

The Refugee Survival Trust only exists thanks to the generosity, help and support given by people in Scotland— individuals, churches, clubs, companies and schools. It is thanks to you that we are able to prevent so many vulnerable people from being destitute on the streets of Scotland. However, as harsh legislation and an often ineffective asylum system forces more and more people to rely on RST funding to survive, we need your help more than ever.

Please pass on this newsletter to friends, family and colleagues, and encourage them to support us—ask them to show their support by becoming a member or regular donor.



Refugee Survival Trust
19 Smith's Place
Edinburgh
EH6 8NT
Charity no: SC024328
Phone: 0131 554 6776
Email: info@rst.org.uk

Visit our website:
www.rst.org.uk

Please make a donation:

Last year, RST made grants of over £85,000 to prevent the destitution of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. RST only has limited funds, and desperately needs to raise more if it is to continue. Without RST, asylum seekers, refugees and their children would be left with no money for food, and often no accommodation. Please make a donation now to help us continue this essential work. **Every donation goes towards preventing destitution.** Thank you.

Title: Mr / Mrs / Ms / Other

Full Name:

Full address:

Postcode:

- I would like to make a donation of £ and enclose a cheque/postal order payable to the Refugee Survival Trust for this amount.
- I am a UK Taxpayer and would like the Refugee Survival Trust to reclaim tax on this and all donations hereafter (*please tick*)

NB This only applies if you currently pay tax on income or any savings you have. You must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations in the tax year.

Please return to: The Refugee Survival Trust, 19 Smith's Place, Edinburgh, EH6 8NT

About us

The Refugee Survival Trust (RST) works to prevent the destitution of refugees and asylum claimants in Scotland.

We achieve this through the provision of grants to those facing destitution and by working with the Scottish Refugee Council, British Red Cross, UK Border Agency (UKBA) and other agencies to tackle the causes of destitution.

Grants are only made by RST when someone has no other source of support. At a maximum of only £40 a week, grants are minimal.

As a small charity with only one part-time member of staff and four regular office volunteers, RST continues to punch above its weight. We are currently supporting an average of 100 destitute asylum claimants and refugees every month and last year, we prevented the destitution of 1,588 people.

Survival

The Newsletter of the Refugee Survival Trust



The new Immigration & Citizenship Bill

The Government proposes to replace all the current immigration acts – about 10 acts from the Immigration Act 1971 onwards – with one simplified act.



A partial draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill was published in July 2008, containing much of the content expected to be included in next year's Immigration and Citizenship Bill.

Concerns have been raised among those working with refugees and asylum seekers that the draft proposals will fail to assist and protect refugees.

Particular areas of concern are proposals within the bill that will:

- Increase barriers to refugees getting to the UK or making their claims;
- Extend the circumstances in which asylum seekers may be detained;
- Further reduce appeal rights for those whose claim has been refused;
- Extend the circumstances in which the UK excludes refugees from the...

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STOP PRESS! RST office move!

From the end of February, RST will be moving from its Smith's Place office to the Melting Pot in Rose Street. Our new address will be:

The Refugee Survival Trust, The Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR.
Telephone number to follow...

The new Immigration & Citizenship Bill

(continued from cover)

- ... protection of the 1951 Refugee Convention;
- Increase the powers to withdraw a person's refugee status in the UK;
- Delay the time by which refugees may apply for British citizenship or permanent residence.

increasingly punitive, and RST would strongly oppose any move to restrict access to support further. RST's past experience also shows that changes to the asylum support system can often lead to increased destitution as UKBA and other government agencies struggle to adapt. RST will be involved in influencing and lobbying on the Bill wherever possible, particularly within the area of asylum support. Updates on our efforts will be included on our website at www.rst.org.uk.

The bill, as published, is only partial and gives no information about the proposed support system for asylum claimants.

Over recent years, the asylum system has become

“The bill is only partial and gives no information about the proposed support system for asylum claimants.”

New partnership with the British Red Cross

RST has recently embarked on a new partnership with the British Red Cross. Although the we have worked closely with the Red Cross for a while, this new partnership will see the Red Cross making a monthly donation to RST's destitution fund, and RST and the Red Cross combining forces to

produce more detailed information and statistics to show the causes and extent of destitution among refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland. A report looking at trends in destitution over the past 5 years will be launched in January 2009. This report will identify the successes

in tackling destitution over this period and will recommend key steps that could be taken by UKBA and other organisations to prevent destitution in the future. A copy of this report will be sent to RST members in January 2009.



Your Questions Answered...

Is the credit crunch likely to affect RST?

Yes.

RST is highly dependent on income from major donors and trusts, and as the recession begins to take hold, income is likely to decrease significantly.

Trusts already have far less investment income and as a result, their grant-making capacity has been reduced. One of RST's committed trust donors has already told us that they are postponing their grant-making meeting this autumn and will be unlikely to be able to make a donation this year.

RST also relies heavily on the support of individual donors. We had seen a real growth in income donated by regular donors over the past 18 months, but in the wake of the credit crunch, we are already seeing our donors reduce their donations.

The next year is going to be a difficult year for RST!

Is it true that RST's funding runs out in 2009?

Yes and no – one key area of RST funding ends in September 2009.

For the past six years, RST's office, staff and volunteer costs have been largely met by the Big Lottery Fund. This funding allows RST to fundraise for grants, distribute grants and work with partners to tackle the causes of destitution. This funding comes to an end in September 2009, and RST is not eligible for apply for more Big Lottery funding.

RST must secure more funding to ensure it can continue these key activities. We are currently submitting funding applications to other funders to ensure our core costs are met after September 2009.

