

RST NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021 • ISSUE 33



REFUGEE SURVIVAL TRUST

Refugee Survival Trust is a small charity that provides practical support and services to people seeking asylum and refugees experiencing destitution and living in Scotland. We build connections and campaign for change.

STAY IN TOUCH

-  @RefugeeSurvivalTrust
-  @RefugeeSurvival
-  @RefugeeSurvival
-  @RefugeeSurvivalTrust

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

LETTER FROM THE CEO

In September 2020, RST gained our first Chief Executive - meet Elaine Cameron!

Elaine has held strategic leadership roles in the third sector for over a decade, previously working within the financial sector of private business. Motivated to bring her public values and ethics to life, Elaine is also a Non-Executive Board Member at NHS Golden Jubilee.

A firm believer in equality, she has championed the Living Wage as well as other initiatives to support and advance the opportunities available to vulnerable and marginalised groups. She firmly believes in the fundamental principles of Human Rights and Freedoms.

"I am delighted to be the first Chief Executive of Refugee Survival Trust, one of the longest established organisations in Scotland supporting refugees and people seeking asylum to live free of destitution, raise public awareness and influence policy to positively impact people's lives. I am privileged to be working with such a committed team.

Unfortunately, the current political and economic climate is disproportionately affecting the people we support, and I am deeply concerned about the UK Government's new plan for immigration, which I believe will lead to further unnecessary suffering. I am committed to working to change this and reach our vision of a welcoming, inclusive, safe Scotland for refugees and people seeking asylum, where all live free of destitution and have the means and opportunities to realise their full potential."

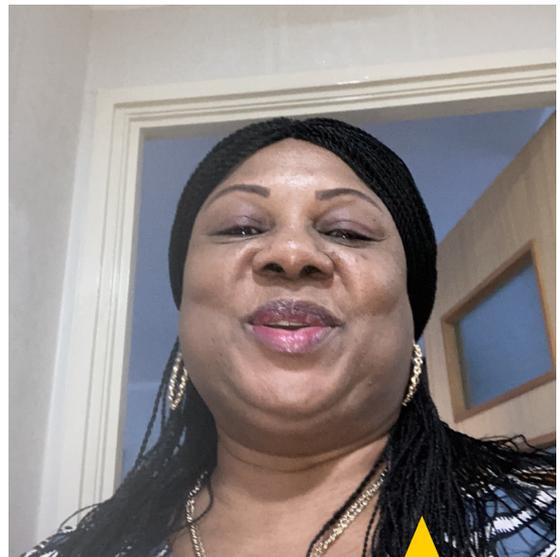
MEET OUR STAFF

We have a few new faces on the team here at RST. Get to know the folk behind the scenes!



LAWRENCE BICHENO

Lawrence happily joined RST in autumn of 2020 from a long-held interest in helping refugees and asylum seekers. He feels one of the best parts of working as a fundraiser is meeting caring and passionate people who have the drive to make a difference. Lawrence is proud of how generous our supporters are and of how many people are passionate about helping some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is a challenging time, especially for our beneficiaries, and there is a lot of work to do, but he is excited about the difference that we make and about all of our upcoming projects.



DODEE OLANGI

Having joined RST in 2016, Dodee works for RST and DASS as an Accommodation Worker. Her main duty is to provide practical support to the individuals accommodated in our shared flats who have been made homeless and have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Her role is vast and challenging, however, rewarding. Though she sometimes finds the language barrier challenging, Dodee enjoys the challenge of extending her communication skills. The best thing about her job is meeting people of different backgrounds and ethnicities.



ANDREW MCAINSH

After a few years working in adult learning and touring with his favourite band, Andrew joined RST in 2014 as an Administrator. This was an exciting time for us, with new partnerships being established to deliver our new Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS). As RST has grown over the years, so has his role, and he's now kept busy in the post of Finance and Administration Manager. Andrew has found that there's never a dull moment at RST and feels lucky to be working alongside a great team of colleagues who continue to support our service users through very challenging times.



CATH MCGEE

After a number of years in ESOL, adult literacies and adult learning management, Cath joined RST in 2014 as manager of the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS), a new partnership project designed to tackle the issue of long-term destitution among people claiming asylum in Scotland. From 2018, she also started to manage the temporary accommodation element of the project, which was a new direction for RST. Cath very much enjoys working with her colleagues at RST who are all very supportive and passionate about their work.

