

ARC Blackburn - Casework Update 2022

Given the current situation of increased numbers of people fleeing Afghanistan, we expect to support a total of 13-15 families initially who have recently arrived in our area and are currently living in hotels. We will need to work intensively with an individual or family over a period which may stretch over several years. We anticipate that many of the men who used to work for the British Army/DfID projects as interpreters are likely to secure permanent employment in the near future with the fast track intensive support of ARC Job Club. It is likely that many females will require additional support with English language and job seeking over a longer period. ARC will tailor the needed intensive social support to Afghan families who will already have refugees status, such as initial orientation for everyday survival: shopping, transport, mental and physical health support, children's and adult education, cultural orientation and leisure activities. We are fortunate in already having several Afghan families in the ARC community who will be a good link for newly arrived families. Some of these have the language skills and experience to provide interpreting services.

ARC case work office is open 3 days weekly, provides vital day to day survival support assisting all asylum seekers and refugees (AS&R) to navigate complex procedures related to legal status, job seeking, benefits, housing, disability, education and health as they settle into UK life. Case work sessions average 1 hour but complex issues often related to Universal Credit and housing can require over 2 hours especially with increasingly long waits by telephone. A weekly Drop-In allows individuals and families to meet socially building vital friendships and a strong sense of community. Other local organisations and services access the Drop-in to initiate the various support they can provide to AS&R. In addition ARC provide twice weekly English classes, free of cost, for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, (Blackburn College charge £350 for beginners course). ARC also runs a Job Club to prepare refugees to seek and obtain employment including CV preparation, job search, interview skills and visits to local employers.

The casework support forms the backbone to the ARC programme. In addition to the paid staff, ARC relies upon a strong volunteer team, many of whom have several years of experience in dealing with the issues of this client group. The volunteers include interpreters, several of whom themselves initially received support through ARC and are keen to support others and to educate the wider community about the experiences and needs of AS&Rs, eg through schools and colleges. ARC has a strong working relationship developed over time with all the relevant agencies/services in the Borough that AS&R come into contact with. Public service offices such as the Council and The Job Centre often signpost clients to ARC, knowing that they will be respectfully supported in a professional way.

We have many case stories which highlight how ARC has helped clients, eg a Sudanese woman 8 months pregnant with a disturbed 2 yr old girl arrived in Blackburn with no family connections, traumatised from leaving family to flee from danger, with little English and no idea about how to get any help. ARC immediately helped her to register with a GP and ante-natal care, photocopied documents for her asylum application, arranged for interpreters for all appointments, signposted for housing, baby equipment, gave emergency food when needed, enrolled her in English class and introduced her to others at the social Drop In which meets on Tuesdays. ARC, by quick, vital action, helped her (and many others like her) overcome the destitution 'gap' and helped her access income support and child benefits. For other case stories see ARC website: www.arcblackburn.org.uk and Health Watch report on ARC website.

The main outputs of ARC are helping clients integrate into UK society, providing

timely help and support to people according to their individual needs, many of whom are initially desperate, confused, frightened and traumatised by the upheaval they have faced. Many speak of ARC as their FAMILY - a place where they feel safe, included, befriended, supported and valued and where they can support each other through also volunteering their time. The specialist work that ARC will undertake with newly arrived Afghan families will ensure that they are quickly able to settle happily in the local area and within the ARC community.

Asylum and Refugee Community, Blackburn
Registered Charity No: 1188910

**ACCOUNTS &
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 August 2022**

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Year ended 31 August 2022.

