

RST is a small charity that provides grants to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland.

These grants either alleviate poverty and destitution, or help refugees and asylum seekers to overcome obstacles in accessing educational and employment opportunities.

RST uses the information and experience gained from providing these grants to lobby for improved conditions for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland.

Stay in touch:

 [@RefugeeSurvival](https://twitter.com/RefugeeSurvival)

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www.rst.org.uk

Please read this newsletter and pass it on to spread the word about our work.



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Message from our co-chairs

We were honoured to be asked to take on the role of co-chairs after Philippa Bonella stepped down as interim chair. We would like to say thank you so much to Philippa for all the hard work and dedication she has given to RST, both as interim chair and during her five years on the board. Philippa led the organisation through some big changes and is very much missed.



Thanking Philippa at RST's AGM

Refugee and asylum issues were at the forefront of public attention in 2015. Some of the press coverage and political rhetoric has been worrying, but expressions of solidarity have been strong too—we have had many offers of support and donations from members of the public and organisations wishing to show that refugees are very much welcome in Scotland.

2015 was an eventful year for RST in many other ways:

- we saw a large change in our board (meet new board members on page 3), and said goodbye to our dedicated part-time administrator, Rob
- we launched our new flagship partnership DASS project (read more on page 4)
- we began our new destitution grant partnerships, and were delighted to be able to re-open our Access to Education and Employment Grants (read about the grants we have distributed on page 5)

We would like to welcome new members and volunteers who joined us in 2015, and thank everyone who continues to support us: we really would not be able to do the work we do without you. We expect 2016 to be an equally busy year. We are planning to work with partners to highlight the worrying trends and issues we are seeing, and through the year we will share more about the work we do with our members and supporters.

Kate Alexander and Ben White, co-chairs, RST.

RST AGM

Over 30 members and supporters attended our AGM on 19th October 2015, held at Edinburgh City Chambers.

The meeting was opened by the Rt Hon Donald Wilson, Lord Provost of Edinburgh and Patron of RST.



RST AGM audience

The report for the year 2014-15 was presented by Philippa Bonella, outgoing chair of RST, and the accounts for the year were presented by Gabriel Kaifala, treasurer of RST.

Representatives from two partner organisations gave heart felt and inspiring talks about their experiences working with RST:

Nancy Mungai, from Arise and Walk, told supporters about their experience of partnering with the RST-led Destitute Asylum Support Service (DASS) project. Arise and Walk began working with RST in May 2015 and provides temporary accommodation for destitute asylum seeking men in Glasgow. Nancy stated that she had never been so shocked realising what goes on in a destitute asylum

seeker's life.

Florence Dioka, from Central and West Integration Network (CWIN), talked about their experience of partnering with RST to distribute destitution grants. CWIN is one of nine integration networks throughout Glasgow and started a partnership with RST in February 2015. Along with the Scottish Refugee Council, Govan and Craigton Integration Network and St Rollox Community Outreach, we work together to ensure those who need RST's support have access to it.

Florence told RST supporters how the destitution grants have complimented CWIN's other work and that they have noticed an increase in referrals to their foodbank as a result.

We would like to thank Nancy and Florence for talking so passionately about their work, and for their ongoing support of RST.



Outgoing Chair Philippa Bonella and Treasurer Gabriel Kaifala sign the 2014-15 annual report and accounts.



We were very sad to say goodbye to five of our board members this year:

Patrick Ntawuyamara stood down in March to move to Zambia for work. **Anna Beale**, **Philippa Bonella**, **Kerrie Brooks** and **Vlad Valiente** stood down at the AGM in October. Philippa led the organisation for the last year, having been on the board since 2010! At the end of June we also said goodbye to our trusted administrator **Rob Whiteman**.

Two dedicated RST volunteers left this year: **Fiona Rennie** raised a fantastic amount with her half marathon before moving to Copenhagen for an MSc in refugee studies. **Katharine Weatherhead** ran our very successful T-shirt design competition before leaving for an MSc in refugee and forced migration studies.

