



# **Annual Report**

## **2023**

(April 2022 – March 2023)

**'A world where refugees and asylum seekers  
are included, accepted and supported by  
society'**



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## Reference and Administrative Details

Charity name	Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS)
Registered Charity Number	1096874
OISC Number	N200100432
Office address	27b Tavistock Street Bedford, MK40 2RB

### Staff

Brian Cunningham - Coordinator  
Andrea Tulloch - Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer (from December 2022)  
Helena Maddock - Immigration & Employment Adviser  
Jon Howton - Finance Officer  
Pat Porter - Admin Assistant  
Rani Sheemar - Finance Manager  
Sharifullah Dorani - Immigration & Employment Adviser

### Volunteers

Andrea Jones	Kathy Mortimer
Anne Shortley	Lindsey Coldwell
Brenda Betts	Liz Turner
Cathy Wood	Mahmoud El Sayed
Clare Ball	Michael Barber
David Porter	Nicola Lindsay
David Thomas	Patricia Porter
Gordon James	Sabina Billing
Helena Maddock	Sally Hilliard
Jane Marriott	Sharifullah Dorani
John Esam	Sidney Miller
Joanna Clark	Sue Horn
John Watkins	

### Trustees

Morris Johns (Chair)	Cathy Moorhouse
Victoria Hilliard (Vice Chair)	James Biggs
Sanja Radic (Secretary)	Jo Tester
Cassandra Howes	

# **Structure, Governance and Management**

## **Governing Document**

BRASS is a registered charity governed by a constitution that was adopted on 1st October 1999 and then revised on 18th September 2002 and 5th March 2003. BRASS is a non-political, voluntary organisation, established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress.

## **Organisational Structure**

BRASS employs 1 full-time member of staff; a Project Co-ordinator overseeing day to day business. and a Resettlement worker supporting Syrian and Afghan Refugees who have been resettled in Bedford as part of the government's resettlement programme. We also employ a number of part time staff; a Benefits Adviser, 2 Immigration Advisers, 2 Employment Advisers, an Integration Officer (from December 2022), a Finance Manager, a Finance Officer and an office Manager. Staff are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers, making our services excellent value for money. Services are delivered from a town centre, local government owned property leased by BRASS. A board of skilled and experienced trustees drawn from the local community oversee and govern services.

## **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

BRASS recognises that the recruitment and selection of new trustees can strongly influence our future effectiveness. The organisation aims to follow good practice in this field as well as the provisions of our constitution. All BRASS trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting or are co-opted. When looking to recruit new trustees, the committee will attempt to fill any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience of our current trustees and reflect the diversity of the communities in which we operate. We will use the most appropriate ways of recruiting new trustees, including local networks and advertising. We will prepare role descriptions for trustees, ensure that all potential trustees meet all eligibility criteria and ask all potential trustees about any possible conflicts of interest.

All trustee nominations are presented at the Annual General Meeting or the next Executive Committee. They will then be invited to meet with the chairperson to discuss their nomination and this discussion will be recorded on their nomination paper and then, once accepted, their name and details will be given to the Charities Commission.

## **Relationships with Other Organisations**

BRASS believes that by building capacity through partnership working we can facilitate sustainability of service provision. The work of BRASS complements other services through the co-ordinator's involvement with The Equalities and New Migration Partnership and the Bedfordshire Advice Forum – local multi-

agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

BRASS has strong working relationships with local organisations so that individuals can get support from the organisation best placed to provide it. Luton Law Centre has qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisers. There is cross referral of clients between BRASS and the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Polish British Integration Centre. BRASS makes referrals to the local MP Mohammad Yasin who helps with representations to the Home Office for specific cases. Referrals are received from the Social Care Team, which is responsible for unaccompanied under-18 asylum seekers, for both advice at the drop-in and English tuition. Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and Bedford Borough Council supports BRASS and contributes to Refugee Week.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK. BRASS is a referral organisation for clients requiring provisions via the Bedford Foodbank.

Supporting the local voluntary sector and working towards some financial self-sustainability has become an important part of the organisational ethic.

### **Risk Management**

The main risk again this year has been Covid and the earlier part of the year meant continuing with telephone advice with face to face meetings only when necessary and with Covid measures in place including plastic screens, face masks, sanitisers, social distancing and good ventilation and we had to much reduce our social activities. Towards the beginning of the year, a cautious reopening of services commenced. We were fully functioning again for most of the year and continue with safety measures such as good air circulation in place

We ensure that our health and safety policy, fire risk assessment and fire safety management plan are regularly reviewed and updated. The building and our services are appropriately insured to safeguard the organisation and volunteers with the tutoring project are subject to DBS checks in order to protect our clients. Our drop-in advice service is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commission (OISC) and we are regularly audited.

As with other small charities, BRASS is affected by external factors, particularly in terms of the economy and legal changes affecting asylum seekers and refugees. The economic situation nationally continues to affect fundraising and BRASS has done well to secure a 5 year lottery grant. BRASS continues to seek and secure other grants which allow us to maintain and expand our services. BRASS has had members of staff successfully qualify for OISC level 1. They are supervised by a member of staff qualified to level 2. In addition, it is important for BRASS that we are able to provide volunteers with training and progression



in return for their commitment. BRASS is also affected by media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers. This can result in increased interest in helping our clients, but it can also have a negative impact when prejudice against refugees and asylum seekers increases.

Internally, BRASS has a group of committed trustees with skills and experience that can help with the development of the organisation. The National Lottery Community Fund grant provides longer term stability for our staff and the ability to expand the number of staff we employ and therefore the capacity to expand our services. Our success in fundraising also presents some challenges as many trusts will only fund an organisation for a limited time, which means we have to be increasingly proactive in seeking funders. We are fortunate to have a good number of committed volunteers, enabling us to provide reliable and high-quality services beyond our drop-in advice service.

The organisation has a policy to hold financial reserves of six months, a level which we have now achieved and exceeded.





## **Message from the Chair of Trustees**

Dear Trustees, Supporters, and Friends of BRASS,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2022/23 on behalf of BRASS. As the Chair of Trustees, I am humbled and honoured to provide an overview of our organisation's activities, achievements, and contributions over the past year.

BRASS remains committed to its mission of providing support, hope, and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers who have sought refuge in Bedford. The year presented numerous challenges, but our dedicated team and generous supporters have continued to make a significant impact in the lives of those in need.



### **Key Highlights and Achievements:**

1. **Advocacy and Awareness:** BRASS remains actively involved in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the refugees' issues, and advocate for better policies and support systems for refugees. Our campaigns reached a broader audience, resulting in increased public understanding and support, particularly in the Sharnbrook area, where there was concern about possible local hostility to the presence of a new asylum hotel in the village.
2. **English Language Lessons:** Our education programs have continued to thrive, ensuring access to quality lessons for the refugees and asylum seekers.
3. **Social Programme:** We organised a variety of events which encouraged the refugees and local Bedfordians to meet each other; for example, in a friendly football competition, which allowed refugees and local teams to compete with each other. Other social events, like a coach trip to Wicksteed Park, provided the families with rare opportunities to unwind in relaxed surroundings.
4. **Advisory Sessions.** The drop-in days have been expanded to provide more opportunities for the refugees to come and seek advice on various issues.

Our success would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and trustees. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your contributions to our cause.

**Challenges and Future Plans:** While we have achieved significant milestones, challenges remain. The ongoing refugee crisis, compounded by a sometimes hostile media, requires us to remain vigilant and responsive. In the coming year, we aim to:

- Strengthen partnerships with other organizations to enhance our impact.
- Continue advocating for refugee rights and improved policies.
- Ensure the efficient and transparent use of resources to maximize our effectiveness.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the work we do at BRASS is not possible without your support. Together, we have made a profound difference in the lives of refugees, providing them with hope and opportunities for a better future. As we look ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to this noble cause.



Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to BRASS. We invite you to join us in the journey ahead as we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of refugees in Bedford.

Sincerely,  
Morris Johns

***Morris Johns, Chair of Trustees***

## Co-ordinator's Report

The most significant change in service for us this year was the re-starting of drop-in advice in person having done mostly by phone during Covid. We expanded drop-in hours from Tuesday and Wednesday to opening Thursday also. But I will let Sharif tell you more about that.



We also started having social work placement students again. Melissa and Veronica helped triage at drop-in, which is great for them to have experience with clients, helping them with simpler matters also. They also helped with social activities including updating our myth buster leaflets to give out at our market stall during refugee week and helped organise our 5-a-side football tournament which went ahead for the first time post Covid. Thanks to the BPHA, Bedfordshire Police, PBIC, social workers and to refugee teams who attended and referees and other helpers who came despite the rain!



We had a new Integration officer start in late 2022. Andrea is also our Benefits advisor. She is now looking after our tutors and helping with social activities. So our tutors are much more organised but I will let her tell you about that and lots more social activities in the future. We had a coach trip to Wicksteed park this summer. Not our usual Hunstanton seaside trip we considered the long journey was still a Covid risk so we went somewhere closer. We also had a very successful Christmas party this year with over 100 attending

Our usual client groups were added to this year by Ukrainians, around 40 to 50 mostly with our Employment project which has been a great success. We have heard that project, which was supposed to end in December is continuing with some further funding. I will let Helena tell you more about that.

Later in the year we heard rumours of a new Asylum hotel in nearby Sharnbrook. We visited the site and look forward to working with the predicted 30 asylum seeking families there and local residents some of whom are BRASS volunteers and have expressed an interest in helping.

Finally, the refugee family reunion project run by the legal department at the university of Bedford continues to run under the BRASS umbrella. There can be few better things than reuniting refugees with the families they had to leave behind.



**Brian Cunningham, BRASS Co-ordinator**

# **Service Updates**

## **Drop-in Report**

For all of the reporting year, our drop-in sessions were open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We also continued to solve clients' matters through telephone appointments if they were unable to attend. We managed to help our clients with a variety of matters, including those relating to immigration, benefits, employment, (social) housing, utility bills, debts, professional driving theory licence, taxi/private hire driver applications, Uber Eats/Just Eat driver applications, school/nursery, to name but a few. As we continue to see more and more clients, we will continue to open three days a week.

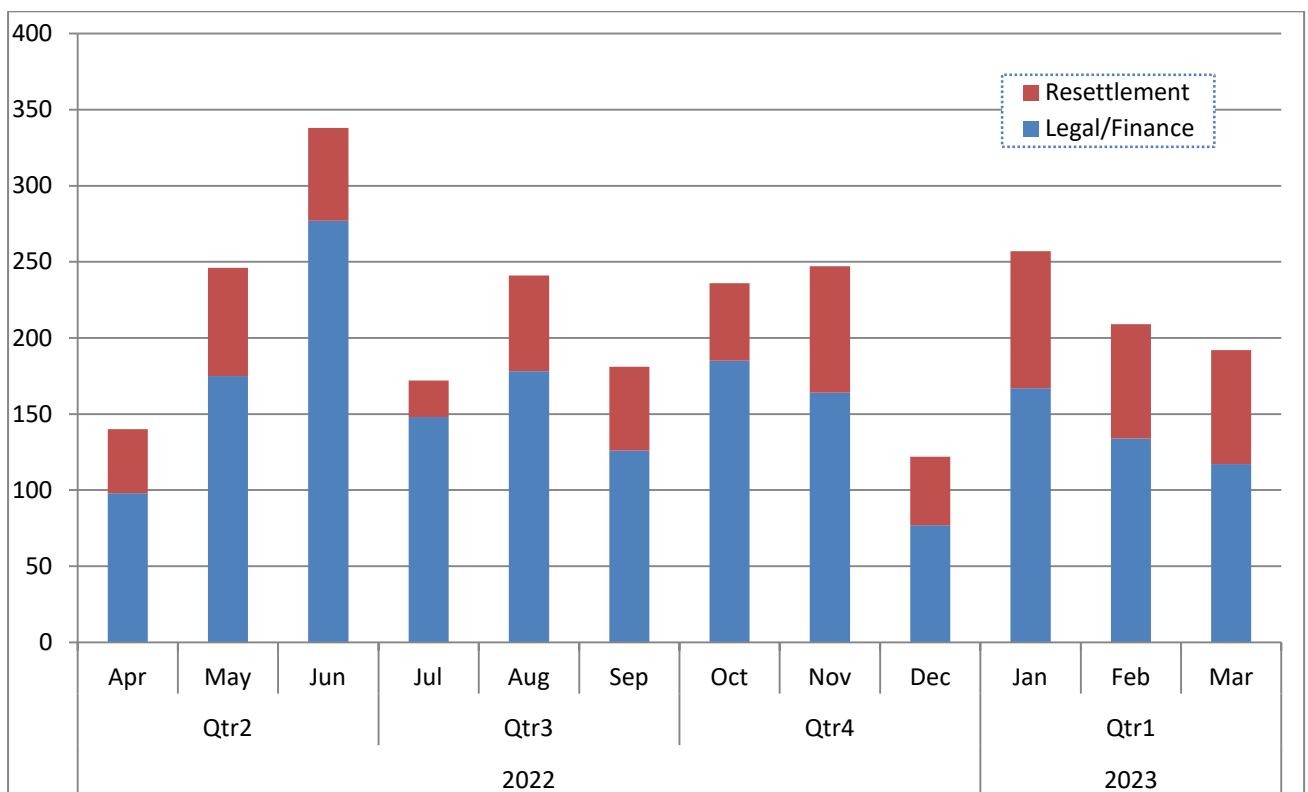
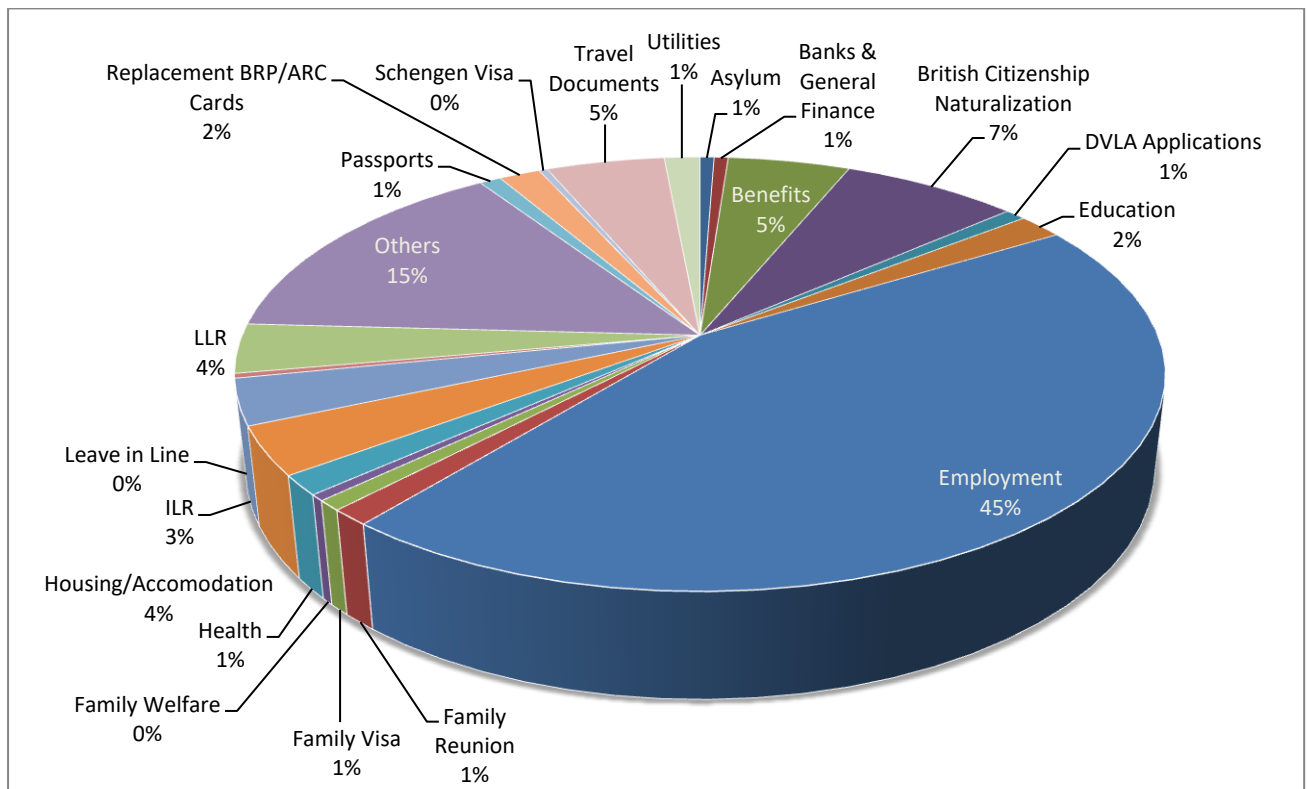
As my colleague, Helena Maddock, elaborates on this, we registered more than 80 clients for our Employment Project and sent them to a variety of courses.