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Asylum Refugee Community Blackburn

Registered Charity No : 1188910

Income & Expenditure Account

Year Ended 31 August 2022

	£	£	2021 £	£
Income				
Grants		124,474.10		72,065.00
Donations		8,681.72		5,075.95
Miscellaneous Income		208.76		0.00
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		133,364.58		77,140.95
Less Expenses and Overheads				
Staffing Costs				
Staff Wages & Salaries	49,947.93		46,006.45	
Staff NIC	0.00		0.00	
Pensions	934.67		787.48	
Staff Training Costs	3,256.00		50.00	
Pension Fees	105.00		0.00	
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	1,458.10		125.52	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		55,701.70		46,969.45
Tinta Appeal Expenses		0.00		0.00
Administration & Marketing				
Stationery & Inks	848.09		30.00	
Client, Socials and Charity Expenses	578.68		750.10	
Lamplight Training & Database	3,720.00		0.00	
Memberships	30.00		30.00	
Advertising	295.00		0.00	
Postage	117.48		0.00	
Accountancy, Payroll & Examination of Accounts	748.90		647.60	
Funding Application	727.00		1,325.00	
Professional Fees	0.00		150.00	
Bank & Card Fees	93.00		76.50	
Travel Expenses	0.00		63.59	
Website Fees	10.79		400.07	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		7,168.94		3,472.86
Establishment Expenses				
Rent, Electricity & water	8,899.56		0.00	
Insurance	998.78		1,022.65	
Telephone	3,811.66		2,331.59	
Computer Expenses	195.64		179.15	
Alarm & Security	0.00		0.00	
Repairs & Sundry Equipment	2,160.89		219.67	
Equipment Hire	0.00		0.00	
Due Diligence Checks	700.00		0.00	
Sundry Expenses	330.54		81.10	
Cleaning Expenses	75.00		0.00	
Depreciation of Assets	497.00		712.07	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		17,669.07		4,546.23
Total Expenses		<hr/>		<hr/>
		80,539.71		54,988.54
(Loss) Surplus Generated from Operations				
		52,824.87		22,152.41
Profits (Losses) transferred to Revenue Reserves		<hr/>		<hr/>
		52,824.87		22,152.41
		=====		=====

Asylum Refugee Community Blackburn

Registered Charity No : 1188910

Balance Sheet

31 August 2022

	£	£	2021	£
Fixed Assets				
Laptops & Printers	1,655.00		2,367.07	
Less : Depreciation	497.00		712.07	
		1,158.00		1,655.00
Current Assets				
Cash at bank-3840	92,395.07		37,280.07	
West Pennine Methodist Circuit (Debtor)	0.00		2,186.41	
Petty Cash in Hand	0.00		0.00	
	92,395.07		39,466.48	
Current Liabilities				
Accrued Charges	425.00		350.00	
Wages	0.00		0.00	
Pensions	580.20		215.72	
PAYE & NI	1,127.24		0.00	
	2,132.44		565.72	
Net Current Assets		90,262.63		38,900.76
		91,420.63		40,555.76
Less : Restricted Funding re Tinta Ali		(1,740.00)		(3,700.00)
		89,680.63		36,855.76
Represented by				
Reserves brought forward		36,855.76		
Capital Introduced				
HSBC (share of Balance)			4,280.95	
Methodist Circuit Current Account			10,422.40	
		0.00		14,703.35
Add: Surplus (Deficit) for the year		52,824.87		22,152.41
		89,680.63		36,855.76

For the year ended 31 August 2022

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting Principles

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and with applicable Accounting Standards.

Depreciation

Depreciation has been calculated to write off the net book values of fixed assets over their expected economic lives at the following annual rates.

Computer Equipment 30 % on reducing balance

2. TURNOVER

Turnover for the year was £133,364 and represents various charitable grants and donations received in the year

3. CORPORATION TAX

Corporation tax is charged in the accounts in the period to which it relates.

The amount of Corporation tax due on Non-Charitable trading activities for the year was £ Nil.

4. CONTINUING OPERATIONS

None of the charity's activities were acquired or discontinued during the year.

5 TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES

The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the loss for the financial period detailed herewith

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Trustees and Members of Asylum and Refugee Community, Blackburn

I report on the Accounts and Financial Statements on pages 1 to 2 which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 3.

Responsibilities of the Trustees and Committee.

It is the charity's committee's responsibility to prepare accounts and financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the committee are required to :

- i) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- ii) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- iii) Prepare the accounts and financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue to operate.