We would like to thank everyone for their work and dedication to RST and wish them well in their next adventures. You will be greatly missed.

Welcome to RST's new board members

We welcomed five new board members to RST in the second half of 2015:



Jacqueline Farmer is currently a trainee auditor and holds an LL.M in Human Rights Law. Jacqueline volunteered with Right to Remain, writing legal blogs for their website.



Karin Goodwin is a freelance journalist, editor and trainer, specialising in social justice issues. She is managing editor of The Pavement, a small UK-wide homeless charity, and also writes for mainstream and trade press. She works with marginalised groups and small charities to provide media training and PR services. Karin previously worked as a media and communications officer for Scottish Refugee Council.



Agatha Kai Kai is a trained scientific academic and researcher and has spent decades working in British universities and lectured in veterinary preclinical sciences. She is interested in the issues and concerns of refugees and has experience of the hardships and needs of refugees as she is from a migrant family and her motherland had a civil war.



Tanjeel Maleque works as a solicitor in Hamilton and is in charge of the Court Department undertaking a variety of civil litigation and

criminal cases. He has significant experience in dealing with issues including immigration and judicial review. Tanjeel previously worked representing detainees at Dungavel House as well as undertaking immigration and asylum work.



Nicola Manison is a senior solicitor at the Equality and Human Rights Commission. She was previously a procurator fiscal depute and has litigation, regulatory and project management experience. She has experience in equality and diversity work and has volunteered in the refugee and asylum sector. Nicola holds an LL.M in International Law and her thesis was on Refugee Law.

Become an RST board member

RST is looking to recruit people to join our board. We are seeking applicants who have empathy with refugee and asylum issues, strategic vision, good independent judgement, and the ability to work as part of a diverse team. **We are actively looking for representatives from the Refugee community.** For more information please contact info@rst.org.uk.

DASS

The Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS) has been running for over six months and has worked with 91 clients to date. We are supporting people from 23 different countries and 45 per cent of our clients are women.

Our destitution adviser, Lindsay Reid, and casework supervisor, Esther Muchena - based at the Scottish Refugee Council - have helped DASS clients to find shelter, access medical services and obtain a regular source of food. They have also helped clients to apply for travel grants to Liverpool to submit fresh asylum claims and to collect evidence for Section 4 applications which, if successful, will restore accommodation and financial support (via an Azure Card).

To help DASS clients with their legal cases, Strathclyde Immigration Law Clinic volunteers have been gathering evidence for fresh asylum claims and referrals to the law clinic from solicitors are increasing. A new group of Law Clinic volunteers has been recruited to add to the 16 already in place. Our law clinic supervisor, Barbara Coll, has met 22 DASS clients, assessing their asylum cases

and giving them legal advice. Barbara has also been promoting the DASS project within the legal community so that lawyers working on fresh asylum claims can make use of law clinic resources.

Our accommodation partners, Glasgoh Night Shelter, Fasgadh and Arise and Walk, have provided shelter for over 30 DASS clients since the project launched last summer. A night shelter for destitute women is due to open soon which DASS clients will be able to use. DASS clients living in our shared flats and house have reported how much better they feel to have a place to call home and “a bed I can rest in.” Support staff and volunteers have reported a positive change in the physical and mental health of DASS clients in temporary accommodation. A number of male DASS clients are still waiting for a place in a shared flat so we are looking at ways to increase our accommodation for men. The DASS staff team is growing as we are recruiting an accommodation worker and a research and policy officer who will help with our campaigning work.

Access to education and employment grants

We were pleased to be able to re-open our A to EE fund this year, thanks to the efforts of our fundraising volunteers and support from our members.

RST is working with Scottish Refugee Council, Bridges Programmes and Freedom from Torture to provide grants to refugees and asylum seekers to help address some of the issues they face getting a job or going to college.