We have two immigration Advisors, Helena Maddock and myself. We were very busy this year and managed to help hundreds of clients with their immigration matters, including applying for Schengen visas. Schengen visas were much more in demand this reporting year because Brexit introduced more restrictions where our clients with limited leave had to apply for a Schengen visa to travel to Europe. Furthermore, we provide a comprehensive approach when it comes to immigration matters: we help our clients fill in the application form, book a UKVCAS appointment, and sort out their supporting documents.

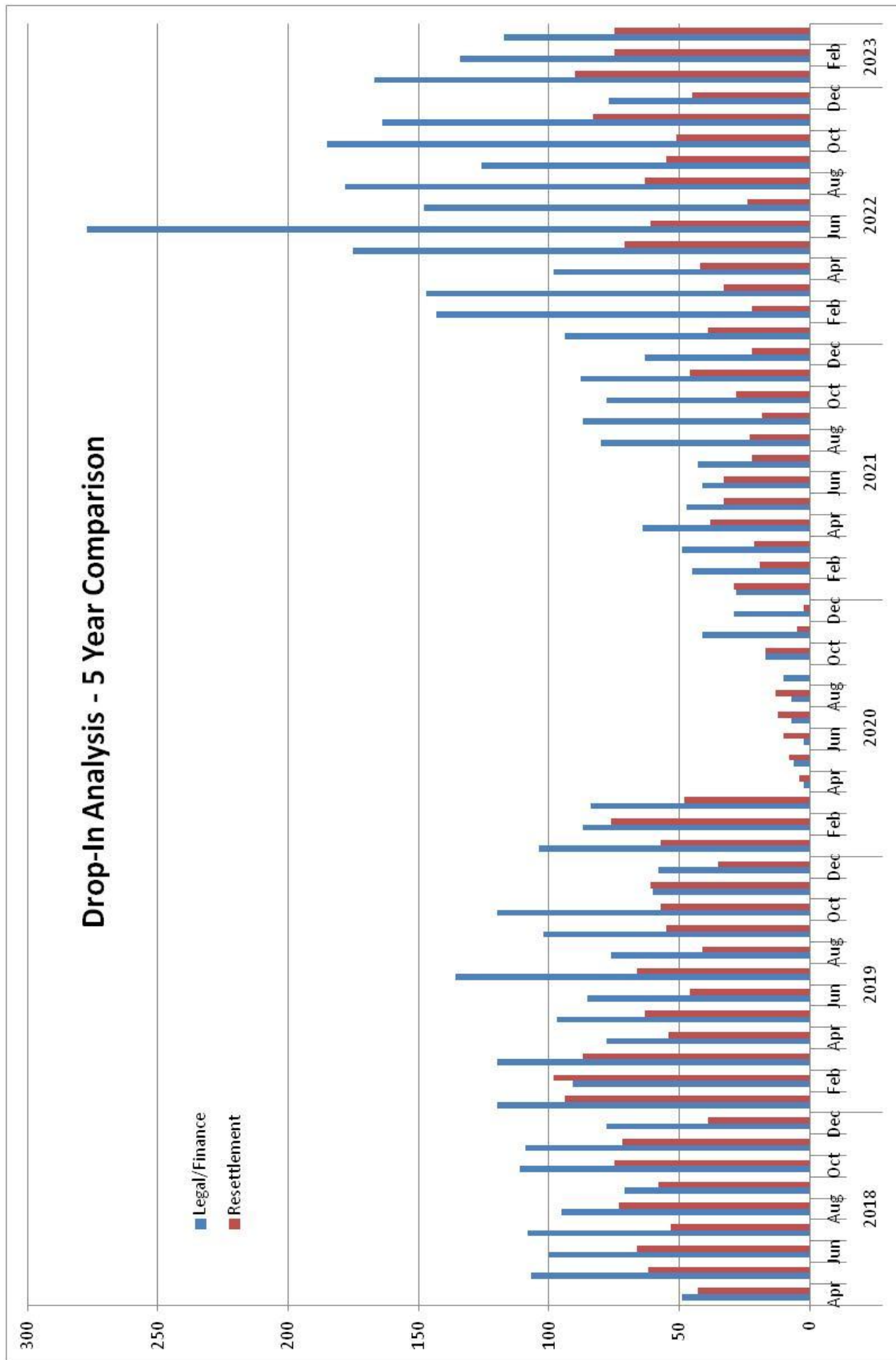
All in all, we supported hundreds of clients this reporting year. We would have not been able to do so without the support of our volunteers and social work placement students. They played a crucial part, and BRASS is grateful to them.

***Sharifullah Dorani, Immigration and Employment Adviser***

## Drop-in Enquiries 2022-2023



# Drop-in Enquiries 5 Year Comparison 2018-2023



## **Employment Project**

In the year starting in April 2022 we registered 83 new clients for the employment project, bringing our total in March 2023 to 172 employment clients. The original end date for the project was December 2022 but we have been able to continue, with different course providers, up until September 2023. Sharif and myself work together on the employment project. We are delighted that we exceeded our targets and consequently our partners were pleased to extend the period of the project. This will continue in a different format for at least another 6 months.

We have been able to refer a lot of our clients to a variety of courses (more than 100 referrals), including driving theory and IELTS, as well as low level English courses on topics such as how to use the NHS. We have also referred clients to MENTA, a business mentoring organisation and they have helped clients who are interested in becoming self-employed or starting their own business. We had more than 30 clients' overseas qualifications recognised here by ENIC. We continue to help our clients with CV writing, finding suitable courses for them, helping with job applications and other research for them.

We have had very good feedback from our clients about the services we have been able to provide such as "I would like to express my deep gratitude to BRASS...you very kindly provided me with the things which I really needed."

***Helena Maddock, Immigration and Employment Adviser***

## **Tuition**

Since starting in the role as Integration Officer, one of the biggest tasks was to get all of the volunteer tutors together to get some feedback on how they felt lessons were going. Based on the level of English that some of the students were arriving with, it was necessary to review and update learning resources. Joanna Clark, a BRASS volunteer, helped organise the resources and we were able to purchase additional resources from some fund raising organised by Kathy Mortimer, another BRASS volunteer.

The majority of students come to us from local authority care/ hostels that look after Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). They are children and young people who have been separated from their parents or carers and are seeking asylum in the UK.

Our Afghan women's group has grown from one day a week to two days a week.

We have also had students from some countries that we have never worked with before including Ukraine. So, we have increased the number of volunteer tutors to accommodate the new students.



They are still progressing and generally use our English classes to support any learning they may receive at college or before being given a place at college, it has been very interesting scheduling all the tutors and students to rooms.

***Andrea Tullock, Integration Officer***

## **Allotment**

BRASS continues to support a Syrian family at an allotment plot in Queens Park, Bedford.



# Objectives and Activities

## Vision

A world where refugees and asylum seekers are included, accepted and supported by society.

## Mission Statement

BRASS is an established charity working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and to protect rights with an aim to develop independence and involvement in UK society.

## Strategic Objectives 2020-2023

The trustees have reviewed BRASS' strategic objectives and made some changes. These objectives will form the basis of planning our activities over the next three years. We plan to use these to inform annual targets to ensure we remain focussed on our strategic objectives.

- 1) Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their families.
- 2) To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand and navigate UK procedures, processes and systems and promoting change to create a fairer system.
- 3) Provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to increase independence, integration and confidence through learning and social activities.
- 4) Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.
- 5) To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign for the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.
- 6) To inform and educate the community of Bedford and foster relationships between refugees and asylum seekers and the wider community.

## Services

BRASS currently offers three drop-in advice sessions staffed by volunteers and BRASS staff - on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am-2pm, with fewer sessions conducted via telephone than in the earlier months of the year. These are accredited by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to give immigration advice. Through funding by the National Lottery Community Fund and the East of England LGA, BRASS employs a specialist benefits adviser, 2 employment advisers and 2 immigration advisers. We also support the

Refugee Legal Assistance project run by the University of Bedford on its Luton Campus on Tuesday evenings during term time, which specialises in refugee family reunions. The project has, over recent years, supported over 55 families.

Our tutoring programme matches volunteer tutors with refugees and asylum seekers who want to learn or improve their English language skills. This service is offered in the community, at the BRASS offices and online. BRASS provides small group tuition in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test

Our allotment plot continues to be worked by client volunteers. Whilst our popular annual summer trip to the seaside was, sadly, not possible this year, our coach trip to Wicksteed Park for clients was oversubscribed.

BRASS plays a leading role in Refugee Week each year, organising a variety of events to promote refugee issues, this year's events revolved around raising awareness via our market stall with The Higgins, myth-busting leaflets, suggested reading Book Lists and installations at St Paul's Church.

## **Public Benefit**

BRASS provides a range of services to support refugees and asylum seekers in the Bedford community and further afield. Free immigration advice is in short supply in this area and without the service provided by BRASS through phone and appointment advice sessions, many refugees and asylum seekers would be left to tackle the often complex immigration system alone. Advice is also provided on a range of resettlement issues including employment, housing, education and benefits. This advice enables our clients to better integrate into society and to learn to manage their own affairs independently. BRASS also provides a dedicated resettlement worker to support Syrian and Afghan refugees who are resettled in Bedford, supporting them to settle and integrate into our community.

For those who want to improve their English, BRASS' tutoring project matches volunteer tutors with clients. This relationship can often provide improved self-confidence and support with other aspects of integration. We also run classes for those wishing to improve their numeracy and those preparing for the Life in the UK test. The BRASS allotment is now quite well established, providing a sense of community to clients, as well as providing asylum seekers (who are not allowed to work) activities to fill their time as well as fresh produce to take home.

BRASS is working to inform and educate the public on issues around immigration and asylum. Asylum seekers are a stigmatised group and through our work with Refugee Week and our coordinator giving talks to groups in the Bedford area, we are encouraging the public to look differently at refugees and asylum seekers and to see the positive contribution they make to our society.

# **Achievements and Performance**

## **Progress towards Strategic Objectives 2020-2023**

We have measured our progress on our previous strategic objectives as the review took place at the end of the reporting year.

### **Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS' advice sessions, our core service, is provided mainly in person with face to face meetings with clients with appropriate Covid measures in place. We also continue to provide specialist benefits advice. Through our VPRS resettlement worker, we support families, in conjunction with Bedford Borough Council, who are resettled in Bedford from refugee camps in the Middle East. Our English Language project has been boosted by the appointment of an Integration officer to run the tuition service.

The BRASS allotment continues to offer a great benefit to clients.

### **To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand UK procedures, processes and systems.**

The UK immigration system can be confusing even for those of us who deal with it on a regular basis, so navigating it can be near impossible for those who are new to the country and may have limited English. Through our OISC registered drop-in immigration advice sessions, BRASS helps refugees and asylum seekers to deal with these complex systems. Advice is also provided around other non-immigration issues such as housing, employment and finance to aid integration. We are able to provide specialist advice through our immigration advisers, employment advisers and benefits adviser. Our popular English Language Tuition also gives refugees and asylum seekers the skills to better navigate British systems and our classes in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test also aid integration.

### **Increasing independence and confidence through learning and social activities.**

Our tuition project provides one-to-one/group tuition to those who wish to improve their English, numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test. It is hoped that this will enable them to become more independent and better able to integrate into society. Our allotment provides a place for our clients to relax, meet new people and grow their own food.

**To raise awareness in wider society of issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS is always heavily involved with activities in Bedford celebrating Refugee Week. Myth busting leaflets are given out to members of the public and events are held at various venues around the town including a very popular football tournament and fun day in one of Bedford's public parks. We also had a publicity raising market stall where we distributed Myth busting leaflets. BRASS' coordinator gives talks to local groups and the feedback forms completed at the end of these talks indicate that perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers have been changed by what they have heard. We regularly publish positive stories about our clients and information about refugees and the asylum system on our website and Facebook page.

**Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.**

BRASS continually encourages clients and former clients to become involved in BRASS, whether through attending groups and activities, becoming a volunteer or joining the committee. A former client is now on our committee and some of our volunteers have previously used our services. We have also provided social work placements to a number of students, some of whom are from a refugee background.

**To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign on behalf of the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.**

BRASS works with other agencies in a variety of ways. BRASS works with many local charities and networks. Our coordinator is involved with The New Migration Partnership, Bedford Borough Diversity Network and the Bedford Advice forum – local multi-agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied Asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the Charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough.

BRASS has been very involved with Refugee Week in Bedford for many years. The aim of Refugee Week is to raise awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers and the positive contributions they make to British society. Covid has had a serious effect upon the level of engagement in the past but we are back working with the local community in terms of giving talks to various groups in the Bedford area to change perceptions of these issues and gathering feedback from those who attend to assess changing attitudes.

## **Fundraising activities**

We would like to thank the following organisations from whom we have received grants over the past years

The National Lottery Community Fund  
Bedford Borough Council  
The Beds and Luton Community Foundation  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
WW4R1

Harpur Trust  
Wixamtree Trust  
Panacea Charitable Trust  
East of England LGA

We would also like to thank all of the individual donors who support BRASS through one off and regular donations.

BRASS would like to thank our fundraiser Karen Mayoh for her continued hard work and support.

## **Future Plans and the challenges ahead**

Our services have been steadily resuming this year as we came out of Covid. We are now helping clients in numbers higher than pre Covid.

We have obtained a new five year grant with the National Lottery to help with our long term stability and continue to work other local funders.

BRASS will continue to prioritise the needs of our clients by providing good quality, reliable services. In order to safeguard BRASS and ensure that our vital services continue to be available, we will work to ensure good governance to maintain stability. BRASS is fortunate to be in a secure financial position, with more than 6 months of reserves. There are bound to be other challenges ahead, but we are confident that BRASS is well placed to face them.



## Getting Involved with BRASS

Volunteers are often needed for our drop-in, English tutoring and the allotment.

If you are interested in becoming involved with BRASS as a volunteer, please contact Co-ordinator Brian Cunningham on 01234 211381 or [brian@brass27b.org](mailto:brian@brass27b.org). For further information on any of our work, please check our website [www.brassbedford.org.uk](http://www.brassbedford.org.uk) and Facebook pages [www.facebook.com/brassbedford](https://www.facebook.com/brassbedford) and [www.facebook.com/brassallotment](https://www.facebook.com/brassallotment)









Charity Registration Number: 1096874

**BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP  
(BRASS)**

TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

## **CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**CHARITY NAME:** Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Group

OTHER NAME CHARITY IS KNOWN BY: BRASS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1096874

**CHARITY'S PRINCIPAL ADDRESS:**

27B Tavistock Street  
Bedford  
MK40 2RB

**NAMES OF THE CHARITY TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY**

Victoria Hilliard  
Cathy Moorhouse  
Morris Johns - Chair from 3rd July 2020  
Sanja Radic  
James Biggs  
Jo Tester  
Cass Howes

**PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR**

Brian Cunningham

**BANKERS**

RBS\\  
Bedford Branch  
15-19 Mill Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3EU

Main current account held since May 2021 :-

The Co-operative Bank  
Delf House  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 6WT

# **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

The trustees of the charity present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

From April 2022 to March 2023 finance meetings and trustee meetings were held quarterly, attended by the Chair, Executive Committee members and staff.

BRASS employs a Project Co-ordinator to oversee day to day business and to provide specialist advice, and full-time Syrian Family Support Officer and part-time Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer, Immigration Adviser, Finance Manager and Finance Officer. Much of the charity's work is undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers.

### **OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES**

The charity is an established non-political, voluntary organisation working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and their families, protect their rights and enable them to develop their independence and involvement in UK society. Specifically the charity was established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress. Services are delivered from a local government owned property in Bedford town centre which is leased by BRASS. Much work in the previous year was done by phone and virtually from our offices and by staff from home due to Covid. From early in this year we were back in the office seeing people under Covid conditions by appointment, by the end of this year we had returned to full drop in advice as well.

