



2021 Annual Report

RAS (Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Annual report for the period June 2021 - December 2021

Background

Peace of Mind was set up on 14-02-2014. Peace of Mind is a refugee led community organisation managed by a committee of experienced Trustees - some of whom have lived experience of issues we are trying to address. We support refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into new and unfamiliar surroundings (British Society) and to overcome some of the difficulties they face. For example, cultural and social differences, language barriers, health issues - particularly mental health problems, diet and lifestyle. These can all be barriers to integration. Another important part of our work is to end hunger/food poverty and destitution among families with children and individual asylum seekers/refugees.

Regular Activities:

Peace of Mind has a strong reputation among people in Gateshead who are seeking asylum or have refugee status. The organisation is trusted and relied on by many as a first place to ask for help with any difficulties. This trust has taken time to build and has been gained due to the reliable, understanding and dedicated help offered by the group. People are supported with a huge range of issues including sourcing food for families with no income, assistance to access education, emergency help and support/financial assistance where necessary, accessing medical services appropriately and understanding/reporting hate crime. Our usual services include:

- 1) Weekly advice and practical support sessions for asylum seeker and refugees
- 2) Training and educational sessions around Universal Credit and parenting in the UK
- 3) Ending Food poverty
- 4) Promotion of volunteering
- 5) Networking and partnership working

We actively seek to adopt an 'open door' policy by welcoming anyone who turns up to our 'open' sessions which represent most of our work. We preclude no-one from these sessions and actively strive to make newcomers welcome by greeting them in an open and friendly way, and to introduce them to others in our groups with whom we think they may have particular things in common. We do not ask questions about their circumstances unless they choose to share these or unless we need to establish certain facts in order to be better placed to help them with a specific request.

We are proud to have made a positive difference to the lives of many within the struggling refugee community in the area of Gateshead. We have been able to offer essential support services aimed at addressing the disadvantage, exclusion and poverty which negatively affect asylum seekers and refugees. We offered practical help and advocacy support through weekly (Wednesday) drop-in sessions.

The North East has a highest number of dispersed asylum seekers relative to its population (16 supported asylum seekers in every 10,000 inhabitants), while the South-East has the lowest relative number (fewer than 1 in every 10,000 inhabitants) and Gateshead is one of the main dispersal areas for refugees and asylum seekers in the North East.

Since June 2021, 548 families/individuals representing 269 children benefited through our support. This figure includes new arrivals/those dispersed from other areas such as York and Newcastle hotels to Gateshead. This also includes a small number of those who received regular/multiple support from us since June 2021. Most stayed in contacted for help/support after receiving a negative decision from the Home Office on their asylum applications.

Asylum seekers and refugees who received our support since June 2021 represent 24 different nationalities: Syria, Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Pakistan, Albania, Turkey, China, Bangladesh, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Venezuela, Angola, Congo, Libya and India.

We were able to offer welfare support and signposting to other agencies/organisations where we couldn't meet the need of a family or individual. Our dedicated volunteers also continued to offer befriending support where family/ individual was struggling with depression and anxiety caused by loneliness, financial insecurity and uncertainty of future because of complicated Asylum journey. Overall, since June 2021 we have been able to help migrant community by offering:

- 1472 Food parcels (Including help with other household and newborn baby items) for struggling RAS families/individuals
- 315 phone calls to "The Migrant Help" on behalf of clients needing help with:
 - a) HC2 certificates
 - b) Asylum payment cards
 - c) Asylum ID cards
- 163 clients were referred to Gateshead and Newcastle based legal aid solicitors/Law Firms for

- immigration advice
- 56 Individuals were supported into employment by helping them with work clothes and shoes
- 106 Referrals were made for welfare support/benefit advice
- 331 befriending phone call resulting in 109 emergency food parcels and 23 emergency electric/Gas top up, 15 families/individuals were supported to secure their own accommodations through “Tyne and Wear Homes” by helping them to set up their online accounts and by guiding them to put regular bids on for houses that meet their needs and 28 Homeless (refused) asylum seeker supported by sourcing temporary shelter/accommodation.
- 62 Referrals were made to other organisations including: Gateshead Carers, young Carers, citizens advice Gateshead and Talking Therapies Gateshead

As the Covid restrictions slowly lifted, England moved towards the end of lockdown but asylum seeking and refugee community faced more challenges in terms of an increase in negative decisions from the Home Office on asylum applications and a rise in homelessness as a result of these refusals. Many other struggles faced by our migrant community were:

