cope with the mainstream benefits and housing systems, as well as other integration matters such as accessing employment support, education, language support and health services.

The shared asylum/refugee "sanctuary hub" at St Anne's continues to enable MRSN to work in close partnership and provide reciprocal asylum and refugee client support and signposting in a very effective way with colleagues from Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

As ever, we continue to maintain and develop our close working relationships with Network Members to collectively help and support our vulnerable refugee and asylum-seeking clients, as well as each other. During the past year these relationships have developed and been enhanced as the need for cross-agency working and complex casework has significantly increased.

We are delighted in this context to present our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, as we approach our Charity's formal 20<sup>th</sup> birthday later in 2022.

As per previous reports, the numbers of people fleeing war and persecution and seeking sanctuary across UK and Europe has not abated and our service is constantly trying to keep resources in place to help new refugees when they are granted leave to remain and in the years beyond to support their onward integration journey. By summer 2021 the plight of the Afghan people very much brought the spotlight back to the reasons people flee their homelands.

### **Our work**

On an annual basis, and resource dependent, MRSN works with between 350-500 individual refugees and their families. During 2020-21 our numbers were somewhat lower at 250+ clients, which reflects the fact that for long periods there was little decision making or movement of new refugees through the system due to the pandemic. Our casework included crisis support; applications and follow up on benefits applications; housing referrals and application; family reunion arrival and integration support; DV client support; homelessness support; reporting of unfit housing conditions; help with repayment of Home Office support and or referral to counselling and health services. In addition, our ESF funded work has also focussed on building skills and confidence to help clients understand their rights and entitlements, to remove barriers to employment through job seeking skills, digital literacy and language support.

During the period, however, our casework took longer and became increasingly complex as a result of the pandemic and other local factors.

Our advocacy, wellbeing and integration support casework is not limited in time or scope, and our work has been extended and enhanced through various grants which have spanned accounting years –John Moores Foundation; European Union ERASMUS + (Create Opportunities); European Social Fund (Refugee Integration/Employability project) and the Allan Lane Foundation.

During the pandemic, we had the amazing additional support of various local and national funders including: Support Asylum Seekers (SAS)/Churches Together in Merseyside; Charities Aid Foundation (CAF); PH Holt Foundation; LCR Cares; LCVS/Liverpool CCG and the Barrow Cadbury Trust.

Together with existing funds and programmes these funds enabled us:

- to offer additional staff hours to meet the service demand for refugee advocacy casework

- to provide emergency cash grants, food supplies (via ALM) + volunteer shoppers/clothing and or mobile phone/data support to a value of £7075.00
- to enable clients emergency access to support and services via a Covid-safe “zoom-room”
- to continue to support clients with integration and employability skills
- to provide regular and translated information on staying Covid-safe, following government guidelines, encouraging testing and sharing information on vaccines
- to provide insight into refugee community access to health services and Covid support
- to provide at-home therapy gardening kits to vulnerable clients via Faiths for Change.
- to support developmental costs for our data monitoring systems
- to progress the development of our website [www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk](http://www.mrsnliverpool.org.uk)
- to regularly share information across the Network with Members and City of Sanctuary partner (n=500 recipients)
- to respond to wider calls for client support, information and advice locally, regionally and nationally (n=127 outside agency requests)

We continue to work hard as an organisation and Network - to highlight the ongoing need to change hearts and minds and address media myth and hype, hence we have continued to work on updates to our Fact Not Fiction publication (now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year of circulation) thanks to contributory funds via Our Liverpool. The updated edition has been circulated widely and with a splendid set of new artwork thanks to children and young people from across Merseyside who entered our joint art competition with EMTAS in May 2021.

Furthermore, we continue to administer Liverpool City of Sanctuary group and the Liverpool Schools of Sanctuary groups. During the year we are delighted to have supported Liverpool Theatres and City College in their applications for Sanctuary status.

Widening our reach and maintaining partnership arrangements is crucial in the support work we offer to both clients and sector colleagues alike. Although many across the local refugee and asylum support sector were remote working for long periods of time, it often felt as if we had found new ways of supporting each other and checking-in on each other more than ever before and long may that continue.

The trustees meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis to oversee the governance and administration of the Network and to discuss and respond to matters of urgent concern that are directly affecting refugees and asylum seekers, which are then shared and developed through the normal pre-Covid Network meetings.

As another period of Covid restrictions subsides, we will be seeking to follow through our plans to become an incorporated charity as soon as possible.

All of our work fulfils our charitable objectives and once again we are so grateful to our grant funders who trust in our work, our experience and ethics.

The summary "Receipt and Payment" accounts at page 9 have been approved through external and independent examination and are attached with this Annual Report.

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#### RESERVES POLICY STATEMENT

Reserves are unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend in relation to the charity's purposes. At MRSN we build up reserves through donations, training, events and other income or grants which are received, without restriction. These funds have been recorded as "general funds – unrestricted" within our accounts summary.

The receipts and payment accounts which are prepared for the annual return to the Charity Commission show all income received and whether this is restricted per funder or unrestricted donations and income in each financial year.

Unrestricted reserves may contribute to the future sustainability of the charity, although these will not be built up to excessive levels, it is our intention, in line with good practice and governance to achieve 3 months equivalent in running costs.

This policy and its effectiveness will be reviewed and developed on an annual basis.

## RECEIPT AND PAYMENT ACCOUNTS 2020-2021

**MERSEYSIDE REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK**  
**Receipts and Payments Accounts 2020-21**  
**Year ending 31st March 2021**  
**HSBC ACCOUNT**

**Merseyside Refugee Support Network**  
 Registered Charity No 1093033



#	Project	Income/Funder/Donor	£ B/F	£ Income	£ Exp	£ Balance
<b>Unrestricted Funds/Donations</b>						
1	General Funds	MISC	6922.72	13660	-3214.26	17368.46
Sub Total:			6922.72	13660	-3214.26	17368.46
<b>Restricted Funds/Grants</b>						
6	JOHN MOORES FOUNDATION	CLOSED	2400	0	-2400	0
7	NEW_SAS client support	SAS	0	4350	-3325	1025
8	NEW ERASMUS - CREATE OPPORTUNITIES	ERASMUS + (Bialystok)	6282.65	0	0	6282.65
9	CoS RESIDUAL GRANT	CoS Central	125.59	0	0	125.59
10	NEW ESF 19/20	ESF/WEA	1403.54	6912.5	-8385.6	-69.56
11	L'POOL WELCOMES RESIDUAL FUND	MRSN	549.19	0	-450	99.19
12	ALLEN LANE FOUNDATION	ALLEN LANE	6162.5	0	-1672	4490.5
13	PH HOLT	PH HOLT	0	6510	-3851.5	2658.5
14	CAF - Covid support	CLOSED	0	5610	-5610	0
15	ALM/Our Liverpool	ALM	0	2800	0	2800
16	LCR CARES	CLOSED	0	7720	-7720	0
17	BARROW CADBURY - Covid support	Barrow Cadbury	0	16400	-15395.98	1004.02
Sub Total:			16923.47	50302.5	-48810.08	18415.89
<b>Balances Per Bank Statement: To 31.3.21</b>			£ 23846.19	63962.5	-52024.34	35784.35

*I have independently examined these accounts and they are consistent with the books and records kept by Merseyside Refugee Support Network*

Name: Benjamin Gray

Signed:

Date: 21/01/2022



City of Sanctuary



P. H. HOLT  
FOUNDATION

jmf



European Union  
European  
Social Fund

CAF Charities Aid Foundation

APPROVED BY MRSN TRUSTEES ON:

28/01/2022