BRASS continues to have strong working relationships with local organisations providing advice so that individuals can get support from the organisations best placed to offer it. Luton Law Centre and Luton law firms have qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisors. BRASS also works with the University of Bedfordshire Law Department to assist refugees with family reunification applications. BRASS works with the Citizens Advice Bureau to cross refer clients and makes referrals to the local MP who, in specific cases, helps with representations to the Home Office.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough Council who run the New Migration Partnership of which the BRASS co-ordinator is chair. The co-ordinator is also on the steering group of the Bedford Advice Forum. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity who previously supported our tutoring project by carrying out the relevant DBS checks, but we are now able to do these for ourselves.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (who also offer immigration advice training courses) and Migrant Help. BRASS is also a registered referrer for Bedford Food Bank.

BRASS seeks to support the local voluntary sector and work towards financial self-sustainability. It leases its offices in Bedford town centre.

BRASS is focused on working in partnership with other organisations to share knowledge and skills, prevent duplication, maximise effectiveness, cut costs and share facilities. On behalf of the trustees of BRASS I can confirm that in carrying out our financial review we have considered and complied with our duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

During the last financial year BRASS has supported over 400 clients. We seek to support our client group's changing needs; the changes to the Benefits system and ever increasing complexity of immigration applications has increased demands for our services. BRASS now receives funding from the Big Lottery and will provide specialist advice through a Complex Caseworker for immigration matters and a Benefits Advisor. We will be able to provide additional social activities through our Integration Officer who started this year funded by the Harpur Trust.

We increased our advice sessions from twice a week to three times a week. However, we also offer appointments with our Benefits Adviser worker and our Immigration Adviser where we feel the need is urgent or can best be addressed in person.

Our social activities have become more active again this year. Our Co-ordinator is still the chair of the Refugee Week steering group, and we had successfully organised a football tournament with refugees and other local teams. We also did a market stall giving out myth busting leaflets. BRASS' allotment is still up and running with both refugees and volunteers attending.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

As in previous years, BRASS is very fortunate to have received funding from various different sources this year.

The Big Lottery continues to fund our Co-ordinator, along with other posts and other running costs for five years.

The Harpur Trust continues its support by helping to fund our Finance Manager and Finance Officer salary costs and most recently an Integration officer. Bedford Borough Council provided continued funding support towards staff costs at the beginning of the year. Money has been used to fund a part-time Benefits Adviser.

We thank Beds and Luton Community Foundation, Panacea Society, Wixamtree Trust and WW4R1 for their continued ongoing support for funding

Total Incoming Resources during the financial year were £142,258, a significant increase on the previous year. This income has been used to provide funding to cover all our existing posts which are all filled and other direct costs and overheads. A large part of the reason for the increase in income is that the new lottery funding came into effect from April 2022. We are delighted to say that the lottery granted us this new funding which started at the beginning of the new financial year and that this funding is for five years which means we will be free from having to put together a new lottery bid for five years. Now that we have successfully secured this funding we now have more time to concentrate on putting in other bids. We are asking for funding over more than one year as we have done in the past. We are awaiting outcome of some of these new bids and are planning others early in the new financial year.

Costs decreased this year by approximately 3% to £165,280 mainly due to the Syrian working coming to close. There has been an increase in some staff hours mainly to support the growing needs of the increasing number of refugees coming into the country.



## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)

### FINANCIAL REVIEW RESERVES POLICY.

BRASS reserves as at 31st March 2023, were £94,579. Of these funds £47,575 were restricted funds, the remaining £47,004 were unrestricted funds. The Trustee Board have established a policy whereby it aims to maintain sufficient unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets and not required to meet future budgeted expenditure, being the "free reserves", to support the future growth of the charity and provide sufficient reserves for dealing with possible contingencies such as short-term cessation of project activity or redundancy.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Johns'.

Morris Johns  
Chair  
Date: 15th September 2023

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP**

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023 as set out on pages 7 to 12.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- \* examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- \* to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- \* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;

have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



John Esam  
Mayfield Lodge  
1 Main Road,  
Biddenham  
MK40 4BB

Dated: 15th September 2023

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AS OF 31ST MARCH 2023

Incoming Resources	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable	3	8,000	90,182	98,182	65,170
Donations and other fund raising activities		3,305	37,339	40,644	52,264
Rental income		0	0	0	0
Investment income		114	0	114	43
Other income		2,968	350	3,318	4,655
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>14,387</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>122,132</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds		7,950	1500	9,450	10,200
Charitable activities	4	24,544	130,714	155,258	159,969
Governance costs		0	572	572	534
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>
<b>Net Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources</b>		<b>(18,107)</b>	<b>(4,915)</b>	<b>(23,022)</b>	<b>(48,571)</b>
Funds brought forward		65,111	52,490	117,601	166,172
Transfers between funds		0	0	0	0
<b>Funds carried forward</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible assets	5	76	854	930	2,266
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors and Prepayments	6	1,400	20,510	21,910	9,827
Cash and Bank in hand		45,528	37,139	82,667	114,161
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>57,649</b>	<b>105,507</b>	<b>123,988</b>
<b>Creditors Amounts falling due within one year</b>	7	0	10,928	10,928	8,653
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>46,721</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>115,335</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>					
Unrestricted funds	10	46,091	0	46,091	63,617
Restricted funds	10	0	46,721	46,721	50,483
Unrestricted & Restricted capital reserve		76	854	930	2,266
Designated funds		837	0	837	1,235
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

### Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility in complying with the requirements of the Charities Commission and confirm that the accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) and Charities Act 2011.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....

Name Morris Johns, Dated 15th September 20223

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

## 1. Accounting Policies

### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared on the basis of historic cost and in accordance with the applicable United Kingdom Reporting Standards, the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

### Basis of Preparation

As permitted by SORP 2005 the trustees have adapted the heading used to describe Incoming Resources and Resources Expended within the Statement of Financial Activities when presenting the results for the year.

### Incoming Resources

Incoming Resources are recognised when received or receivable by the charity. Income is derived from fund raising activities, donations and the sub-letting of rented property. Grants are recognised on receipt or award unless, in the judgement of the trustees, conditions attached to the grant make it improbable that they will be received.

### Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds are to be used for a specific purpose as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified against the fund.

### Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds are incoming resources received or receivable generated for charitable purposes and available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and have not been designated for other purposes.

### Paid Employees

The charity employs a Project Co-ordinator, part-time Facilities (Support) Officer and part-time Benefits Advisor and a Syrian Family Support Worker. These four posts are funded through restricted grants.

### Trustee Expenses

There were no payments or reimbursements made to any trustees during the financial year.

### Fixed Assets

Assets with a useful life of more than two years are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful life.

Depreciation on computer equipment is charged at 33% on a straight line basis.

Fixed Assets funded by capital grants are capitalised and a restricted capital reserve created. The reserve is reduced by the depreciation charge.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 2. Property & Operating Leases

i) Operating Lease Commitments - Nil.

ii) The annual commitment for the land and buildings lease amounts to £10,059 (£9,375 in 2021-22) where the term remaining is between one and five years. There are no further lease commitments.

Due to the pandemic, the authority reduced the rent charge, rent charges have increased for the current year.

### 3. Income from Grants, Donations and Legacies:

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations from other charities, companies	8,000	90,182	98,182	52,264
Donations from trusts, individuals and similar	3,305	37,339	40,644	65,170
	<b>11,305</b>	<b>127,521</b>	<b>138,826</b>	<b>117,434</b>

### 4. Resources Expended

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Staff payroll costs	(51)	115,225	115,174	134,997
Volunteer expenses & training	394	0	394	353
Staff travel & training	0	840	840	2,777
Social worker	2,549	0	2,549	800
Rent, rates & insurance (note 2)	6,135	7,000	13,135	11,516
IT, telephone & internet	4,824	0	4,824	4,772
Utilities, cleaning & maintenance.	4,204	0	4,204	2,221
Stationery, printing & postage	1,943	0	1,943	903
Publications & subscriptions	309	0	309	243
Web & promotional costs	179	0	179	95
Client outings & welfare costs	2,587	0	2,587	169
Depreciation	183	1,152	1,335	1,310
Governance Costs	0	572	572	534
Other expenses	9,238	7,997	17,235	10,013
Total	<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

<b>5. Fixed Assets</b>	<b>Computer Equipment</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>£</b>
At 1 April 2022	14,871
Additions	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>14,871</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
At 1 April 2022	12,605
Charge for year	<u>1,336</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>13,941</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,266</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u><u>930</u></u>

<b>6. Debtors and prepayments due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Debtors	0	0
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>
	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>

<b>7. Creditors and accruals due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Creditors	30	30
Deferred income	0	0
Accruals	<u>10,898</u>	<u>8,623</u>
	<u>10,928</u>	<u>8,653</u>

<b>8. Staff Costs</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Gross wages	107,042	126,180
Employers National Insurance costs	6,745	7,921
Employers National Insurance rebate	<span style="color: red;">(5,000)</span>	<span style="color: red;">(4,000)</span>
Pension costs	<u>6,387</u>	<u>4,896</u>
	<u>115,174</u>	<u>134,997</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000.



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 9. Restricted Income Funds as at March 31 2023

Fund Name	Purpose and restriction
Big Lottery (i)	The project is partly funding the following posts- the Co-ordinator, the Office Manager, Benefits Adviser and the Complicated Caseworker.
Harpur Trust (ii)	A further two year grant was awarded by Harpur Trust to support the part of the salary costs of the part- time posts of the Finance Manager & Finance Assistant, as well as the Integration Officer salary costs.
Harpur Trust (iii)	This funding concluded in September 2022.
WW4R1 Employment Support restricted Grants (iv)	These restricted funds are funding the Employment Support work.
Bedford Borough Council (v) - Syrian Refugees	The work for this project funded by the Borough concluded May 2022.

### 10. Movement of Major Funds

Fund Names	Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31st March 2023 £
Other	65,111	14,387	(32,494)	0	47,004
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>65,111</b>	<b>14,387</b>	<b>(32,494)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,004</b>
WW4R1 Employment Support( iv)	20,584	33,657	(30,299)	0	23,942
Bedford Borough Council Syrian Refugee (v)	19,645	2,282	(21,927)	0	0
Bedford & Luton Community Fund	5,000	5,000	(5,000)	(5,000)	0
Beds Charitable Trust	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Big Lottery (i)	51	50,000	(50,051)	0	0
Harpur Trust (ii)	194	25,182	(19,459)	9	5,926
Harpur Trust (iii)	9	0	0	(9)	0
Panacea Society	0	10,000	(4,897)	5,000	10,103
Small restricted grants	0	1,750	0	0	1,750
	50,483	127,871	(131,633)	0	46,721
Restricted capital reserve (Note 11)	2,007	0	(1,153)	0	854
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>52,490</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>(132,786)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,575</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>117,601</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>(165,280)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94,579</b>









# **Annual Report**

## **2023**

(April 2022 – March 2023)

**'A world where refugees and asylum seekers  
are included, accepted and supported by  
society'**



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## Reference and Administrative Details

Charity name	Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS)
Registered Charity Number	1096874
OISC Number	N200100432
Office address	27b Tavistock Street Bedford, MK40 2RB

### Staff

Brian Cunningham - Coordinator  
Andrea Tulloch - Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer (from December 2022)  
Helena Maddock - Immigration & Employment Adviser  
Jon Howton - Finance Officer  
Pat Porter - Admin Assistant  
Rani Sheemar - Finance Manager  
Sharifullah Dorani - Immigration & Employment Adviser

### Volunteers

Andrea Jones	Kathy Mortimer
Anne Shortley	Lindsey Coldwell
Brenda Betts	Liz Turner
Cathy Wood	Mahmoud El Sayed
Clare Ball	Michael Barber
David Porter	Nicola Lindsay
David Thomas	Patricia Porter
Gordon James	Sabina Billing
Helena Maddock	Sally Hilliard
Jane Marriott	Sharifullah Dorani
John Esam	Sidney Miller
Joanna Clark	Sue Horn
John Watkins	

### Trustees

Morris Johns (Chair)	Cathy Moorhouse
Victoria Hilliard (Vice Chair)	James Biggs
Sanja Radic (Secretary)	Jo Tester
Cassandra Howes	

# **Structure, Governance and Management**

## **Governing Document**

BRASS is a registered charity governed by a constitution that was adopted on 1st October 1999 and then revised on 18th September 2002 and 5th March 2003. BRASS is a non-political, voluntary organisation, established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress.

## **Organisational Structure**

BRASS employs 1 full-time member of staff; a Project Co-ordinator overseeing day to day business. and a Resettlement worker supporting Syrian and Afghan Refugees who have been resettled in Bedford as part of the government's resettlement programme. We also employ a number of part time staff; a Benefits Adviser, 2 Immigration Advisers, 2 Employment Advisers, an Integration Officer (from December 2022), a Finance Manager, a Finance Officer and an office Manager. Staff are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers, making our services excellent value for money. Services are delivered from a town centre, local government owned property leased by BRASS. A board of skilled and experienced trustees drawn from the local community oversee and govern services.

## **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

BRASS recognises that the recruitment and selection of new trustees can strongly influence our future effectiveness. The organisation aims to follow good practice in this field as well as the provisions of our constitution. All BRASS trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting or are co-opted. When looking to recruit new trustees, the committee will attempt to fill any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience of our current trustees and reflect the diversity of the communities in which we operate. We will use the most appropriate ways of recruiting new trustees, including local networks and advertising. We will prepare role descriptions for trustees, ensure that all potential trustees meet all eligibility criteria and ask all potential trustees about any possible conflicts of interest.

All trustee nominations are presented at the Annual General Meeting or the next Executive Committee. They will then be invited to meet with the chairperson to discuss their nomination and this discussion will be recorded on their nomination paper and then, once accepted, their name and details will be given to the Charities Commission.

## **Relationships with Other Organisations**

BRASS believes that by building capacity through partnership working we can facilitate sustainability of service provision. The work of BRASS complements other services through the co-ordinator's involvement with The Equalities and New Migration Partnership and the Bedfordshire Advice Forum – local multi-

agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

BRASS has strong working relationships with local organisations so that individuals can get support from the organisation best placed to provide it. Luton Law Centre has qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisers. There is cross referral of clients between BRASS and the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Polish British Integration Centre. BRASS makes referrals to the local MP Mohammad Yasin who helps with representations to the Home Office for specific cases. Referrals are received from the Social Care Team, which is responsible for unaccompanied under-18 asylum seekers, for both advice at the drop-in and English tuition. Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and Bedford Borough Council supports BRASS and contributes to Refugee Week.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK. BRASS is a referral organisation for clients requiring provisions via the Bedford Foodbank.

Supporting the local voluntary sector and working towards some financial self-sustainability has become an important part of the organisational ethic.

## **Risk Management**

The main risk again this year has been Covid and the earlier part of the year meant continuing with telephone advice with face to face meetings only when necessary and with Covid measures in place including plastic screens, face masks, sanitisers, social distancing and good ventilation and we had to much reduce our social activities. Towards the beginning of the year, a cautious reopening of services commenced. We were fully functioning again for most of the year and continue with safety measures such as good air circulation in place

We ensure that our health and safety policy, fire risk assessment and fire safety management plan are regularly reviewed and updated. The building and our services are appropriately insured to safeguard the organisation and volunteers with the tutoring project are subject to DBS checks in order to protect our clients. Our drop-in advice service is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commission (OISC) and we are regularly audited.

As with other small charities, BRASS is affected by external factors, particularly in terms of the economy and legal changes affecting asylum seekers and refugees. The economic situation nationally continues to affect fundraising and BRASS has done well to secure a 5 year lottery grant. BRASS continues to seek and secure other grants which allow us to maintain and expand our services. BRASS has had members of staff successfully qualify for OISC level 1. They are supervised by a member of staff qualified to level 2. In addition, it is important for BRASS that we are able to provide volunteers with training and progression

in return for their commitment. BRASS is also affected by media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers. This can result in increased interest in helping our clients, but it can also have a negative impact when prejudice against refugees and asylum seekers increases.

Internally, BRASS has a group of committed trustees with skills and experience that can help with the development of the organisation. The National Lottery Community Fund grant provides longer term stability for our staff and the ability to expand the number of staff we employ and therefore the capacity to expand our services. Our success in fundraising also presents some challenges as many trusts will only fund an organisation for a limited time, which means we have to be increasingly proactive in seeking funders. We are fortunate to have a good number of committed volunteers, enabling us to provide reliable and high-quality services beyond our drop-in advice service.

The organisation has a policy to hold financial reserves of six months, a level which we have now achieved and exceeded.