Send your questions to be answered in our Spring newsletter to:
Juliet Harris
juliet@rst.org.uk
or to
The Refugee Survival Trust
19 Smith's Place
Edinburgh EH6 8NT

RST's AGM

RST's first Glasgow-based AGM took place on 19th June - during Refugee Week - at Glasgow City Chambers.

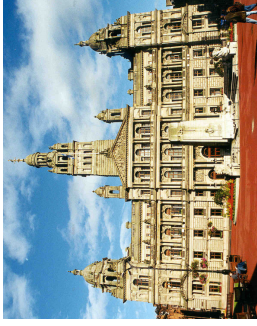
With over 30 members and supporters attending, it was the biggest RST AGM to date. Speakers included Bailie Ellen Hurcombe, the RST Chairman Laurie Naumann, alongside guests including Anne Russell of Jobcentre Plus and Bob Holman, who has been involved in research into asylum policy on behalf of the Centre for Social Justice.

The AGM focussed on the success of RST's work with its partners in tackling the destitution of new refugees. Laurie Naumann told the AGM that in the previous year, funding to support destitute refugees constituted 29% of all RST grant requests. They were at a peak in July 2007, when RST entered into joint work with Jobcentre Plus, the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and the

Border and Immigration Agency (now UKBA).

Ann Russell thanked RST for raising awareness of the problem and spoke about Jobcentre Plus's response. After work with various partners, Jobcentre Plus was able to ensure that its staff were properly trained and resourced to process applications for new refugees. Jobcentre Plus set up a dedicated team to deal with enquiries from new refugees, particularly those being granted refugee status through the 'legacy' case resolution exercise.

Juliet Harris, RST's Development Manager, said that this was an excellent example of how partnership work can be successful in reducing destitution, and that RST now receives very few requests for support from new refugees.



"With over 30 members and supporters attending, it was the biggest RST AGM to date."

In the News

The new immigration Minister



In the Guardian, Phil Woolas the Immigration Minister who was appointed in October, has claimed that "You can only stop it [immigration] being seen as a problem when you can convince the public you're in control of it, and that's my goal". Although he agrees that there are asylum seekers with genuine claims to protection in this country, he said "most asylum seekers, it appears, are economic migrants". He has also accused lawyers and voluntary organisations of exploiting the appeal system and undermining the law by assisting economic migrants in their attempts

to achieve refugee status. The Immigration Law Practitioners Association has pointed out that lawyers can only work within the law as it stands. Donna Covey of the Refugee Council describes the appeal system as a vital safety net for asylum seekers.

Mr Woolas states that he wants a mature debate about the immigration and wishes to heal the divisions in opinion and reassure the public. Yet his statements come at a time when applications for asylum have been consistently dropping since new controls were introduced in recent years so that in 2007 there were 24,000 applications for asylum compared with 76,000 in 2000 and only 20% of these applicants were granted refugee status and a further 11% granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave. Repatriation of refused asylum seekers has also increased recently even to unsettled countries such as Afghanistan and a spokesman for UKBA has

stated that "last year we removed a person every eight minutes".

"In 2007 there were 24,000 applications for asylum compared with 76,000 in 2000 and only 20% of these applicants were granted refugee status."

The Refugee Survival Trust strongly disputes Mr Woolas's comments. The criteria that someone seeking asylum in the UK has to meet is extremely narrow and decision making can still be poor. It is right that both lawyers and voluntary organisations want to ensure that asylum claimants are able to receive a fair hearing on their claim. Advice given to asylum claimants about the appeals process can play a vital role in ensuring that those with genuine protection needs are not sent back to face persecution.

RST - then and now...

Then...

RST provided just under £20,000 of grants per year when it was first established in 1996.

These grants were given towards clothes, travel and even setting up home. It was hoped that RST would be temporary measure, and that the need for the charity would decrease as government policies and better administrative procedures would prevent the destitution of refugees and asylum claimants.

Some of the grants given at this time included:

- £280 for essential living expenses was given in June 1997 to a Kosovan asylum seeker who had applied for asylum in November 1996 and had moved from London to Glasgow. He had poor English and was suffering from depression. He had

lost all his documents and needed to replace them.

- A grant of £100 was given to a Chechnyan asylum seeker aged 16 who was attending a High School in Edinburgh. He had no winter clothing and his headmaster had applied for money from elsewhere but that would not cover his needs.

- In December 1998, £50 was given to an Algerian asylum seeker who had heard that his brother was living in Aberdeen. They had not seen each other for several years and the grant was given for him to travel there and for accommodation for one night.

- In 1999 11 grants of £100 were given to Kosovans who had arrived in Glasgow with only the clothes they were wearing.



“He had no winter clothing.”

Now...

Rather than the need for RST decreasing, it has grown year by year. In 2007 RST provided over £85,000 of grants. Grants are now only given to support basic living needs: food, accommodation and sometimes travel. Grants given in recent months have included:

- In May 2008, £40 was given to an Iranian woman with two young children, who was temporarily moved by her accommodation provider. Because of the move she received no Emergency Support Token (EST) and, although SRC had requested new tokens to be delivered, two days later no action had been taken. It took another 5 days before her support was delivered.

- £40 was paid to a Chinese asylum seeker in July 2008 who had had no support for a month because the buzzer on the door of her block of flats was broken and support could not be delivered to her as a result.

- In October 2008, £40 was paid to an Afghani asylum seeker. The birth of her child was imminent and she had no money and support could not be ordered for her because she was in hospital.

- Two grants of £55 and £70 were given in July and October to an Iraqi man who was approved for Section 4 support and accommodation but was hospitalised. He then had to begin the Section 4 application process again from scratch.



“Her support could not be ordered for her because she was in hospital.”