The committee is also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking responsible steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Respective responsibility of Trustees and Examiner.

As described above the charity's trustees and committee are responsible for the preparation of accounts and financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- a) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- b) to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act ; and
- c) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's report.

My examination was conducted in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. The examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts and financial statements presented with those records and making such limited enquiries of the officers of the charity as we considered necessary for the purposes of this report. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. These procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement of Opinion

In connection with my examination it is my opinion that;

- a) The financial statements are in agreement with the books and records kept by the charity and that the accounting records have been maintained in accordance with section 145 of the 2011 Act

b) Having read only to, and on the basis of, the information contained in those accounting records the accounts and financial statements have been drawn up in a manner consistent with the accounting requirements specified in the 2011 Act;

No matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect of the requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met.

No matter has come to my attention, to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Graham Bennett', with a large, stylized initial 'G' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Graham Bennett FFA. FAIA.
Bennett & Co. Accountants
Spring House 194-196 Union Road
Oswaldtwistle
Accrington BB5 3EG

11 January 2023.

ARC NEWSLETTER

- ANNUAL EDITION 2021 -



DEAR FRIENDS,

Last year we experienced such a different scaled-back celebration, no-one can deny there's a growing excitement that we'll be able to spend time with our loved ones. However, at the time of writing this, increasing numbers of Covid cases as well as the threat of the Omicron variant reminds us that we are not out of the woods yet!

At ARC the festive period brings together many people from different faiths, culture and background, **all bound together with one mission- to renew our love and compassion towards those who make perilous journeys and to educate** and increase understanding to the wider community about those seeking sanctuary.

But what a year it has been!

Here at ARC, our work never stops. Through the filter of Covid 19 we continued to provide support to our service users remotely and most recently in September this year, the office reopened to deal with queries face to face, as well as welcoming back our ESOL learners. It is no exaggeration when I say that our workload increased by 200% and staff and volunteers have shown such fortitude and positive spirit during such challenging times. We have all had to adapt to new ways of working, developing new skills along the way, however whilst not easy we have tackled each challenge together as a team.

We were pleased when we restarted our weekly Drop In sessions as service users enjoyed meeting up with friends in a safe environment. The pandemic and local restrictions has been a difficult time as many service users felt socially isolated and this impacted on their mental health and well-being. With the help of local specialist agencies, we are able to support service users to process what has happened to them and to develop coping mechanisms to help them to rebuild their lives and mental resilience.

With funding from WEA, we were able to launch **the ILHAM project to empower refugee women into employment through focus based training and development.** Fifteen participants joined the group in November to learn new skills, develop interpersonal skills, confidence and self esteem.



And finally, this will be my last edition with you as I will be leaving ARC at the end of December 2021. It has been an amazing experience. **I've met some incredible people along the way and shared some special moments which I will always treasure.** The highlight of the year for me has to be when ARC's very own Volunteer Extraordinaire- Ali Tinta won the One Voice 'Man of the Year' award (see feature). I feel so blessed to know this incredible young man, someone who has waited patiently for over 10 years for a decision from the Home Office, we could all learn about patience and resilience from this truly remarkable person.

My deepest gratitude also goes to the wonderful team at ARC for their hard work and support over the years- you are all STARS!

My thanks always to you all for your ongoing support of ARC (long may it continue) and I hope you enjoy this edition with some wonderful features that you will agree brings into focus the work of ARC Blackburn.

Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.
Love & Light.

SAIDA SOGE (SYD)
ARC BLACKBURN MANAGER

NEWS OF THE YEAR

This year was a year of much good news. We had great things happen to many of our clients and team members - from winning awards to gaining positive decisions after 6 years of waiting.

HIGHLIGHTS



240

refugees seen on average, per month



102

asylum seekers seen on average, per month



650

food parcels provided

MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD - TINTA!