## **Message from the Chair of Trustees**

Dear Trustees, Supporters, and Friends of BRASS,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2022/23 on behalf of BRASS. As the Chair of Trustees, I am humbled and honoured to provide an overview of our organisation's activities, achievements, and contributions over the past year.

BRASS remains committed to its mission of providing support, hope, and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers who have sought refuge in Bedford. The year presented numerous challenges, but our dedicated team and generous supporters have continued to make a significant impact in the lives of those in need.



### **Key Highlights and Achievements:**

1. **Advocacy and Awareness:** BRASS remains actively involved in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the refugees' issues, and advocate for better policies and support systems for refugees. Our campaigns reached a broader audience, resulting in increased public understanding and support, particularly in the Sharnbrook area, where there was concern about possible local hostility to the presence of a new asylum hotel in the village.
2. **English Language Lessons:** Our education programs have continued to thrive, ensuring access to quality lessons for the refugees and asylum seekers.
3. **Social Programme:** We organised a variety of events which encouraged the refugees and local Bedfordians to meet each other; for example, in a friendly football competition, which allowed refugees and local teams to compete with each other. Other social events, like a coach trip to Wicksteed Park, provided the families with rare opportunities to unwind in relaxed surroundings.
4. **Advisory Sessions.** The drop-in days have been expanded to provide more opportunities for the refugees to come and seek advice on various issues.

Our success would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and trustees. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your contributions to our cause.

**Challenges and Future Plans:** While we have achieved significant milestones, challenges remain. The ongoing refugee crisis, compounded by a sometimes hostile media, requires us to remain vigilant and responsive. In the coming year, we aim to:

- Strengthen partnerships with other organizations to enhance our impact.
- Continue advocating for refugee rights and improved policies.
- Ensure the efficient and transparent use of resources to maximize our effectiveness.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the work we do at BRASS is not possible without your support. Together, we have made a profound difference in the lives of refugees, providing them with hope and opportunities for a better future. As we look ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to this noble cause.



Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to BRASS. We invite you to join us in the journey ahead as we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of refugees in Bedford.

Sincerely,  
Morris Johns

***Morris Johns, Chair of Trustees***



## Co-ordinator's Report

The most significant change in service for us this year was the re-starting of drop-in advice in person having done mostly by phone during Covid. We expanded drop-in hours from Tuesday and Wednesday to opening Thursday also. But I will let Sharif tell you more about that.



We also started having social work placement students again. Melissa and Veronica helped triage at drop-in, which is great for them to have experience with clients, helping them with simpler matters also. They also helped with social activities including updating our myth buster leaflets to give out at our market stall during refugee week and helped organise our 5-a-side football tournament which went ahead for the first time post Covid. Thanks to the BPHA, Bedfordshire Police, PBIC, social workers and to refugee teams who attended and referees and other helpers who came despite the rain!



We had a new Integration officer start in late 2022. Andrea is also our Benefits advisor. She is now looking after our tutors and helping with social activities. So our tutors are much more organised but I will let her tell you about that and lots more social activities in the future. We had a coach trip to Wicksteed park this summer. Not our usual Hunstanton seaside trip we considered the long journey was still a Covid risk so we went somewhere closer. We also had a very successful Christmas party this year with over 100 attending

Our usual client groups were added to this year by Ukrainians, around 40 to 50 mostly with our Employment project which has been a great success. We have heard that project, which was supposed to end in December is continuing with some further funding. I will let Helena tell you more about that.

Later in the year we heard rumours of a new Asylum hotel in nearby Sharnbrook. We visited the site and look forward to working with the predicted 30 asylum seeking families there and local residents some of whom are BRASS volunteers and have expressed an interest in helping.

Finally, the refugee family reunion project run by the legal department at the university of Bedford continues to run under the BRASS umbrella. There can be few better things than reuniting refugees with the families they had to leave behind.



**Brian Cunningham, BRASS Co-ordinator**

## **Service Updates**

### **Drop-in Report**

For all of the reporting year, our drop-in sessions were open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We also continued to solve clients' matters through telephone appointments if they were unable to attend. We managed to help our clients with a variety of matters, including those relating to immigration, benefits, employment, (social) housing, utility bills, debts, professional driving theory licence, taxi/private hire driver applications, Uber Eats/Just Eat driver applications, school/nursery, to name but a few. As we continue to see more and more clients, we will continue to open three days a week.

As my colleague, Helena Maddock, elaborates on this, we registered more than 80 clients for our Employment Project and sent them to a variety of courses.

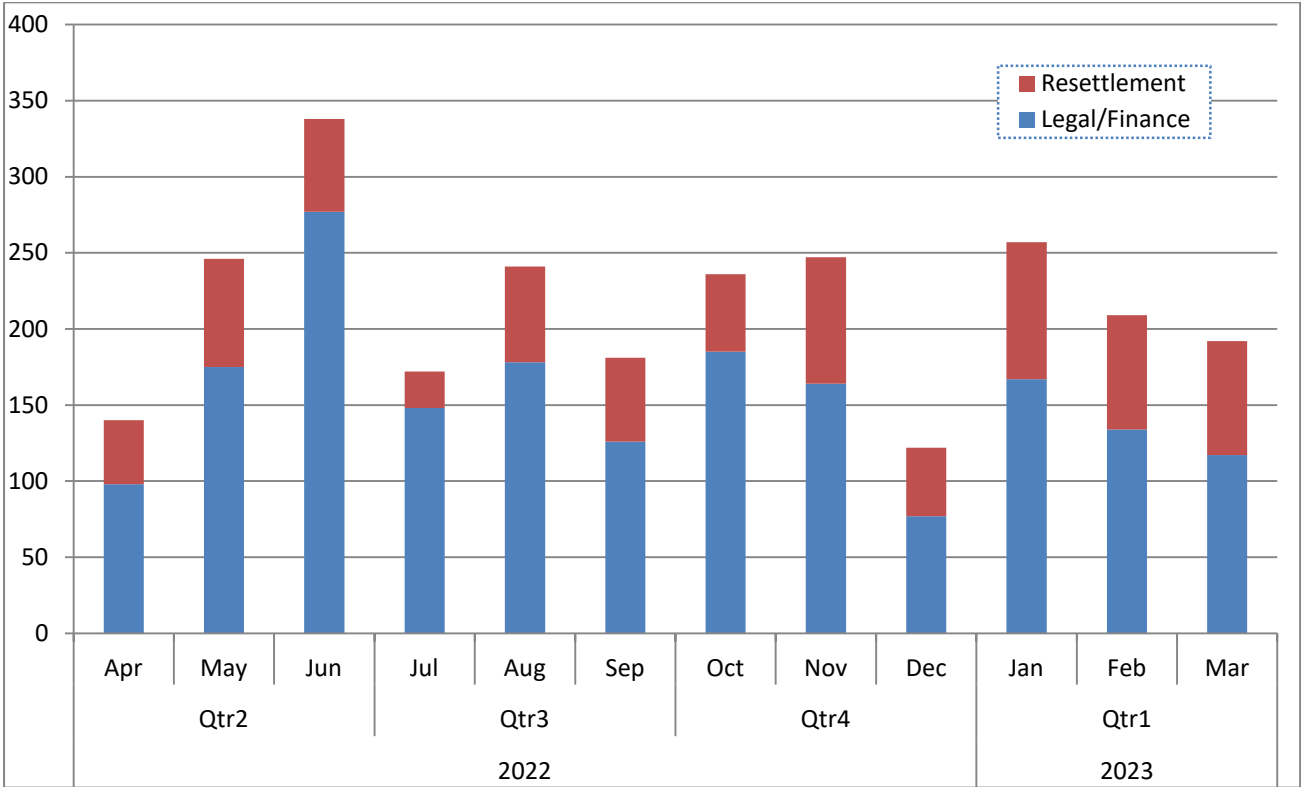
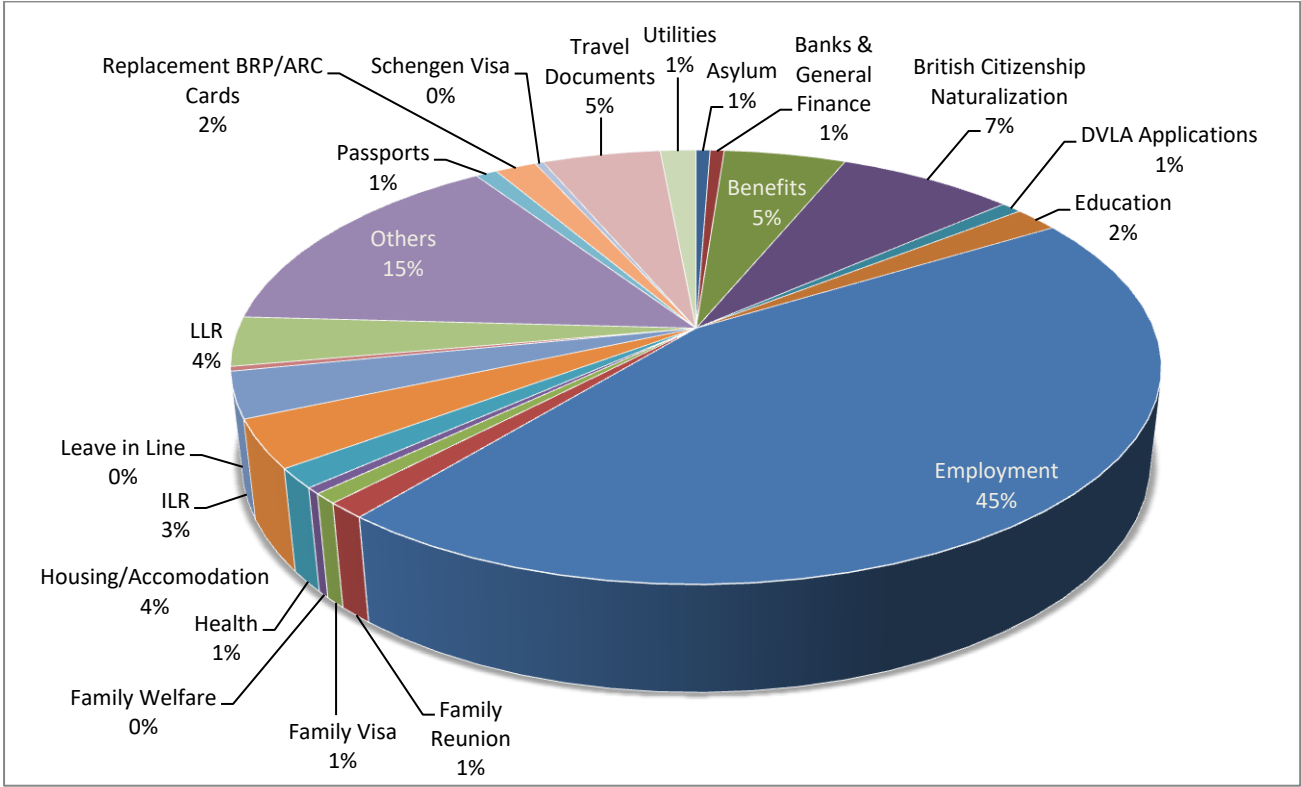
We have two immigration Advisors, Helena Maddock and myself. We were very busy this year and managed to help hundreds of clients with their immigration matters, including applying for Schengen visas. Schengen visas were much more in demand this reporting year because Brexit introduced more restrictions where our clients with limited leave had to apply for a Schengen visa to travel to Europe. Furthermore, we provide a comprehensive approach when it comes to immigration matters: we help our clients fill in the application form, book a UKVCAS appointment, and sort out their supporting documents.

All in all, we supported hundreds of clients this reporting year. We would have not been able to do so without the support of our volunteers and social work placement students. They played a crucial part, and BRASS is grateful to them.

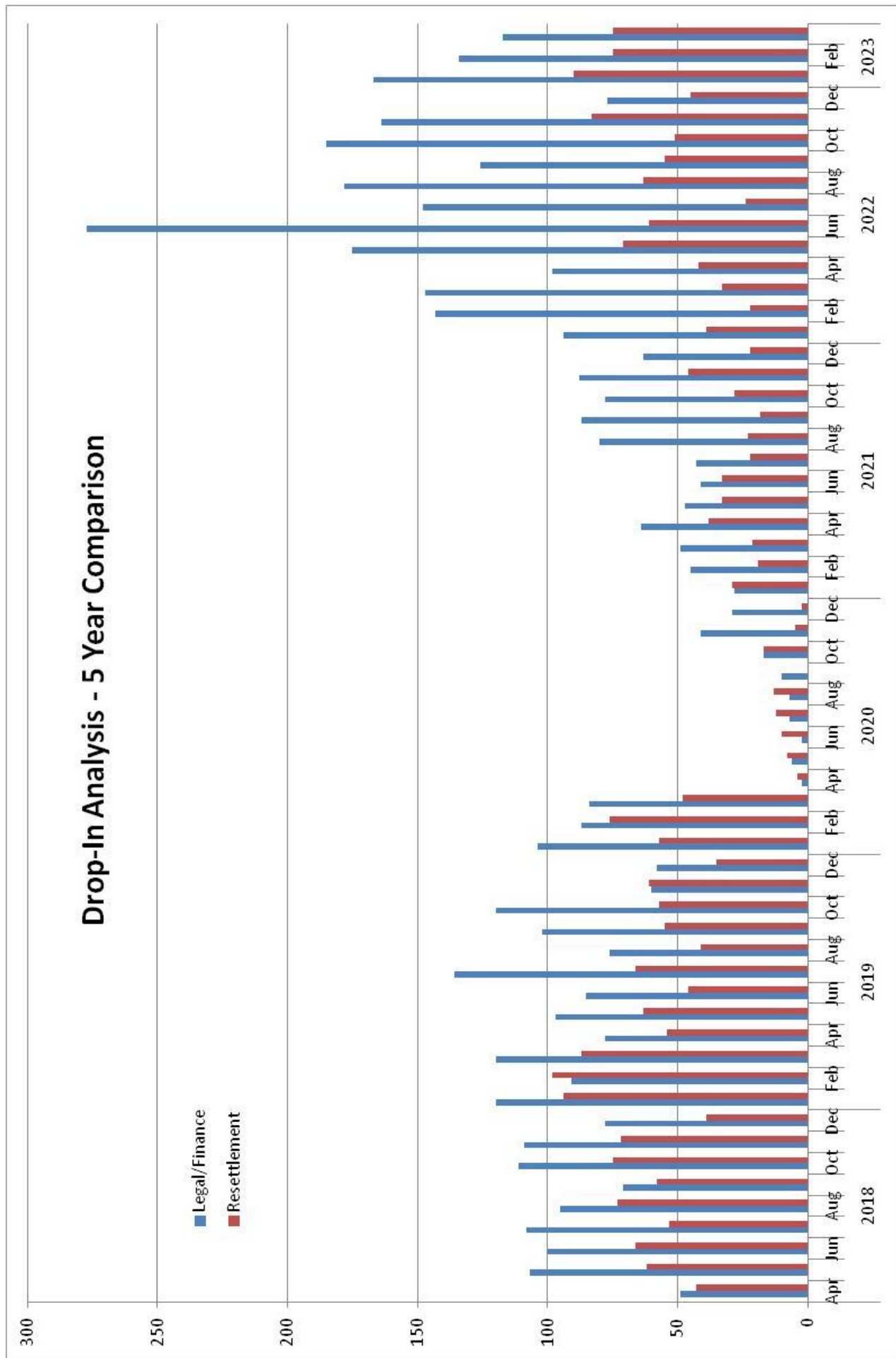
***Sharifullah Dorani, Immigration and Employment Adviser***



### Drop-in Enquiries 2022-2023



# Drop-in Enquiries 5 Year Comparison 2018-2023



## **Employment Project**

In the year starting in April 2022 we registered 83 new clients for the employment project, bringing our total in March 2023 to 172 employment clients. The original end date for the project was December 2022 but we have been able to continue, with different course providers, up until September 2023. Sharif and myself work together on the employment project. We are delighted that we exceeded our targets and consequently our partners were pleased to extend the period of the project. This will continue in a different format for at least another 6 months.

We have been able to refer a lot of our clients to a variety of courses (more than 100 referrals), including driving theory and IELTS, as well as low level English courses on topics such as how to use the NHS. We have also referred clients to MENTA, a business mentoring organisation and they have helped clients who are interested in becoming self-employed or starting their own business. We had more than 30 clients' overseas qualifications recognised here by ENIC. We continue to help our clients with CV writing, finding suitable courses for them, helping with job applications and other research for them.