RST has provided 11 A to EE grants so far this year.

We have a limited fund and will have to close this again once all the money is committed—but we have a dedicated team of volunteers working on applying for further funding.

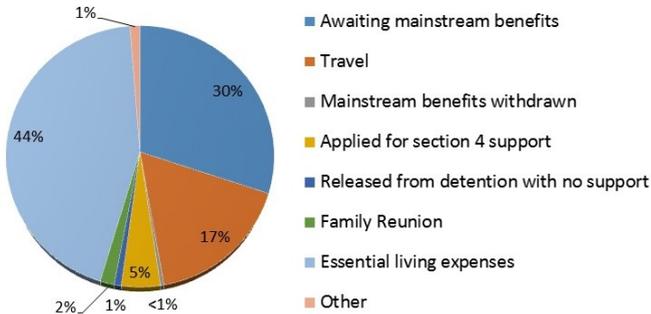
What would you like to hear more about in RST's newsletters?

Please let us know your thoughts and feedback.
email: info@rst.org.uk

Destitution grants

RST provided 485 destitution grants from April to October 2015, totalling £33,623.25. The average grant was £69.47. These supported 682 people and the average monthly spend was £4,803.32. The breakdown of reason for grant claims is shown in the graph below:

**Reasons for claiming RST grants
April - October 2015**



- ◇ 75% of lead applicants were male
- ◇ 52% (251) applicants were homeless at the time of the application.
- ◇ 34% of applicants were entitled to benefits but were having trouble accessing them.
- ◇ 16% of applicants had applied to RST for support before.

We provided 170 grants to refugees and 47 to people who were yet to claim asylum (39 of which were for travel). We provided 86 grants to people waiting for a decision on their asylum application and 92 to people who were in the process of submitting a new application.

Very worryingly, we supported 132 children in this period. Regardless of their asylum status, children should never be facing destitution in Scotland. RST intends to work with our partners to investigate this issue further.

The number of grants, and therefore the amount we spend, is increasing each month. While this shows the new partnerships are working well, and we are reaching more and more people in need of our support, it is also placing extra pressure on our funds. In October alone we provided over 100 grants, totalling more than £7,000.

Winter bus pass scheme

We are running our winter bus pass scheme again through the cold months, working in partnership with Destiny Angels, Govan and Craigton Integration Network (GCIN), Positive Action in Housing (PAiH) and St Rollox Community Outreach.

We have provided over 100 bus passes to date (12th January 2016). These will help destitute asylum seekers to make it to important appointments whatever the weather.

A day pass costs just £5.75, but not only means someone can go to see their doctor or solicitor, but can also visit friends and attend community events — helping them to feel less isolated. We have very limited funds for this project. Any support you can give will make a real difference to the people RST supports.



Volunteer news

2015 was a very busy year for RST volunteers and supporters. We would like to say thank you so much to everyone who has worked so hard to support RST this year. Without you we would not be able to provide the level of support that we do. Here is a snapshot of some of the volunteer news since our Spring newsletter:

Fundraising

In **September** RST supporter Phil Gallagher auctioned off his unique Waterboys t-shirts to raise funds for RST.

Stockbridge Colonies carol singers raised an amazing £500 in **December**.

Ceilidhs

Ceilidh Collective put on fantastic Ceilidhs in **March** and **November**, in support of RST and Reforesting Scotland.

Edinburgh University societies Amnesty and STAR organised a brilliant ceilidh in **December**, raising a phenomenal £1,600 for RST.



RST

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T-shirt design competition

RST Volunteer Katharine Weatherhead ran a T-shirt design competition in the summer to raise awareness of RST. Thanks to support from the Scottish Fairtrade Forum the winning design was printed on T-shirts that can now be worn by RST representatives at events.

Events

The Poetry Library hosted a poetry evening with RST on the theme of 'Journeys; reflecting the refugee experience' in **April**.