Saturday 9th October evening was a special evening for us all. Our one and only Tinta won the Man of the Year Award at the One Voice Annual Awards for the exceptional work he does for our community in Blackburn and Darwen and beyond.

Over the past 10 years, Tinta has supported many vulnerable people and groups. He has been a volunteer with various charities, undertaking interpreting and casework. During the Covid-19 pandemic, he also volunteered with the local council as well as with the police.

Additionally, at ARC Tinta has been the backbone of the team - always present as a helping hand. We can't think of anyone who deserves it more than he!

Congratulations Tinta and we hope to see you continue all the great work you do.



POSITIVE DECISIONS

We are pleased to share that clients from the following countries gained positive decisions this year! We wish them the very best of luck.



Iran



Iraq



Afghanistan



Sudan



Bangladesh



Pakistan



Albania



Russia



El Salvador

CORE PROJECTS

CASE WORK

ARC case work office is now open 3 days weekly, providing vital day to day survival support. It is available for all asylum seekers and refugees (AS&R) to navigate complex procedures related to legal status, job seeking, benefits, housing, disability, education and health as they settle into UK life. Case work sessions average 1 hour but complex issues often related to Universal Credit and housing can require over 2 hours especially with increasingly long waits by telephone.

THE CASEWORK SUPPORT FORMS THE BACKBONE OF ARC.

In addition to the paid staff, ARC relies upon a strong volunteer team, many of whom have several years of experience in dealing with the issues of this client group. The volunteers include interpreters, several of whom themselves initially received support through ARC and are keen to support others and to educate the wider community about the experiences and needs of asylum seekers and refugees, e.g. through schools and colleges. ARC has a strong working relationship developed over time with all the relevant agencies/services in the Borough that AS&R come into contact with. Public service offices such as the Council and the DWP often signpost clients to ARC, knowing that they will be respectfully supported in a professional way.

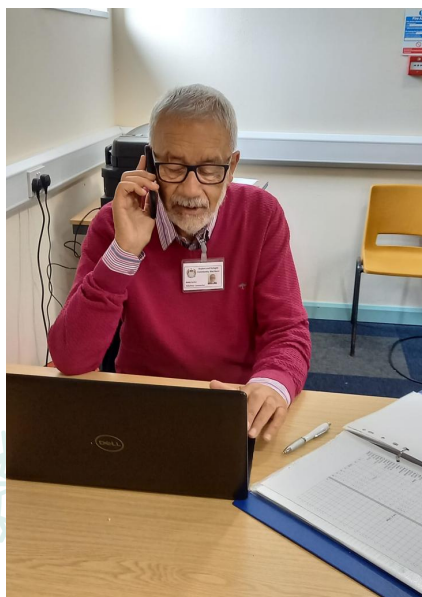


A CASE WE WORKED ON

A Sudanese woman, 8 months pregnant with her 2 year old daughter arrived in Blackburn with no family connections, traumatised from leaving family to flee from danger, with little English and no idea about how to get any help. ARC immediately helped her to register with a GP and ante-natal care, photocopied documents for her asylum application, arranged for interpreters for all appointments, signposted for housing, baby equipment, gave emergency food when needed, enrolled her in English class and introduced her to others at the social Drop In which meets on Tuesdays. ARC, by quick, vital action, helped her (and many others like her) overcome the destitution 'gap' and helped her access income support and child benefits.

The main outputs of ARC are helping clients integrate into UK society, providing timely help and support to people according to their individual needs, many of whom are initially desperate, confused, frightened and traumatised by the upheaval they have faced. Many speak of ARC as their FAMILY - a place where they feel safe, included, befriended, supported and valued and where they can support each other through also volunteering their time.

We give thanks to all who seek our help and support and the trust they place in us during this difficult period in their lives



CORE PROJECTS

ENGLISH CLUB

During the coronavirus lockdown, teaching continued on-line using 'zoom'. During this time three groups emerged. The original beginners' group made extraordinary progress and became the pre-intermediate group. A new beginners' group was set up and by the summer term of 2021 another new 'absolute' beginners group accessed this on-line teaching. Classroom teaching restarted in September 2021 and gradually numbers have increased as learners are re-establishing their family routines in order to access the teaching.