We have had very good feedback from our clients about the services we have been able to provide such as "I would like to express my deep gratitude to BRASS...you very kindly provided me with the things which I really needed."

***Helena Maddock, Immigration and Employment Adviser***

## **Tuition**

Since starting in the role as Integration Officer, one of the biggest tasks was to get all of the volunteer tutors together to get some feedback on how they felt lessons were going. Based on the level of English that some of the students were arriving with, it was necessary to review and update learning resources. Joanna Clark, a BRASS volunteer, helped organise the resources and we were able to purchase additional resources from some fund raising organised by Kathy Mortimer, another BRASS volunteer.

The majority of students come to us from local authority care/ hostels that look after Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). They are children and young people who have been separated from their parents or carers and are seeking asylum in the UK.

Our Afghan women's group has grown from one day a week to two days a week.

We have also had students from some countries that we have never worked with before including Ukraine. So, we have increased the number of volunteer tutors to accommodate the new students.

They are still progressing and generally use our English classes to support any learning they may receive at college or before being given a place at college, it has been very interesting scheduling all the tutors and students to rooms.

***Andrea Tullock, Integration Officer***

## **Allotment**

BRASS continues to support a Syrian family at an allotment plot in Queens Park, Bedford.



# Objectives and Activities

## Vision

A world where refugees and asylum seekers are included, accepted and supported by society.

## Mission Statement

BRASS is an established charity working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and to protect rights with an aim to develop independence and involvement in UK society.

## Strategic Objectives 2020-2023

The trustees have reviewed BRASS' strategic objectives and made some changes. These objectives will form the basis of planning our activities over the next three years. We plan to use these to inform annual targets to ensure we remain focussed on our strategic objectives.

- 1) Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their families.
- 2) To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand and navigate UK procedures, processes and systems and promoting change to create a fairer system.
- 3) Provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to increase independence, integration and confidence through learning and social activities.
- 4) Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.
- 5) To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign for the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.
- 6) To inform and educate the community of Bedford and foster relationships between refugees and asylum seekers and the wider community.

## Services

BRASS currently offers three drop-in advice sessions staffed by volunteers and BRASS staff - on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am-2pm, with fewer sessions conducted via telephone than in the earlier months of the year. These are accredited by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to give immigration advice. Through funding by the National Lottery Community Fund and the East of England LGA, BRASS employs a specialist benefits adviser, 2 employment advisers and 2 immigration advisers. We also support the

Refugee Legal Assistance project run by the University of Bedford on its Luton Campus on Tuesday evenings during term time, which specialises in refugee family reunions. The project has, over recent years, supported over 55 families.

Our tutoring programme matches volunteer tutors with refugees and asylum seekers who want to learn or improve their English language skills. This service is offered in the community, at the BRASS offices and online. BRASS provides small group tuition in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test

Our allotment plot continues to be worked by client volunteers. Whilst our popular annual summer trip to the seaside was, sadly, not possible this year, our coach trip to Wicksteed Park for clients was oversubscribed.

BRASS plays a leading role in Refugee Week each year, organising a variety of events to promote refugee issues, this year's events revolved around raising awareness via our market stall with The Higgins, myth-busting leaflets, suggested reading Book Lists and installations at St Paul's Church.

## **Public Benefit**

BRASS provides a range of services to support refugees and asylum seekers in the Bedford community and further afield. Free immigration advice is in short supply in this area and without the service provided by BRASS through phone and appointment advice sessions, many refugees and asylum seekers would be left to tackle the often complex immigration system alone. Advice is also provided on a range of resettlement issues including employment, housing, education and benefits. This advice enables our clients to better integrate into society and to learn to manage their own affairs independently. BRASS also provides a dedicated resettlement worker to support Syrian and Afghan refugees who are resettled in Bedford, supporting them to settle and integrate into our community.

For those who want to improve their English, BRASS' tutoring project matches volunteer tutors with clients. This relationship can often provide improved self-confidence and support with other aspects of integration. We also run classes for those wishing to improve their numeracy and those preparing for the Life in the UK test. The BRASS allotment is now quite well established, providing a sense of community to clients, as well as providing asylum seekers (who are not allowed to work) activities to fill their time as well as fresh produce to take home.

BRASS is working to inform and educate the public on issues around immigration and asylum. Asylum seekers are a stigmatised group and through our work with Refugee Week and our coordinator giving talks to groups in the Bedford area, we are encouraging the public to look differently at refugees and asylum seekers and to see the positive contribution they make to our society.



# **Achievements and Performance**

## **Progress towards Strategic Objectives 2020-2023**

We have measured our progress on our previous strategic objectives as the review took place at the end of the reporting year.

### **Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS' advice sessions, our core service, is provided mainly in person with face to face meetings with clients with appropriate Covid measures in place. We also continue to provide specialist benefits advice. Through our VPRS resettlement worker, we support families, in conjunction with Bedford Borough Council, who are resettled in Bedford from refugee camps in the Middle East. Our English Language project has been boosted by the appointment of an Integration officer to run the tuition service.

The BRASS allotment continues to offer a great benefit to clients.

### **To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand UK procedures, processes and systems.**

The UK immigration system can be confusing even for those of us who deal with it on a regular basis, so navigating it can be near impossible for those who are new to the country and may have limited English. Through our OISC registered drop-in immigration advice sessions, BRASS helps refugees and asylum seekers to deal with these complex systems. Advice is also provided around other non-immigration issues such as housing, employment and finance to aid integration. We are able to provide specialist advice through our immigration advisers, employment advisers and benefits adviser. Our popular English Language Tuition also gives refugees and asylum seekers the skills to better navigate British systems and our classes in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test also aid integration.

### **Increasing independence and confidence through learning and social activities.**

Our tuition project provides one-to-one/group tuition to those who wish to improve their English, numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test. It is hoped that this will enable them to become more independent and better able to integrate into society. Our allotment provides a place for our clients to relax, meet new people and grow their own food.

**To raise awareness in wider society of issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS is always heavily involved with activities in Bedford celebrating Refugee Week. Myth busting leaflets are given out to members of the public and events are held at various venues around the town including a very popular football tournament and fun day in one of Bedford's public parks. We also had a publicity raising market stall where we distributed Myth busting leaflets. BRASS' coordinator gives talks to local groups and the feedback forms completed at the end of these talks indicate that perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers have been changed by what they have heard. We regularly publish positive stories about our clients and information about refugees and the asylum system on our website and Facebook page.

**Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.**

BRASS continually encourages clients and former clients to become involved in BRASS, whether through attending groups and activities, becoming a volunteer or joining the committee. A former client is now on our committee and some of our volunteers have previously used our services. We have also provided social work placements to a number of students, some of whom are from a refugee background.

**To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign on behalf of the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.**

BRASS works with other agencies in a variety of ways. BRASS works with many local charities and networks. Our coordinator is involved with The New Migration Partnership, Bedford Borough Diversity Network and the Bedford Advice forum – local multi-agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied Asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the Charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough.

BRASS has been very involved with Refugee Week in Bedford for many years. The aim of Refugee Week is to raise awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers and the positive contributions they make to British society. Covid has had a serious effect upon the level of engagement in the past but we are back working with the local community in terms of giving talks to various groups in the Bedford area to change perceptions of these issues and gathering feedback from those who attend to assess changing attitudes.



## **Fundraising activities**

We would like to thank the following organisations from whom we have received grants over the past years

The National Lottery Community Fund  
Bedford Borough Council  
The Beds and Luton Community Foundation  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
WW4R1

Harpur Trust  
Wixamtree Trust  
Panacea Charitable Trust  
East of England LGA

We would also like to thank all of the individual donors who support BRASS through one off and regular donations.

BRASS would like to thank our fundraiser Karen Mayoh for her continued hard work and support.

## **Future Plans and the challenges ahead**

Our services have been steadily resuming this year as we came out of Covid. We are now helping clients in numbers higher than pre Covid.

We have obtained a new five year grant with the National Lottery to help with our long term stability and continue to work other local funders.

BRASS will continue to prioritise the needs of our clients by providing good quality, reliable services. In order to safeguard BRASS and ensure that our vital services continue to be available, we will work to ensure good governance to maintain stability. BRASS is fortunate to be in a secure financial position, with more than 6 months of reserves. There are bound to be other challenges ahead, but we are confident that BRASS is well placed to face them.

## Getting Involved with BRASS

Volunteers are often needed for our drop-in, English tutoring and the allotment.

If you are interested in becoming involved with BRASS as a volunteer, please contact Co-ordinator Brian Cunningham on 01234 211381 or [brian@brass27b.org](mailto:brian@brass27b.org). For further information on any of our work, please check our website [www.brassbedford.org.uk](http://www.brassbedford.org.uk) and Facebook pages [www.facebook.com/brassbedford](https://www.facebook.com/brassbedford) and [www.facebook.com/brassallotment](https://www.facebook.com/brassallotment)







Charity Registration Number: 1096874

**BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP  
(BRASS)**

TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

## **CONTENTS OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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Independent Examiners Report	Page 6
Statement of Financial Activities	Page 7
Balance Sheet	Page 8
Notes to the Financial Statements	Pages 9-12

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**CHARITY NAME:** Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Group

OTHER NAME CHARITY IS KNOWN BY: BRASS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1096874

CHARITY'S PRINCIPAL ADDRESS:

27B Tavistock Street  
Bedford  
MK40 2RB

NAMES OF THE CHARITY TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY

Victoria Hilliard  
Cathy Moorhouse  
Morris Johns - Chair from 3rd July 2020  
Sanja Radic  
James Biggs  
Jo Tester  
Cass Howes

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Brian Cunningham

BANKERS

RBS\\  
Bedford Branch  
15-19 Mill Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3EU

Main current account held since May 2021 :-

The Co-operative Bank  
Delf House  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 6WT

# **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

The trustees of the charity present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

From April 2022 to March 2023 finance meetings and trustee meetings were held quarterly, attended by the Chair, Executive Committee members and staff.

BRASS employs a Project Co-ordinator to oversee day to day business and to provide specialist advice, and full-time Syrian Family Support Officer and part-time Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer, Immigration Adviser, Finance Manager and Finance Officer. Much of the charity's work is undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers.

### **OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES**

The charity is an established non-political, voluntary organisation working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and their families, protect their rights and enable them to develop their independence and involvement in UK society. Specifically the charity was established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress. Services are delivered from a local government owned property in Bedford town centre which is leased by BRASS. Much work in the previous year was done by phone and virtually from our offices and by staff from home due to Covid. From early in this year we were back in the office seeing people under Covid conditions by appointment, by the end of this year we had returned to full drop in advice as well.

BRASS continues to have strong working relationships with local organisations providing advice so that individuals can get support from the organisations best placed to offer it. Luton Law Centre and Luton law firms have qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisors. BRASS also works with the University of Bedfordshire Law Department to assist refugees with family reunification applications. BRASS works with the Citizens Advice Bureau to cross refer clients and makes referrals to the local MP who, in specific cases, helps with representations to the Home Office.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough Council who run the New Migration Partnership of which the BRASS co-ordinator is chair. The co-ordinator is also on the steering group of the Bedford Advice Forum. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity who previously supported our tutoring project by carrying out the relevant DBS checks, but we are now able to do these for ourselves.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (who also offer immigration advice training courses) and Migrant Help. BRASS is also a registered referrer for Bedford Food Bank.

BRASS seeks to support the local voluntary sector and work towards financial self-sustainability. It leases its offices in Bedford town centre.

BRASS is focused on working in partnership with other organisations to share knowledge and skills, prevent duplication, maximise effectiveness, cut costs and share facilities. On behalf of the trustees of BRASS I can confirm that in carrying out our financial review we have considered and complied with our duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.



## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

During the last financial year BRASS has supported over 400 clients. We seek to support our client group's changing needs; the changes to the Benefits system and ever increasing complexity of immigration applications has increased demands for our services. BRASS now receives funding from the Big Lottery and will provide specialist advice through a Complex Caseworker for immigration matters and a Benefits Advisor. We will be able to provide additional social activities through our Integration Officer who started this year funded by the Harpur Trust.

We increased our advice sessions from twice a week to three times a week. However, we also offer appointments with our Benefits Adviser worker and our Immigration Adviser where we feel the need is urgent or can best be addressed in person.

Our social activities have become more active again this year. Our Co-ordinator is still the chair of the Refugee Week steering group, and we had successfully organised a football tournament with refugees and other local teams. We also did a market stall giving out myth busting leaflets. BRASS' allotment is still up and running with both refugees and volunteers attending.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

As in previous years, BRASS is very fortunate to have received funding from various different sources this year.

The Big Lottery continues to fund our Co-ordinator, along with other posts and other running costs for five years.

The Harpur Trust continues its support by helping to fund our Finance Manager and Finance Officer salary costs and most recently an Integration officer. Bedford Borough Council provided continued funding support towards staff costs at the beginning of the year. Money has been used to fund a part-time Benefits Adviser.

We thank Beds and Luton Community Foundation, Panacea Society, Wixamtree Trust and WW4R1 for their continued ongoing support for funding

Total Incoming Resources during the financial year were £142,258, a significant increase on the previous year. This income has been used to provide funding to cover all our existing posts which are all filled and other direct costs and overheads. A large part of the reason for the increase in income is that the new lottery funding came into effect from April 2022. We are delighted to say that the lottery granted us this new funding which started at the beginning of the new financial year and that this funding is for five years which means we will be free from having to put together a new lottery bid for five years. Now that we have successfully secured this funding we now have more time to concentrate on putting in other bids. We are asking for funding over more than one year as we have done in the past. We are awaiting outcome of some of these new bids and are planning others early in the new financial year.

Costs decreased this year by approximately 3% to £165,280 mainly due to the Syrian working coming to close. There has been an increase in some staff hours mainly to support the growing needs of the increasing number of refugees coming into the country.

## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)

### FINANCIAL REVIEW RESERVES POLICY.

BRASS reserves as at 31st March 2023, were £94,579. Of these funds £47,575 were restricted funds, the remaining £47,004 were unrestricted funds. The Trustee Board have established a policy whereby it aims to maintain sufficient unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets and not required to meet future budgeted expenditure, being the "free reserves", to support the future growth of the charity and provide sufficient reserves for dealing with possible contingencies such as short-term cessation of project activity or redundancy.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Johns'.

Morris Johns  
Chair  
Date: 15th September 2023

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP**

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023 as set out on pages 7 to 12.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- \* examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- \* to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- \* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;

have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



John Esam  
Mayfield Lodge  
1 Main Road,  
Biddenham  
MK40 4BB

Dated: 15th September 2023

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AS OF 31ST MARCH 2023

Incoming Resources	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable	3	8,000	90,182	98,182	65,170
Donations and other fund raising activities		3,305	37,339	40,644	52,264
Rental income		0	0	0	0
Investment income		114	0	114	43
Other income		2,968	350	3,318	4,655
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>14,387</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>122,132</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds		7,950	1500	9,450	10,200
Charitable activities	4	24,544	130,714	155,258	159,969
Governance costs		0	572	572	534
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>
<b>Net Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources</b>		<b>(18,107)</b>	<b>(4,915)</b>	<b>(23,022)</b>	<b>(48,571)</b>
Funds brought forward		65,111	52,490	117,601	166,172
Transfers between funds		0	0	0	0
<b>Funds carried forward</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible assets	5	76	854	930	2,266
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors and Prepayments	6	1,400	20,510	21,910	9,827
Cash and Bank in hand		45,528	37,139	82,667	114,161
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>57,649</b>	<b>105,507</b>	<b>123,988</b>
<b>Creditors Amounts falling due within one year</b>	7	0	10,928	10,928	8,653
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>46,721</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>115,335</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>					
Unrestricted funds	10	46,091	0	46,091	63,617
Restricted funds	10	0	46,721	46,721	50,483
Unrestricted & Restricted capital reserve		76	854	930	2,266
Designated funds		837	0	837	1,235
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

### Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility in complying with the requirements of the Charities Commission and confirm that the accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) and Charities Act 2011.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....

Name Morris Johns, Dated 15th September 20223

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

## 1. Accounting Policies

### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared on the basis of historic cost and in accordance with the applicable United Kingdom Reporting Standards, the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

### Basis of Preparation

As permitted by SORP 2005 the trustees have adapted the heading used to describe Incoming Resources and Resources Expended within the Statement of Financial Activities when presenting the results for the year.