- Mental Health Issues - new mental health problems have developed as a result of the pandemic and existing mental health problems are getting worse
- Social exclusion of migrant/RAS community mainly caused by Isolation, language barrier and limited social networks
- Increased food poverty among asylum seeking community
- Unemployment among refugee community
- New immigration plan that includes Rwanda Scheme
- Opening of Hassockfield detention centre in Durham

Key Activities and Positive Impacts/Outcomes			
Activity	Average # of participants per week	Demographic info (e.g. age, gender, disability, unaccompanied minors, etc.)	Positive impacts/outcome
Emergency (Culturally Appropriate) food parcel	Between 48 – 60 per week	19 Years old – 62 Years old	Basic (emergency/hardship) food needs were met for a number of

support including Hot meals for homeless			struggling families/individuals which improved their health and wellbeing by providing relief in need
Hardship support Clothing/household/ School uniforms/newborn items/nappies etc	Between 37 - 42 per week	0 Years old - 62 Years old	Basic needs met which improved health and wellbeing. Having age appropriate, good condition school uniforms meant improved attendance in school.
Welfare and housing issues + Referrals for immigration advice+ Befriending support	Between 8 - 15 per week	19 Years old - 62 Years old	Successful in receiving Universal Credit x 43 Success in Homelessness support x 28 331 befriending phone calls were made in total 163 clients were referred to legal aid solicitors
Referrals to other organisations including Citizens advice, Talking Therapies Gateshead for mental health and Carers	62 Benefited	29 Years old - 35 Years old	Improved wellbeing, self-esteem and trust in available support services
Brighten The Day School Holiday Scheme	Up to 75 children benefited through	3 Years - 16 Years	Social and educational activities were offered including culturally appropriate hot meals

	Summer and Winter holiday Schemes (most of them attended up to 19 days sessions)		for children to address the holiday hunger/food poverty. Our holiday schemes are always very successful and oversubscribed. Through these play schemes we have been able to offer equal opportunity for some of the most disadvantaged children in Gateshead.
People supported into employment (An additional outcome)	56 Refugees	25 Years old - 42 Years old	Economic inclusion, Financial stability, improved wellbeing, food security for parents and children

Beneficiary Feedback

We always involve our community in to the process of decision making by having regular surveys and chats with people in person, over the phone or via online methods. This helps us to better understand the needs of our community and enables us to respond to these needs in a most efficient way.

Most people mentioned in their recent feedback to us, that they feel comfortable discussing their needs knowing they will not be judged.
 99% were happy to receive culturally appropriate food/clothing support in their time of hardship/financial difficulty
 80% were happy to access legal aid support through our referral process
 78% were happy to learn their rights as an asylum seeker in this country
 42% were happy to receive information about their entitlement for free NHS services
 65% were NOT happy about the wait and long queues, We promised to improve the situation.

Some of the comments used by the project beneficiaries were:

'I always tell about Peace of Mind to any new asylum seeker I see or meet'

'It is very useful for my case; I didn't know what these words meant on the letter' (A beneficiary who brought a Home Office letter for us to read and explain to him in simple English)

"Your financial support has helped me to buy the school uniform and I am able to have enough food for my children"

"Thank you for the support - God bless all of you"

"I was lost and had no hope. If Peace of Mind was not beside me to help in this difficult process, things would have been very difficult. I am happy and looking for a bright future now in Gateshead"

Hard copies of the evaluation forms can be provided on request. Please see a positive case study below:

Our partner organisations and friends also highly appreciated our work. Please see a few of comments below:

"Fantastic help and planning - some organisations would look at 1 thing but the comprehensive support you provide is heart warming and uplifting - well done (Helen Bardwell - Mears Resident Welfare Manager Embassy Hotel - North East)"

"Thank you I thank you for being there and providing positive reports even in such difficult circumstances. I for one find this calms me a little from the constant feeling of helplessness x you are truly amazing" (Gaynor - Former Youth Worker)

"I hope this will highlight the amazing work you do with the already large refugee community, the need has been here a long time. Social Justice Lass stands beside you. (Sarah Studholme School Teacher and Community worker)"

Please Note: All the above 3 comments were left on our social media page.