Absolute Beginners' Class

There are about 7 to 10 who are now accessing this class. There is capacity for more to join this class. Three learners have their young babies with them, this is no problem to me as a mum of four and grannie of five. I find that I can satisfactorily teach with this group and in fact there is a joy and a sharing as the mums with older children take an interest and the babies give a relaxing dimension to the lessons.

More important even than the learning of English, is that the learners gather with those who are struggling with the same issues of new culture, new language, and an unfamiliar environment.

As confidence grows speaking English is learnt almost incidentally, and group cohesion and friendships are made.



LIZZIE BELL



EC students trip to see the Knife Angel

Beginner, Elementary and Pre-Intermediate

It is a joy to engage with the enthusiasm of our learners as they get to grips with the English language. The classes have always been popular with many learners staying with us to progress from one level to another.

In the short time since returning to in-person teaching and learning after the pandemic lockdown, the numbers have slowly been growing, both with new students and returners.

We try to develop reading and writing skills alongside speaking and listening; many of our learners progress onto college courses and are well aware of the difficulties presented in placing a learner when someone has fluency of speech but very limited literacy skills.

The learners are always very polite and thankful for this opportunity to improve their English. The classes enable them to learn in a supportive environment with others in similar situations. Often new learners arrive with little self-confidence and are very shy to speak but, with the warm welcome, they soon begin to make friends, gain confidence and start to smile!

JANE FARMER
CATHERINE SMITH

NEW PROJECTS

THE ILHAM PROJECT

This November, ARC launched the ILHAM Project (which means 'to inspire' in Arabic) – a unique and innovative project funded by WEA. The aim of the ILHAM Project is to create pathways for refugee women to rebuild their lives with dignity and make a positive contribution in the community. This project is made up of empowerment activities as well as accredited qualifications to support refugee women to develop their confidence skills in employment. By creating a welcoming and supportive place for learning, refugee women will improve their social networks and feel empowered.



ARC FOOTBALL CLUB

With support from Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, 12 members of the ARC community were able to join weekly football sessions at Witton as part of the social inclusion programme. Alongside Creative Football and Blokes United, ARC members played several matches, learned new team building skills as well as improving their physical and mental health & well-being.

SUMMER CONVERSATION CLUB

Over the summer break ARC delivered conversation clubs for learners. These sessions were led by volunteers for refugees and asylum seekers to practice their English language skills. Each session was topic based with themes such as Travel, Health, Money. The sessions helped learners to boost their language skills and confidence and to practice using the language in various settings, i.e ordering food and drink in a Cafe.



2021 AT A GLANCE

As the Covid restrictions slowly eased, ARC was finally able to open our doors again. We were back in full swing this year with our regular activities such as the Drop-ins and a host of new projects too!



Various high schools dropping off winter gifts



PCSO Husna Mayet with Little Ahmed at our Drop in



Family day trip to Southport



On-site English Club back in full swing



Weekly food distribution



Wrap Up Lancashire donating winter clothing



Boxes of food donations from Blackburn Rovers for clients



Donated baked goodies from TIGHS



ILHAM project art work



Easter egg gifts for our young clients



A standard Tuesday drop in

THANK YOU!

ARC would like to thank these following organisations for all the help and support they have given throughout the year.



...and all our local individual supporters.

The Methodist Church

A special THANK YOU to the Methodist Church, in particular West Pennine Moors Circuit for their continued support to ARC.

And finally...a huge thank you to all ARC staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly throughout the year!

food parcels handed out this year

TO DONATE OR FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ARC BLACKBURN, FIND US AT

www.arcprojectblackburn.com | Facebook: @ARCProjectBlackburn | Email: arcprojectblackburn@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTORS: Rachel Warner, Rachel Hodge, Lizzie Bell, Jane Farmer, Catherine Smith, Thasneema Naushad