### Incoming Resources

Incoming Resources are recognised when received or receivable by the charity. Income is derived from fund raising activities, donations and the sub-letting of rented property. Grants are recognised on receipt or award unless, in the judgement of the trustees, conditions attached to the grant make it improbable that they will be received.

### Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds are to be used for a specific purpose as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified against the fund.

### Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds are incoming resources received or receivable generated for charitable purposes and available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and have not been designated for other purposes.

### Paid Employees

The charity employs a Project Co-ordinator, part-time Facilities (Support) Officer and part-time Benefits Advisor and a Syrian Family Support Worker. These four posts are funded through restricted grants.

### Trustee Expenses

There were no payments or reimbursements made to any trustees during the financial year.

### Fixed Assets

Assets with a useful life of more than two years are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful life.

Depreciation on computer equipment is charged at 33% on a straight line basis.

Fixed Assets funded by capital grants are capitalised and a restricted capital reserve created. The reserve is reduced by the depreciation charge.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 2. Property & Operating Leases

i) Operating Lease Commitments - Nil.

ii) The annual commitment for the land and buildings lease amounts to £10,059 (£9,375 in 2021-22) where the term remaining is between one and five years. There are no further lease commitments.

Due to the pandemic, the authority reduced the rent charge, rent charges have increased for the current year.

### 3. Income from Grants, Donations and Legacies:

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations from other charities, companies	8,000	90,182	98,182	52,264
Donations from trusts, individuals and similar	3,305	37,339	40,644	65,170
	<b>11,305</b>	<b>127,521</b>	<b>138,826</b>	<b>117,434</b>

### 4. Resources Expended

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Staff payroll costs	(51)	115,225	115,174	134,997
Volunteer expenses & training	394	0	394	353
Staff travel & training	0	840	840	2,777
Social worker	2,549	0	2,549	800
Rent, rates & insurance (note 2)	6,135	7,000	13,135	11,516
IT, telephone & internet	4,824	0	4,824	4,772
Utilities, cleaning & maintenance.	4,204	0	4,204	2,221
Stationery, printing & postage	1,943	0	1,943	903
Publications & subscriptions	309	0	309	243
Web & promotional costs	179	0	179	95
Client outings & welfare costs	2,587	0	2,587	169
Depreciation	183	1,152	1,335	1,310
Governance Costs	0	572	572	534
Other expenses	9,238	7,997	17,235	10,013
Total	<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

<b>5. Fixed Assets</b>	<b>Computer Equipment</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>£</b>
At 1 April 2022	14,871
Additions	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>14,871</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
At 1 April 2022	12,605
Charge for year	<u>1,336</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>13,941</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,266</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u><u>930</u></u>

<b>6. Debtors and prepayments due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Debtors	0	0
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>
	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>

<b>7. Creditors and accruals due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Creditors	30	30
Deferred income	0	0
Accruals	<u>10,898</u>	<u>8,623</u>
	<u>10,928</u>	<u>8,653</u>

<b>8. Staff Costs</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Gross wages	107,042	126,180
Employers National Insurance costs	6,745	7,921
Employers National Insurance rebate	(5,000)	(4,000)
Pension costs	<u>6,387</u>	<u>4,896</u>
	<u>115,174</u>	<u>134,997</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000.



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 9. Restricted Income Funds as at March 31 2023

Fund Name	Purpose and restriction
Big Lottery (i)	The project is partly funding the following posts- the Co-ordinator, the Office Manager, Benefits Adviser and the Complicated Caseworker.
Harpur Trust (ii)	A further two year grant was awarded by Harpur Trust to support the part of the salary costs of the part- time posts of the Finance Manager & Finance Assistant, as well as the Integration Officer salary costs.
Harpur Trust (iii)	This funding concluded in September 2022.
WW4R1 Employment Support restricted Grants (iv)	These restricted funds are funding the Employment Support work.
Bedford Borough Council (v) - Syrian Refugees	The work for this project funded by the Borough concluded May 2022.

### 10. Movement of Major Funds

Fund Names	Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31st March 2023 £
Other	65,111	14,387	(32,494)	0	47,004
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>65,111</b>	<b>14,387</b>	<b>(32,494)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,004</b>
WW4R1 Employment Support( iv)	20,584	33,657	(30,299)	0	23,942
Bedford Borough Council Syrian Refugee (v)	19,645	2,282	(21,927)	0	0
Bedford & Luton Community Fund	5,000	5,000	(5,000)	(5,000)	0
Beds Charitable Trust	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Big Lottery (i)	51	50,000	(50,051)	0	0
Harpur Trust (ii)	194	25,182	(19,459)	9	5,926
Harpur Trust (iii)	9	0	0	(9)	0
Panacea Society	0	10,000	(4,897)	5,000	10,103
Small restricted grants	0	1,750	0	0	1,750
	50,483	127,871	(131,633)	0	46,721
Restricted capital reserve (Note 11)	2,007	0	(1,153)	0	854
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>52,490</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>(132,786)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,575</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>117,601</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>(165,280)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94,579</b>









# **Annual Report**

## **2023**

(April 2022 – March 2023)

**'A world where refugees and asylum seekers  
are included, accepted and supported by  
society'**



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## Reference and Administrative Details

Charity name	Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS)
Registered Charity Number	1096874
OISC Number	N200100432
Office address	27b Tavistock Street Bedford, MK40 2RB

### Staff

Brian Cunningham - Coordinator  
Andrea Tulloch - Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer (from December 2022)  
Helena Maddock - Immigration & Employment Adviser  
Jon Howton - Finance Officer  
Pat Porter - Admin Assistant  
Rani Sheemar - Finance Manager  
Sharifullah Dorani - Immigration & Employment Adviser

### Volunteers

Andrea Jones	Kathy Mortimer
Anne Shortley	Lindsey Coldwell
Brenda Betts	Liz Turner
Cathy Wood	Mahmoud El Sayed
Clare Ball	Michael Barber
David Porter	Nicola Lindsay
David Thomas	Patricia Porter
Gordon James	Sabina Billing
Helena Maddock	Sally Hilliard
Jane Marriott	Sharifullah Dorani
John Esam	Sidney Miller
Joanna Clark	Sue Horn
John Watkins	

### Trustees

Morris Johns (Chair)	Cathy Moorhouse
Victoria Hilliard (Vice Chair)	James Biggs
Sanja Radic (Secretary)	Jo Tester
Cassandra Howes	

# **Structure, Governance and Management**

## **Governing Document**

BRASS is a registered charity governed by a constitution that was adopted on 1st October 1999 and then revised on 18th September 2002 and 5th March 2003. BRASS is a non-political, voluntary organisation, established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress.

## **Organisational Structure**

BRASS employs 1 full-time member of staff; a Project Co-ordinator overseeing day to day business. and a Resettlement worker supporting Syrian and Afghan Refugees who have been resettled in Bedford as part of the government's resettlement programme. We also employ a number of part time staff; a Benefits Adviser, 2 Immigration Advisers, 2 Employment Advisers, an Integration Officer (from December 2022), a Finance Manager, a Finance Officer and an office Manager. Staff are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers, making our services excellent value for money. Services are delivered from a town centre, local government owned property leased by BRASS. A board of skilled and experienced trustees drawn from the local community oversee and govern services.

## **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

BRASS recognises that the recruitment and selection of new trustees can strongly influence our future effectiveness. The organisation aims to follow good practice in this field as well as the provisions of our constitution. All BRASS trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting or are co-opted. When looking to recruit new trustees, the committee will attempt to fill any gaps in skills, knowledge and experience of our current trustees and reflect the diversity of the communities in which we operate. We will use the most appropriate ways of recruiting new trustees, including local networks and advertising. We will prepare role descriptions for trustees, ensure that all potential trustees meet all eligibility criteria and ask all potential trustees about any possible conflicts of interest.

All trustee nominations are presented at the Annual General Meeting or the next Executive Committee. They will then be invited to meet with the chairperson to discuss their nomination and this discussion will be recorded on their nomination paper and then, once accepted, their name and details will be given to the Charities Commission.

## **Relationships with Other Organisations**

BRASS believes that by building capacity through partnership working we can facilitate sustainability of service provision. The work of BRASS complements other services through the co-ordinator's involvement with The Equalities and New Migration Partnership and the Bedfordshire Advice Forum – local multi-

agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

BRASS has strong working relationships with local organisations so that individuals can get support from the organisation best placed to provide it. Luton Law Centre has qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisers. There is cross referral of clients between BRASS and the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Polish British Integration Centre. BRASS makes referrals to the local MP Mohammad Yasin who helps with representations to the Home Office for specific cases. Referrals are received from the Social Care Team, which is responsible for unaccompanied under-18 asylum seekers, for both advice at the drop-in and English tuition. Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and Bedford Borough Council supports BRASS and contributes to Refugee Week.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK. BRASS is a referral organisation for clients requiring provisions via the Bedford Foodbank.

Supporting the local voluntary sector and working towards some financial self-sustainability has become an important part of the organisational ethic.

## **Risk Management**

The main risk again this year has been Covid and the earlier part of the year meant continuing with telephone advice with face to face meetings only when necessary and with Covid measures in place including plastic screens, face masks, sanitisers, social distancing and good ventilation and we had to much reduce our social activities. Towards the beginning of the year, a cautious reopening of services commenced. We were fully functioning again for most of the year and continue with safety measures such as good air circulation in place

We ensure that our health and safety policy, fire risk assessment and fire safety management plan are regularly reviewed and updated. The building and our services are appropriately insured to safeguard the organisation and volunteers with the tutoring project are subject to DBS checks in order to protect our clients. Our drop-in advice service is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commission (OISC) and we are regularly audited.

As with other small charities, BRASS is affected by external factors, particularly in terms of the economy and legal changes affecting asylum seekers and refugees. The economic situation nationally continues to affect fundraising and BRASS has done well to secure a 5 year lottery grant. BRASS continues to seek and secure other grants which allow us to maintain and expand our services. BRASS has had members of staff successfully qualify for OISC level 1. They are supervised by a member of staff qualified to level 2. In addition, it is important for BRASS that we are able to provide volunteers with training and progression

in return for their commitment. BRASS is also affected by media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers. This can result in increased interest in helping our clients, but it can also have a negative impact when prejudice against refugees and asylum seekers increases.

Internally, BRASS has a group of committed trustees with skills and experience that can help with the development of the organisation. The National Lottery Community Fund grant provides longer term stability for our staff and the ability to expand the number of staff we employ and therefore the capacity to expand our services. Our success in fundraising also presents some challenges as many trusts will only fund an organisation for a limited time, which means we have to be increasingly proactive in seeking funders. We are fortunate to have a good number of committed volunteers, enabling us to provide reliable and high-quality services beyond our drop-in advice service.

The organisation has a policy to hold financial reserves of six months, a level which we have now achieved and exceeded.



## **Message from the Chair of Trustees**

Dear Trustees, Supporters, and Friends of BRASS,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2022/23 on behalf of BRASS. As the Chair of Trustees, I am humbled and honoured to provide an overview of our organisation's activities, achievements, and contributions over the past year.

BRASS remains committed to its mission of providing support, hope, and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers who have sought refuge in Bedford. The year presented numerous challenges, but our dedicated team and generous supporters have continued to make a significant impact in the lives of those in need.



### **Key Highlights and Achievements:**

1. **Advocacy and Awareness:** BRASS remains actively involved in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the refugees' issues, and advocate for better policies and support systems for refugees. Our campaigns reached a broader audience, resulting in increased public understanding and support, particularly in the Sharnbrook area, where there was concern about possible local hostility to the presence of a new asylum hotel in the village.
2. **English Language Lessons:** Our education programs have continued to thrive, ensuring access to quality lessons for the refugees and asylum seekers.
3. **Social Programme:** We organised a variety of events which encouraged the refugees and local Bedfordians to meet each other; for example, in a friendly football competition, which allowed refugees and local teams to compete with each other. Other social events, like a coach trip to Wicksteed Park, provided the families with rare opportunities to unwind in relaxed surroundings.
4. **Advisory Sessions.** The drop-in days have been expanded to provide more opportunities for the refugees to come and seek advice on various issues.

Our success would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our donors, partners, and trustees. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your contributions to our cause.

**Challenges and Future Plans:** While we have achieved significant milestones, challenges remain. The ongoing refugee crisis, compounded by a sometimes hostile media, requires us to remain vigilant and responsive. In the coming year, we aim to:

- Strengthen partnerships with other organizations to enhance our impact.
- Continue advocating for refugee rights and improved policies.
- Ensure the efficient and transparent use of resources to maximize our effectiveness.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the work we do at BRASS is not possible without your support. Together, we have made a profound difference in the lives of refugees, providing them with hope and opportunities for a better future. As we look ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to this noble cause.



Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to BRASS. We invite you to join us in the journey ahead as we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of refugees in Bedford.

Sincerely,  
Morris Johns

***Morris Johns, Chair of Trustees***



## Co-ordinator's Report

The most significant change in service for us this year was the re-starting of drop-in advice in person having done mostly by phone during Covid. We expanded drop-in hours from Tuesday and Wednesday to opening Thursday also. But I will let Sharif tell you more about that.



We also started having social work placement students again. Melissa and Veronica helped triage at drop-in, which is great for them to have experience with clients, helping them with simpler matters also. They also helped with social activities including updating our myth buster leaflets to give out at our market stall during refugee week and helped organise our 5-a-side football tournament which went ahead for the first time post Covid. Thanks to the BPHA, Bedfordshire Police, PBIC, social workers and to refugee teams who attended and referees and other helpers who came despite the rain!



We had a new Integration officer start in late 2022. Andrea is also our Benefits advisor. She is now looking after our tutors and helping with social activities. So our tutors are much more organised but I will let her tell you about that and lots more social activities in the future. We had a coach trip to Wicksteed park this summer. Not our usual Hunstanton seaside trip we considered the long journey was still a Covid risk so we went somewhere closer. We also had a very successful Christmas party this year with over 100 attending

Our usual client groups were added to this year by Ukrainians, around 40 to 50 mostly with our Employment project which has been a great success. We have heard that project, which was supposed to end in December is continuing with some further funding. I will let Helena tell you more about that.

Later in the year we heard rumours of a new Asylum hotel in nearby Sharnbrook. We visited the site and look forward to working with the predicted 30 asylum seeking families there and local residents some of whom are BRASS volunteers and have expressed an interest in helping.

Finally, the refugee family reunion project run by the legal department at the university of Bedford continues to run under the BRASS umbrella. There can be few better things than reuniting refugees with the families they had to leave behind.



**Brian Cunningham, BRASS Co-ordinator**

## **Service Updates**

### **Drop-in Report**

For all of the reporting year, our drop-in sessions were open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We also continued to solve clients' matters through telephone appointments if they were unable to attend. We managed to help our clients with a variety of matters, including those relating to immigration, benefits, employment, (social) housing, utility bills, debts, professional driving theory licence, taxi/private hire driver applications, Uber Eats/Just Eat driver applications, school/nursery, to name but a few. As we continue to see more and more clients, we will continue to open three days a week.

As my colleague, Helena Maddock, elaborates on this, we registered more than 80 clients for our Employment Project and sent them to a variety of courses.