Case Studies:

1 - Mrs Hassan

This single mother with 3 children from Birtley approached us for help as she was struggling financially. After discussing her needs, we found - She hasn't been able to pay the last 3 months' house rent as struggling due to the rising costs of food and energy + affected by the benefit cap + She is in debt for above £2,500 + struggling to find a job due to limited skills and language barrier. Mrs Hassan informed us that after paying her loan instalments, she doesn't even have money for electricity and gas in the house. We immediately helped her with £100 for gas and electricity top up and offered her a culturally appropriate food parcel from our food bank. Mum was struggling to buy age appropriate school uniforms for her 2 daughters. Therefore, we helped her with a £75 Asda gift card towards the cost of school uniforms for her children. After meeting her immediate needs we referred her to The Future You programme at Gateshead Council. She was offered an appointment and enrolled for housing support to save her from eviction/homelessness with her 3 children. Once her housing is secured and she is no longer in danger of being homeless with her 3 children - She is going to receive all the necessary skills to get her into paid employment. She was so pleased and rang us to say: "Thank You So Much, I didn't know this help was available. Thank you for referring me. Sihle (The support worker) is very nice and helpful"

2 - Mohammad

M arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker, later granted refugee status. He was supported by our team to prepare his CV. He was shortlisted and invited for an interview. M didn't have nice clothing for his job interview and no money to buy new clothes. He requested some support; Peace of Mind helped him with suitable clothing for his interview and travel expenses to and from his job interview. We are pleased to say, he was selected and going to start his paid job in April 2022. This family will not have to rely on our food support anymore. We believe this was an amazing outcome of the support POM provided and exactly why we exist. This is how we empower people so they can live an independent life rather than relying on us for day-to-day support. M sent a "Thank You message" to us that made all the work worthwhile. (A picture of his Thank you message was shared on our

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/peaceofmind455/>)

3 - Ali

A is from Iran, where he was tortured and raped by the authorities because of his conversion to Christianity. He managed to escaped

and arrived in the UK to claim asylum. Unfortunately, his asylum case was refused in 6 weeks. He received documents from the Home Office to apply for permission to appeal but his solicitor refused to further represent him on the basis of low success chances. After 21 days of receiving the refusal his financial support and accommodation was withdrawn. We encouraged A to persuade with the appeal and helped him to submit the application, he was granted permission to appeal and within 7 months he was granted refugee status after a successful appeal hearing in June 2021. This showed how sometimes solicitor can give false advice and why it is important to have an effective advocacy support.

A says "I was lost and had no hope. If Peace of Mind was not beside me to help in this difficult process, things would have been very difficult. I am happy and looking for a bright future now in Gateshead"

4 - Parwen

"I feel thankful that Parwen's journey ended safely"

A journey that started with 32 people from Iraq ended with only 18 people as others were shot dead by Turkish border Police or couldn't survive the difficult journey to seek sanctuary.

Parwen is an asylum seeker who was referred to us by her CPN for emotional and practical support as she suffers from PTSD. Parwen had to take a dangerous journey through jungles and sea to reach safety. She witnessed people (within her group) dying because of long walks, thirst, hunger cold or because they were shot dead by the border Police. Parwen is a bright young girl who is hardworking and want to keep herself busy to avoid the flashbacks and who wants to become a useful part of the community she is living in. She showed an interest in volunteering with us; therefore, we offered her a volunteering role at Wednesday's drop in. Parwen proved herself to be reliable, hardworking and professional. We feel so relax when Parwen is around as we know this young girl will manage everything from welcoming new arrivals to setting up donations and making teas/coffees. The amazing aspect of her volunteering is that she walks nearly 40 minutes to come to the Church on Wednesday but doesn't want anything in return, not even travel reimbursement. "Parwen says when your life is a survival, it doesn't always give you choices and you have to be grateful for what you get."

This bright spark of a 24-year-old young girl could have been any of those 31 poor souls who never made it last week. Who never had a chance to seek sanctuary and to try survival. This makes us more grateful to think Parwen's journey ended safely, and we are proud to

have been able to welcome her and support her at our project
"Peace of Mind"

Nida Muzaffar
14/05/2022



2021 Financial Accounts

Peace of Mind CIO

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the period 10th June 2021 to 31st December 2021

Charity Number: 1194752

Registered Office:

Methodist Church
Whitehall Road
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE8 4LH

Date CIO Registered: 10th June 2021

Core purpose of CIO:

To prevent and relieve poverty and the needs of those granted refugee status, or those seeking asylum, and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Gateshead and Newcastle and the surrounding areas.