RST volunteers organised a fantastic tea party in an East Lothian mansion in support of RST in **August**, raising £490.

Another fantastic event 'Songs of Hope' in **November** was organised by Sarah Tolley, in support of RST.

Sponsored events

In **May** Fiona Rennie raised over £500 for RST with her half marathon.

In **June** Glasgow GRASS student group completed a sponsored 'GRASS routes' walk from Balloch to Glasgow.

In **August** the RST swim team participated in the Great Scottish Swim raising over £1,700 for our destitution and A to EE grants.



Ex-Scotland badminton player Angela Frazer took on challengers in singles matches in **November**, raising over £400 for RST in the process.

GRASS student group slept out on a cold

November night to raise awareness about asylum destitution and raised over £600 for RST.

Awareness raising

RST spoke about our work at the 'East Lothian Welcomes Refugees' event in **October**.

RST was on the panel of an Edinburgh University event 'What Can Scotland do?' in **December**.

Dates for the diary..

January 2016

Edinburgh musicians, Paper Rifles and Billy Liar have collaborated to produce an EP in support of refugees.

The proceeds of sales of the EP will be donated to RST.

The **EP launch** is on **Saturday 30th January**, and the EP will be available to buy online soon. Please check our website and social media for updates.



Valentine's Eve Ceilidh Saturday 13 February 2016



February 2016

Ceilidh Collective are once again supporting RST with their **Valentine Ceilidh** on **Saturday 13th February** at Edinburgh Steiner School, 60 Spylaw Road, Edinburgh EH10 5BR.

Tickets available from their website: www.ceilidhcollective.org or from New Leaf Co-op on Argyle Place, Edinburgh.

March 2016

To start the celebrations for RST's 20th birthday, and to show #refugeeswelcome, RST volunteer Sarah Tolley is presenting the **Big Welcome! Concert** on **Saturday 26th March** in the Corn Exchange, Haddington.

Tickets available from our website: www.rst.org.uk/events

Please contact Sarah at: fundraising_volunteer@rst.org.uk if you would like to help with organising and advertising this event.



Later in 2016

The Scottish Poetry Library and RST volunteer Sarah Tolley will be hosting a **Poetry Translation Workshop** in Edinburgh.

Look out for RST events in **The Scottish Refugee Festival** in June.

RST is turning 20!

This year is RST's 20th birthday. We are kicking off the celebrations with our Big Welcome! Concert in March. If you would like to help us celebrate our birthday please get in touch—whether you would like to help organise an event, or take part in a birthday sponsored event in September—such as Pedal for Scotland - connecting Edinburgh and Glasgow!



Look out for updates and further events on:

- ⇒ Our website: www.rst.org.uk
- ⇒ Twitter: @refugeesurvival
- ⇒ Facebook: Refugee Survival Trust





Refugee
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The Refugee Survival Trust only exists thanks to the generosity, help and support given by people in Scotland—individuals, churches, groups, companies and schools. It is thanks to you that we are able to prevent hundreds of vulnerable people from being destitute on the streets of Scotland. However, as harsh legislation and an often ineffective asylum system force 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 making a donation or by joining us. You can also donate online: www.rst.org.uk.

Please make a donation

Last year (2014-15), RST made grants of over £18,000 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. Thank you!

Title: Mr / Mrs / Ms / Other

Full Name:

Full address:

..... Postcode: Date:

Email: (Please give us your email address if you would like to receive occasional updates about our work by email)

- I would like to make a donation of £ and enclose a cheque/postal order payable to the Refugee Survival Trust for this amount.
- (please tick) I want all the donation I've made since 6th April 2010 and all donation in the future to qualify for **Gift Aid** until I notify you otherwise. To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount of tax that RST, and all other charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs you donate to, will claim in the tax year. RST will claim 25p of tax for every £1 you donate. Taxes such as VAT and council tax do not qualify

Please return to: **Refugee Survival Trust, Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4TB.**