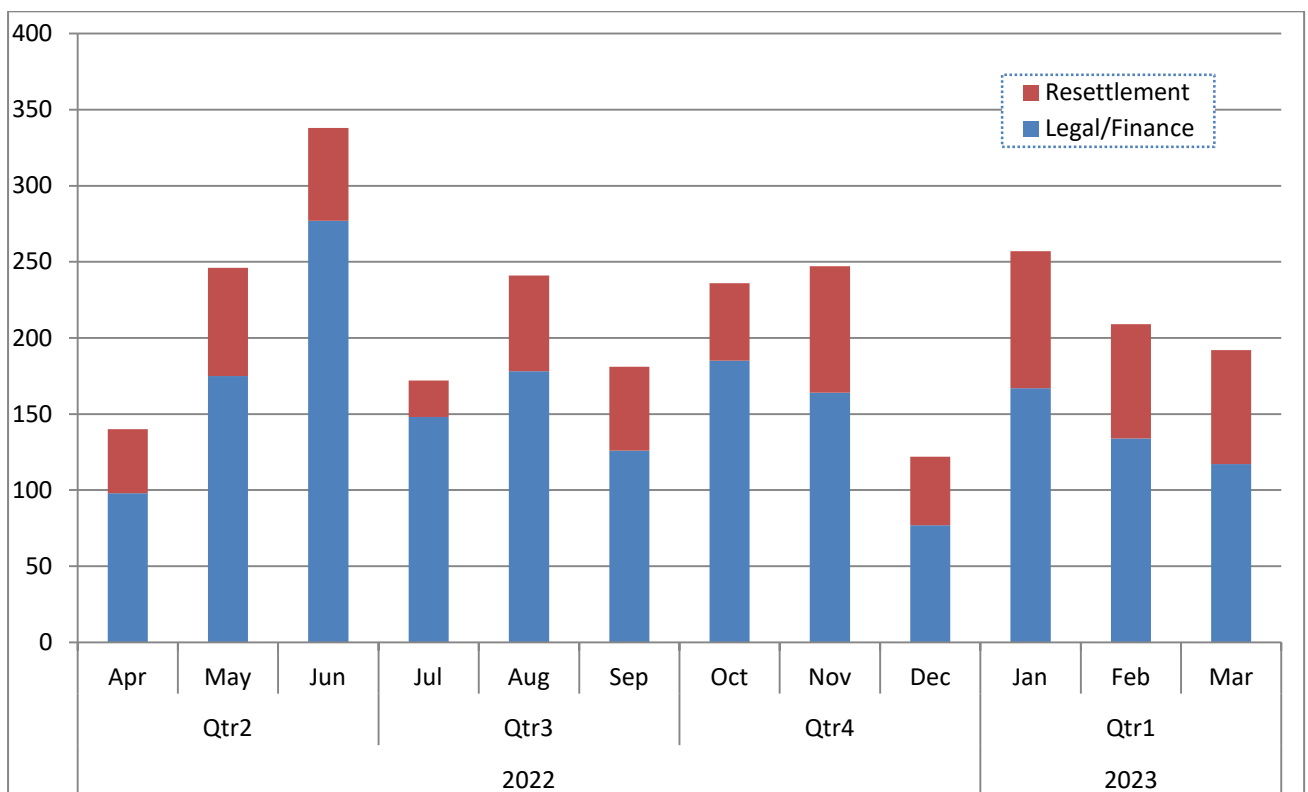
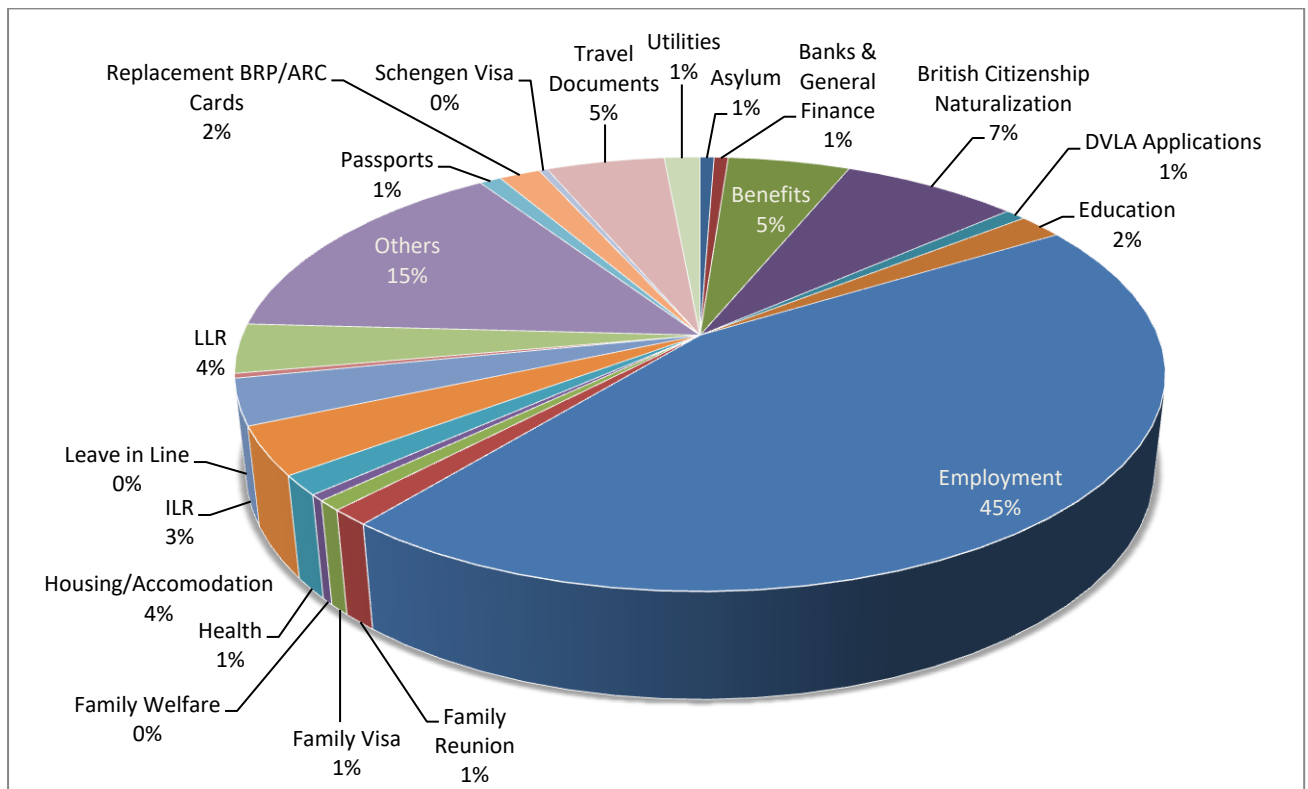
We have two immigration Advisors, Helena Maddock and myself. We were very busy this year and managed to help hundreds of clients with their immigration matters, including applying for Schengen visas. Schengen visas were much more in demand this reporting year because Brexit introduced more restrictions where our clients with limited leave had to apply for a Schengen visa to travel to Europe. Furthermore, we provide a comprehensive approach when it comes to immigration matters: we help our clients fill in the application form, book a UKVCAS appointment, and sort out their supporting documents.

All in all, we supported hundreds of clients this reporting year. We would have not been able to do so without the support of our volunteers and social work placement students. They played a crucial part, and BRASS is grateful to them.

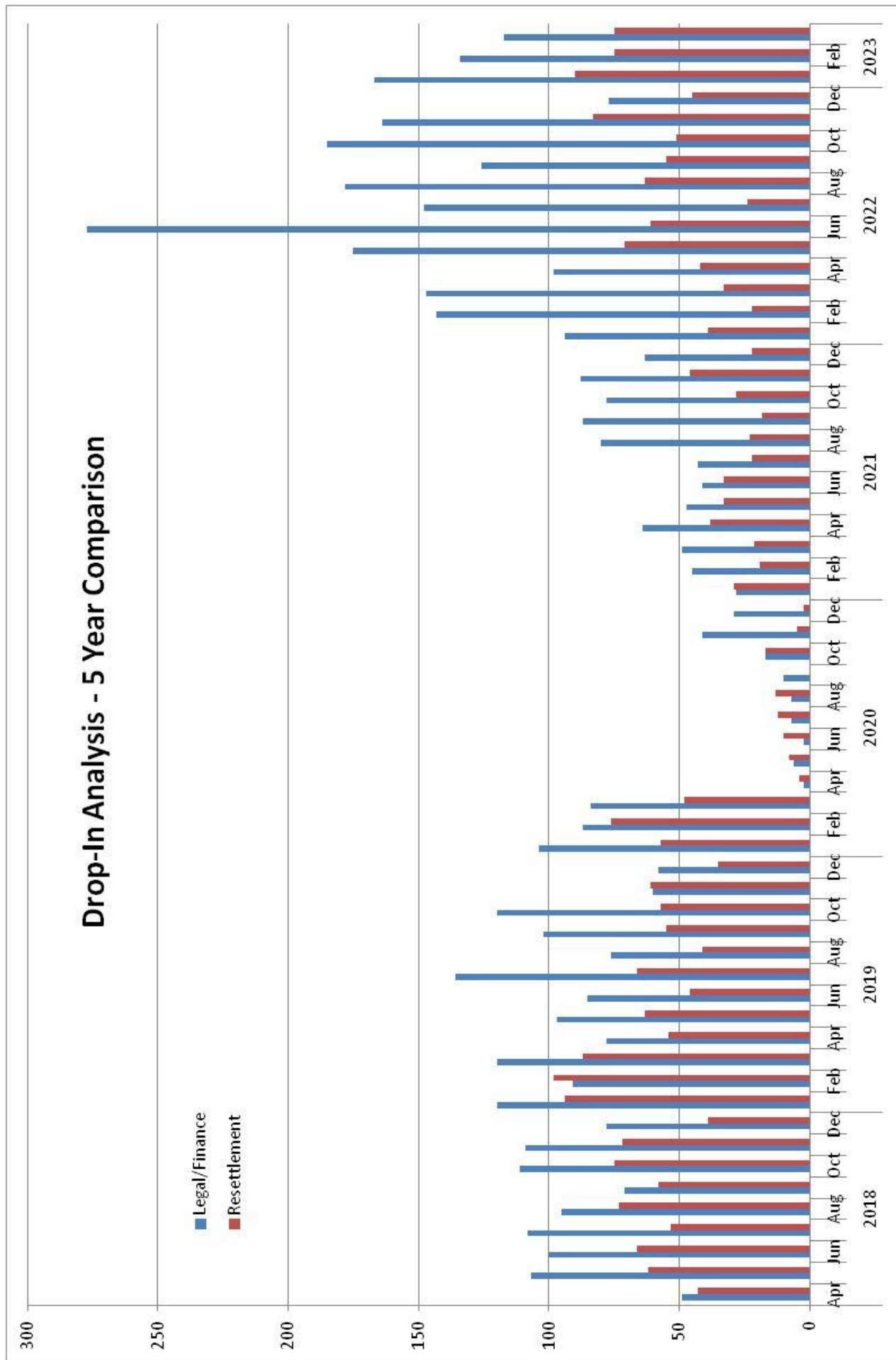
***Sharifullah Dorani, Immigration and Employment Adviser***



## Drop-in Enquiries 2022-2023



# Drop-in Enquiries 5 Year Comparison 2018-2023



## **Employment Project**

In the year starting in April 2022 we registered 83 new clients for the employment project, bringing our total in March 2023 to 172 employment clients. The original end date for the project was December 2022 but we have been able to continue, with different course providers, up until September 2023. Sharif and myself work together on the employment project. We are delighted that we exceeded our targets and consequently our partners were pleased to extend the period of the project. This will continue in a different format for at least another 6 months.

We have been able to refer a lot of our clients to a variety of courses (more than 100 referrals), including driving theory and IELTS, as well as low level English courses on topics such as how to use the NHS. We have also referred clients to MENTA, a business mentoring organisation and they have helped clients who are interested in becoming self-employed or starting their own business. We had more than 30 clients' overseas qualifications recognised here by ENIC. We continue to help our clients with CV writing, finding suitable courses for them, helping with job applications and other research for them.

We have had very good feedback from our clients about the services we have been able to provide such as "I would like to express my deep gratitude to BRASS...you very kindly provided me with the things which I really needed."

***Helena Maddock, Immigration and Employment Adviser***

## **Tuition**

Since starting in the role as Integration Officer, one of the biggest tasks was to get all of the volunteer tutors together to get some feedback on how they felt lessons were going. Based on the level of English that some of the students were arriving with, it was necessary to review and update learning resources. Joanna Clark, a BRASS volunteer, helped organise the resources and we were able to purchase additional resources from some fund raising organised by Kathy Mortimer, another BRASS volunteer.

The majority of students come to us from local authority care/ hostels that look after Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). They are children and young people who have been separated from their parents or carers and are seeking asylum in the UK.

Our Afghan women's group has grown from one day a week to two days a week.

We have also had students from some countries that we have never worked with before including Ukraine. So, we have increased the number of volunteer tutors to accommodate the new students.

They are still progressing and generally use our English classes to support any learning they may receive at college or before being given a place at college, it has been very interesting scheduling all the tutors and students to rooms.

***Andrea Tullock, Integration Officer***

## **Allotment**

BRASS continues to support a Syrian family at an allotment plot in Queens Park, Bedford.



# Objectives and Activities

## Vision

A world where refugees and asylum seekers are included, accepted and supported by society.

## Mission Statement

BRASS is an established charity working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and to protect rights with an aim to develop independence and involvement in UK society.

## Strategic Objectives 2020-2023

The trustees have reviewed BRASS' strategic objectives and made some changes. These objectives will form the basis of planning our activities over the next three years. We plan to use these to inform annual targets to ensure we remain focussed on our strategic objectives.

- 1) Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their families.
- 2) To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand and navigate UK procedures, processes and systems and promoting change to create a fairer system.
- 3) Provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to increase independence, integration and confidence through learning and social activities.
- 4) Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.
- 5) To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign for the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.
- 6) To inform and educate the community of Bedford and foster relationships between refugees and asylum seekers and the wider community.

## Services

BRASS currently offers three drop-in advice sessions staffed by volunteers and BRASS staff - on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am-2pm, with fewer sessions conducted via telephone than in the earlier months of the year. These are accredited by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to give immigration advice. Through funding by the National Lottery Community Fund and the East of England LGA, BRASS employs a specialist benefits adviser, 2 employment advisers and 2 immigration advisers. We also support the

Refugee Legal Assistance project run by the University of Bedford on its Luton Campus on Tuesday evenings during term time, which specialises in refugee family reunions. The project has, over recent years, supported over 55 families.

Our tutoring programme matches volunteer tutors with refugees and asylum seekers who want to learn or improve their English language skills. This service is offered in the community, at the BRASS offices and online. BRASS provides small group tuition in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test

Our allotment plot continues to be worked by client volunteers. Whilst our popular annual summer trip to the seaside was, sadly, not possible this year, our coach trip to Wicksteed Park for clients was oversubscribed.

BRASS plays a leading role in Refugee Week each year, organising a variety of events to promote refugee issues, this year's events revolved around raising awareness via our market stall with The Higgins, myth-busting leaflets, suggested reading Book Lists and installations at St Paul's Church.

## **Public Benefit**

BRASS provides a range of services to support refugees and asylum seekers in the Bedford community and further afield. Free immigration advice is in short supply in this area and without the service provided by BRASS through phone and appointment advice sessions, many refugees and asylum seekers would be left to tackle the often complex immigration system alone. Advice is also provided on a range of resettlement issues including employment, housing, education and benefits. This advice enables our clients to better integrate into society and to learn to manage their own affairs independently. BRASS also provides a dedicated resettlement worker to support Syrian and Afghan refugees who are resettled in Bedford, supporting them to settle and integrate into our community.

For those who want to improve their English, BRASS' tutoring project matches volunteer tutors with clients. This relationship can often provide improved self-confidence and support with other aspects of integration. We also run classes for those wishing to improve their numeracy and those preparing for the Life in the UK test. The BRASS allotment is now quite well established, providing a sense of community to clients, as well as providing asylum seekers (who are not allowed to work) activities to fill their time as well as fresh produce to take home.

BRASS is working to inform and educate the public on issues around immigration and asylum. Asylum seekers are a stigmatised group and through our work with Refugee Week and our coordinator giving talks to groups in the Bedford area, we are encouraging the public to look differently at refugees and asylum seekers and to see the positive contribution they make to our society.



# **Achievements and Performance**

## **Progress towards Strategic Objectives 2020-2023**

We have measured our progress on our previous strategic objectives as the review took place at the end of the reporting year.

### **Sustainable development of BRASS as an organisation to serve the interests and needs of refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS' advice sessions, our core service, is provided mainly in person with face to face meetings with clients with appropriate Covid measures in place. We also continue to provide specialist benefits advice. Through our VPRS resettlement worker, we support families, in conjunction with Bedford Borough Council, who are resettled in Bedford from refugee camps in the Middle East. Our English Language project has been boosted by the appointment of an Integration officer to run the tuition service.

The BRASS allotment continues to offer a great benefit to clients.

### **To enhance the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to understand UK procedures, processes and systems.**

The UK immigration system can be confusing even for those of us who deal with it on a regular basis, so navigating it can be near impossible for those who are new to the country and may have limited English. Through our OISC registered drop-in immigration advice sessions, BRASS helps refugees and asylum seekers to deal with these complex systems. Advice is also provided around other non-immigration issues such as housing, employment and finance to aid integration. We are able to provide specialist advice through our immigration advisers, employment advisers and benefits adviser. Our popular English Language Tuition also gives refugees and asylum seekers the skills to better navigate British systems and our classes in numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test also aid integration.