Trustees:

Nida Muzaffar – appointed 10th June 2021


Rifat Farrukh Siddiqi - appointed 10th June 2021

Tanveer Shuja - appointed 10th June 2021

Mahnoor Mansoor - appointed 7th December 2021

This report has been agreed at the Peace of Mind CIO board meeting on: 25th April 2022

It is signed by Nida Muzaffar on behalf of the board



25/04/2022

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Trustees' Report

The Trustees of the CIO, for the purposes the Charities Act, are pleased to present their first annual report, together with the financial statements of the charity for the period 10th June 2021 to 31st December 2021.

Objectives and Activities during the reporting period

The CIO aimed to support refugees and asylum seekers through the provision of services that cannot be supplied by other service providers. This includes:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Weekly advice and practical support sessions
- Training and educational sessions around Universal Credit and parenting in the UK
- Ending food poverty
- Promotion of volunteering (with the support of Gateshead Council)
- Community safety

In total 548 refugees and asylum seekers (from a population of 989 asylum seekers in the borough of Gateshead) were supported.

Financial Review

Income of £75,897 was received during the reporting period, of which £70,514 (93%) was restricted funds. After expenses of £47,186, a surplus of £28,711 was retained and carried forward to 2022.

Capital of £23,449 was introduced to the CIO from the previous unincorporated charity and Capital and Reserves at 31st December 2021 are £52,160.

Restricted funds of £41,976 were carried forward at the year end.

As at 31st December 2021 there were no debtors. There were creditors of £374.

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern and it is assumed that the Charity will continue for the foreseeable future.

Financial Statement – 10th June 2021 to 31st December 2021

Income	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Grants	70,514		70,514
Donations		5,383	5,383
	£70,514	£5,383	£75,897
Expenditure			
Beneficiary support	26,653		26,653
Volunteer Expenses		954	954
Premises costs	1,837		1,837
Facilitator Fees	17,415		17,415
Professional costs		327	327
Total Expenditure	£45,905	£1,281	£47,186
Surplus for 2021	£24,609	£4,102	£28,711

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2021

Net Assets

Cash at Bank	52,534	
Creditors at 31st Dec 2021	(374)	
		£52,160

Capital & Reserves

Capital introduced from		
Unincorporated charity	23,449	
Surplus for 2021	28,711	
		£52,160

Capital introduced from unincorporated charity includes £17,367 of restricted funds

Restricted Funds at 31st December 2021:

National Lottery	£9,952
Rothley Trust	£800
Virgin Money Foundation	£12,430
National Lottery/Places Called Home	£4,794
Local Giving	£500
Choose Love/Winter Grant	£5,000
Lush Wholeness Fund	£8,500
	£41,976

Notes to Financial Accounts**1. Accounting policies**

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost convention basis.

2. Debtors

There are no debtors at 31st December 2021.

3. Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the company has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

4. Employee numbers

There are no salaried employees. The CIO is run by volunteer trustees and staff.

5. Going concern

The CIO meets its day-today working capital requirements and has sufficient reserves to sustain itself into the future.

The Trustees declare that these financial statements represent a fair and honest account of the trading history of the CIO between 10th June 2021 and 31st December 2021.

Acknowledgements

The trustees would like to thank the following for their generous contributions during 2021.

Virgin Money Foundation

Gateshead Council

National Lottery

Lush Wholeness Fund

Choose Love

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Arnold Clark

Rothley Trust

And all those individuals and volunteers who supported the CIO



Independent Report on the Financial Records of Peace of Mind CIO

I have reviewed the financial accounts for Peace of Mind CIO for the year ended 31st December 2021. Peace of Mind was registered as CIO on 10th June 2021.

I confirm that the attached Financial Statement for 2021, which shows a net surplus of £28,711, generated from income of £70,514, is a true and fair record of the financial year ended 31st December 2021.

The Balance Sheet position as at 31st December 2021, showing total net assets (and equity) of £52,160, is a true representation of the financial position of the CIO at that date.

Based on the information to hand, I confirm that Peace of Mind CIO is a going concern and has sufficient on-going income and funds to meet its current and foreseeable financial commitments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Beavis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'B'.

David Beavis

Managing Director,
Northern Pinetree Trust Trading Ltd t/a
Pinetree Business Centre