### **Increasing independence and confidence through learning and social activities.**

Our tuition project provides one-to-one/group tuition to those who wish to improve their English, numeracy and preparing for the Life in the UK test. It is hoped that this will enable them to become more independent and better able to integrate into society. Our allotment provides a place for our clients to relax, meet new people and grow their own food.

**To raise awareness in wider society of issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers.**

BRASS is always heavily involved with activities in Bedford celebrating Refugee Week. Myth busting leaflets are given out to members of the public and events are held at various venues around the town including a very popular football tournament and fun day in one of Bedford's public parks. We also had a publicity raising market stall where we distributed Myth busting leaflets. BRASS' coordinator gives talks to local groups and the feedback forms completed at the end of these talks indicate that perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers have been changed by what they have heard. We regularly publish positive stories about our clients and information about refugees and the asylum system on our website and Facebook page.

**Encourage participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the development and management of BRASS.**

BRASS continually encourages clients and former clients to become involved in BRASS, whether through attending groups and activities, becoming a volunteer or joining the committee. A former client is now on our committee and some of our volunteers have previously used our services. We have also provided social work placements to a number of students, some of whom are from a refugee background.

**To build partnerships with other agencies, to cross refer clients, share information and campaign on behalf of the wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers locally and nationally.**

BRASS works with other agencies in a variety of ways. BRASS works with many local charities and networks. Our coordinator is involved with The New Migration Partnership, Bedford Borough Diversity Network and the Bedford Advice forum – local multi-agency forums where issues are raised, information exchanged and partnership solutions explored. BRASS is a key participant in the organisation of the annual Bedford Refugee Week which holds events to raise awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied Asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the Charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough.

BRASS has been very involved with Refugee Week in Bedford for many years. The aim of Refugee Week is to raise awareness of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers and the positive contributions they make to British society. Covid has had a serious effect upon the level of engagement in the past but we are back working with the local community in terms of giving talks to various groups in the Bedford area to change perceptions of these issues and gathering feedback from those who attend to assess changing attitudes.



## **Fundraising activities**

We would like to thank the following organisations from whom we have received grants over the past years

The National Lottery Community Fund  
Bedford Borough Council  
The Beds and Luton Community Foundation  
Beatrice Laing Trust  
WW4R1

Harpur Trust  
Wixamtree Trust  
Panacea Charitable Trust  
East of England LGA

We would also like to thank all of the individual donors who support BRASS through one off and regular donations.

BRASS would like to thank our fundraiser Karen Mayoh for her continued hard work and support.

## **Future Plans and the challenges ahead**

Our services have been steadily resuming this year as we came out of Covid. We are now helping clients in numbers higher than pre Covid.

We have obtained a new five year grant with the National Lottery to help with our long term stability and continue to work other local funders.

BRASS will continue to prioritise the needs of our clients by providing good quality, reliable services. In order to safeguard BRASS and ensure that our vital services continue to be available, we will work to ensure good governance to maintain stability. BRASS is fortunate to be in a secure financial position, with more than 6 months of reserves. There are bound to be other challenges ahead, but we are confident that BRASS is well placed to face them.

## Getting Involved with BRASS

Volunteers are often needed for our drop-in, English tutoring and the allotment.

If you are interested in becoming involved with BRASS as a volunteer, please contact Co-ordinator Brian Cunningham on 01234 211381 or [brian@brass27b.org](mailto:brian@brass27b.org). For further information on any of our work, please check our website [www.brassbedford.org.uk](http://www.brassbedford.org.uk) and Facebook pages [www.facebook.com/brassbedford](https://www.facebook.com/brassbedford) and [www.facebook.com/brassallotment](https://www.facebook.com/brassallotment)







Charity Registration Number: 1096874

**BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP  
(BRASS)**

TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**CHARITY NAME:** Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Group

OTHER NAME CHARITY IS KNOWN BY: BRASS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1096874

**CHARITY'S PRINCIPAL ADDRESS:**

27B Tavistock Street  
Bedford  
MK40 2RB

**NAMES OF THE CHARITY TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY**

Victoria Hilliard  
Cathy Moorhouse  
Morris Johns - Chair from 3rd July 2020  
Sanja Radic  
James Biggs  
Jo Tester  
Cass Howes

**PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR**

Brian Cunningham

**BANKERS**

RBS\\  
Bedford Branch  
15-19 Mill Street  
Bedford  
MK40 3EU

Main current account held since May 2021 :-

The Co-operative Bank  
Delf House  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 6WT

# **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

The trustees of the charity present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

From April 2022 to March 2023 finance meetings and trustee meetings were held quarterly, attended by the Chair, Executive Committee members and staff.

BRASS employs a Project Co-ordinator to oversee day to day business and to provide specialist advice, and full-time Syrian Family Support Officer and part-time Benefits Adviser, Integration Officer, Immigration Adviser, Finance Manager and Finance Officer. Much of the charity's work is undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers.

### **OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES**

The charity is an established non-political, voluntary organisation working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and their families, protect their rights and enable them to develop their independence and involvement in UK society. Specifically the charity was established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress. Services are delivered from a local government owned property in Bedford town centre which is leased by BRASS. Much work in the previous year was done by phone and virtually from our offices and by staff from home due to Covid. From early in this year we were back in the office seeing people under Covid conditions by appointment, by the end of this year we had returned to full drop in advice as well.

BRASS continues to have strong working relationships with local organisations providing advice so that individuals can get support from the organisations best placed to offer it. Luton Law Centre and Luton law firms have qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisors. BRASS also works with the University of Bedfordshire Law Department to assist refugees with family reunification applications. BRASS works with the Citizens Advice Bureau to cross refer clients and makes referrals to the local MP who, in specific cases, helps with representations to the Home Office.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough Council who run the New Migration Partnership of which the BRASS co-ordinator is chair. The co-ordinator is also on the steering group of the Bedford Advice Forum. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity who previously supported our tutoring project by carrying out the relevant DBS checks, but we are now able to do these for ourselves.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (who also offer immigration advice training courses) and Migrant Help. BRASS is also a registered referrer for Bedford Food Bank.

BRASS seeks to support the local voluntary sector and work towards financial self-sustainability. It leases its offices in Bedford town centre.

BRASS is focused on working in partnership with other organisations to share knowledge and skills, prevent duplication, maximise effectiveness, cut costs and share facilities. On behalf of the trustees of BRASS I can confirm that in carrying out our financial review we have considered and complied with our duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.



## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

During the last financial year BRASS has supported over 400 clients. We seek to support our client group's changing needs; the changes to the Benefits system and ever increasing complexity of immigration applications has increased demands for our services. BRASS now receives funding from the Big Lottery and will provide specialist advice through a Complex Caseworker for immigration matters and a Benefits Advisor. We will be able to provide additional social activities through our Integration Officer who started this year funded by the Harpur Trust.

We increased our advice sessions from twice a week to three times a week. However, we also offer appointments with our Benefits Adviser worker and our Immigration Adviser where we feel the need is urgent or can best be addressed in person.

Our social activities have become more active again this year. Our Co-ordinator is still the chair of the Refugee Week steering group, and we had successfully organised a football tournament with refugees and other local teams. We also did a market stall giving out myth busting leaflets. BRASS' allotment is still up and running with both refugees and volunteers attending.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

As in previous years, BRASS is very fortunate to have received funding from various different sources this year.

The Big Lottery continues to fund our Co-ordinator, along with other posts and other running costs for five years.

The Harpur Trust continues its support by helping to fund our Finance Manager and Finance Officer salary costs and most recently an Integration officer. Bedford Borough Council provided continued funding support towards staff costs at the beginning of the year. Money has been used to fund a part-time Benefits Adviser.

We thank Beds and Luton Community Foundation, Panacea Society, Wixamtree Trust and WW4R1 for their continued ongoing support for funding

Total Incoming Resources during the financial year were £142,258, a significant increase on the previous year. This income has been used to provide funding to cover all our existing posts which are all filled and other direct costs and overheads. A large part of the reason for the increase in income is that the new lottery funding came into effect from April 2022. We are delighted to say that the lottery granted us this new funding which started at the beginning of the new financial year and that this funding is for five years which means we will be free from having to put together a new lottery bid for five years. Now that we have successfully secured this funding we now have more time to concentrate on putting in other bids. We are asking for funding over more than one year as we have done in the past. We are awaiting outcome of some of these new bids and are planning others early in the new financial year.

Costs decreased this year by approximately 3% to £165,280 mainly due to the Syrian working coming to close. There has been an increase in some staff hours mainly to support the growing needs of the increasing number of refugees coming into the country.

## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONT'D...)

### FINANCIAL REVIEW RESERVES POLICY.

BRASS reserves as at 31st March 2023, were £94,579. Of these funds £47,575 were restricted funds, the remaining £47,004 were unrestricted funds. The Trustee Board have established a policy whereby it aims to maintain sufficient unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets and not required to meet future budgeted expenditure, being the "free reserves", to support the future growth of the charity and provide sufficient reserves for dealing with possible contingencies such as short-term cessation of project activity or redundancy.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Johns'.

Morris Johns  
Chair  
Date: 15th September 2023

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT GROUP**

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023 as set out on pages 7 to 12.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the 2011 Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- \* examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- \* to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- \* to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- \* to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;

have not been met; or

2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



John Esam  
Mayfield Lodge  
1 Main Road,  
Biddenham  
MK40 4BB

Dated: 15th September 2023

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AS OF 31ST MARCH 2023

Incoming Resources	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable	3	8,000	90,182	98,182	65,170
Donations and other fund raising activities		3,305	37,339	40,644	52,264
Rental income		0	0	0	0
Investment income		114	0	114	43
Other income		2,968	350	3,318	4,655
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>14,387</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>122,132</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds		7,950	1500	9,450	10,200
Charitable activities	4	24,544	130,714	155,258	159,969
Governance costs		0	572	572	534
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>
<b>Net Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources</b>		<b>(18,107)</b>	<b>(4,915)</b>	<b>(23,022)</b>	<b>(48,571)</b>
Funds brought forward		65,111	52,490	117,601	166,172
Transfers between funds		0	0	0	0
<b>Funds carried forward</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible assets	5	76	854	930	2,266
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors and Prepayments	6	1,400	20,510	21,910	9,827
Cash and Bank in hand		45,528	37,139	82,667	114,161
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>57,649</b>	<b>105,507</b>	<b>123,988</b>
<b>Creditors Amounts falling due within one year</b>	7	0	10,928	10,928	8,653
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>46,928</b>	<b>46,721</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>115,335</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>					
Unrestricted funds	10	46,091	0	46,091	63,617
Restricted funds	10	0	46,721	46,721	50,483
Unrestricted & Restricted capital reserve		76	854	930	2,266
Designated funds		837	0	837	1,235
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>47,004</b>	<b>47,575</b>	<b>94,579</b>	<b>117,601</b>

### Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility in complying with the requirements of the Charities Commission and confirm that the accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) and Charities Act 2011.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

  
.....

Name Morris Johns, Dated 15th September 20223

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

## 1. Accounting Policies

### Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared on the basis of historic cost and in accordance with the applicable United Kingdom Reporting Standards, the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

### Basis of Preparation

As permitted by SORP 2005 the trustees have adapted the heading used to describe Incoming Resources and Resources Expended within the Statement of Financial Activities when presenting the results for the year.

### Incoming Resources

Incoming Resources are recognised when received or receivable by the charity. Income is derived from fund raising activities, donations and the sub-letting of rented property. Grants are recognised on receipt or award unless, in the judgement of the trustees, conditions attached to the grant make it improbable that they will be received.

### Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds are to be used for a specific purpose as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified against the fund.

### Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds are incoming resources received or receivable generated for charitable purposes and available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and have not been designated for other purposes.

### Paid Employees

The charity employs a Project Co-ordinator, part-time Facilities (Support) Officer and part-time Benefits Advisor and a Syrian Family Support Worker. These four posts are funded through restricted grants.

### Trustee Expenses

There were no payments or reimbursements made to any trustees during the financial year.

### Fixed Assets

Assets with a useful life of more than two years are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful life.

Depreciation on computer equipment is charged at 33% on a straight line basis.

Fixed Assets funded by capital grants are capitalised and a restricted capital reserve created. The reserve is reduced by the depreciation charge.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 2. Property & Operating Leases

i) Operating Lease Commitments - Nil.

ii) The annual commitment for the land and buildings lease amounts to £10,059 (£9,375 in 2021-22) where the term remaining is between one and five years. There are no further lease commitments.

Due to the pandemic, the authority reduced the rent charge, rent charges have increased for the current year.

### 3. Income from Grants, Donations and Legacies:

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations from other charities, companies	8,000	90,182	98,182	52,264
Donations from trusts, individuals and similar	3,305	37,339	40,644	65,170
	<b>11,305</b>	<b>127,521</b>	<b>138,826</b>	<b>117,434</b>

### 4. Resources Expended

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Staff payroll costs	(51)	115,225	115,174	134,997
Volunteer expenses & training	394	0	394	353
Staff travel & training	0	840	840	2,777
Social worker	2,549	0	2,549	800
Rent, rates & insurance (note 2)	6,135	7,000	13,135	11,516
IT, telephone & internet	4,824	0	4,824	4,772
Utilities, cleaning & maintenance.	4,204	0	4,204	2,221
Stationery, printing & postage	1,943	0	1,943	903
Publications & subscriptions	309	0	309	243
Web & promotional costs	179	0	179	95
Client outings & welfare costs	2,587	0	2,587	169
Depreciation	183	1,152	1,335	1,310
Governance Costs	0	572	572	534
Other expenses	9,238	7,997	17,235	10,013
Total	<b>32,494</b>	<b>132,786</b>	<b>165,280</b>	<b>170,703</b>

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

<b>5. Fixed Assets</b>	<b>Computer Equipment</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>£</b>
At 1 April 2022	14,871
Additions	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>14,871</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>	
At 1 April 2022	12,605
Charge for year	<u>1,336</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>13,941</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,266</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u><u>930</u></u>

<b>6. Debtors and prepayments due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Debtors	0	0
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>
	<u>21,910</u>	<u>9,827</u>

<b>7. Creditors and accruals due within one year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Creditors	30	30
Deferred income	0	0
Accruals	<u>10,898</u>	<u>8,623</u>
	<u>10,928</u>	<u>8,653</u>

<b>8. Staff Costs</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Gross wages	107,042	126,180
Employers National Insurance costs	6,745	7,921
Employers National Insurance rebate	(5,000)	(4,000)
Pension costs	<u>6,387</u>	<u>4,896</u>
	<u>115,174</u>	<u>134,997</u>

No employee earned more than £60,000.



## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 (CONT'D...)

### 9. Restricted Income Funds as at March 31 2023

Fund Name	Purpose and restriction
Big Lottery (i)	The project is partly funding the following posts- the Co-ordinator, the Office Manager, Benefits Adviser and the Complicated Caseworker.
Harpur Trust (ii)	A further two year grant was awarded by Harpur Trust to support the part of the salary costs of the part- time posts of the Finance Manager & Finance Assistant, as well as the Integration Officer salary costs.
Harpur Trust (iii)	This funding concluded in September 2022.
WW4R1 Employment Support restricted Grants (iv)	These restricted funds are funding the Employment Support work.
Bedford Borough Council (v) - Syrian Refugees	The work for this project funded by the Borough concluded May 2022.

### 10. Movement of Major Funds

Fund Names	Balance at 1st April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31st March 2023 £
Other	65,111	14,387	(32,494)	0	47,004
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>65,111</b>	<b>14,387</b>	<b>(32,494)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,004</b>
WW4R1 Employment Support( iv)	20,584	33,657	(30,299)	0	23,942
Bedford Borough Council Syrian Refugee (v)	19,645	2,282	(21,927)	0	0
Bedford & Luton Community Fund	5,000	5,000	(5,000)	(5,000)	0
Beds Charitable Trust	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Big Lottery (i)	51	50,000	(50,051)	0	0
Harpur Trust (ii)	194	25,182	(19,459)	9	5,926
Harpur Trust (iii)	9	0	0	(9)	0
Panacea Society	0	10,000	(4,897)	5,000	10,103
Small restricted grants	0	1,750	0	0	1,750
	50,483	127,871	(131,633)	0	46,721
Restricted capital reserve (Note 11)	2,007	0	(1,153)	0	854
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>52,490</b>	<b>127,871</b>	<b>(132,786)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47,575</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>117,601</b>	<b>142,258</b>	<b>(165,280)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94,579</b>