PARISA BARAMAKEH

Parisa joined the RST family in July 2019. Working in this supportive and friendly team while completing her Masters at Strathclyde University gave Parisa a great opportunity to practice her skills and use her knowledge. "Motivated and hard-working staff who always try to support each other in any situation makes me feel that I belong to such an unbreakable team with a purposeful future."



Many thanks to our Board of Trustees:

Kat Wilson (Co-chair)
Chris Murray (Co-chair)
Agatha Kai-kai
Eva Zuckschwerdt
Amy Westendarp
Monojit Chatterji
Ajmal Yamin

**Interested in
volunteering for RST or
becoming a Board
Member?**

**Get in touch with us
here:**

info@rst.org.uk



CHRISTINE MUSASA

Christine joined RST in August 2018 as an Intern and became a Befriender in November 2018. Inspired to be part of an organisation that promotes inclusion, she joined RST as a staff member in April 2019. Christine is a Community Development Practitioner who is passionate about the community and making a difference in people’s lives. As a Community Engagement Officer, Christine brings lived experience and has successfully worked on the Glasgow Welcome, Wee Welcome, and the Internship Project. Christine is a Board Member of the West of Scotland Housing Association.

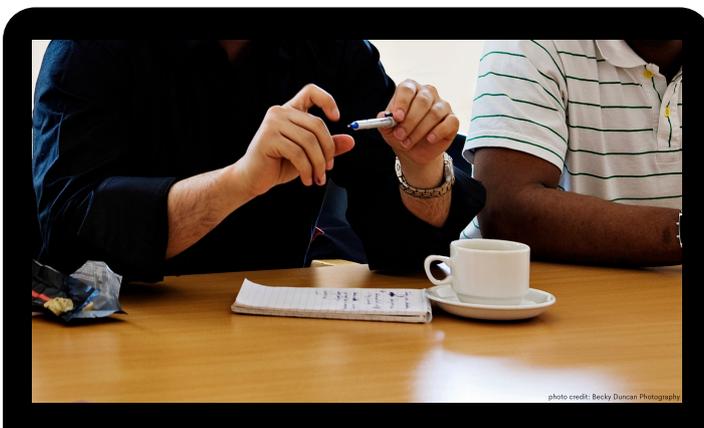


ERIN MCCLELLAND

Erin joined RST as a Database Volunteer in 2018 and is thrilled to have come aboard in 2020 as Grants Administrator, taking on the additional role of Social Media & Communications Officer in 2021. Her roles involve reviewing and approving grant applications as well as sharing RST's vital activities with our community. She believes that refugees and people seeking asylum should have the means and opportunities to pursue their happiness and purpose.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The Refugee Survival Trust Internship Programme is an eight-week programme supporting people seeking asylum and refugees to gain work experience in Scotland. The programme was designed in response to the need for practical office experience. It enables the Interns to build on their



existing skills, to learn new skills, to establish working relationships and to practice and improve their English language skills as part of their integration.

This year, due to the pandemic, the programme has been delivered online with the support of a work coach, our Community Engagement Officer, Christine Musasa, and RST staff. Four Interns have completed their internship and received their certificates.

DASS RESEARCH & UPDATE



The Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS) has adjusted well to COVID restrictions over the last year. Face-to-face advocacy and legal advice switched to telephone and Zoom-based support and legal cases have been able to proceed, albeit at a slower rate. We have had 3 successful grants of asylum from Law Clinic-based cases over the last couple of months.

A DASS emergency shelter run by Safe in Scotland (formerly Glasgow Night Shelter) made use of a city centre hotel during the lockdown period and has since moved into new accommodation providing single rooms and ensuite facilities. Three people have moved on from DASS temporary accommodation (our shared community-based flats), and we have welcomed two new guests. We have commissioned a piece of research in partnership with British Red Cross asking how destitution can be prevented. Four researchers have been recruited, all of whom have direct experience of the asylum system. They are working hard interviewing people and collating their testimony. We plan to launch the final research report at the end of August. The DASS project is due to finish at the end of September 2021. RST is currently fundraising to enable the temporary accommodation service to continue.

COMMUNITY NEWS



KENMURE STREET PROTEST

On 13 May, community members in Glasgow Southside gathered by the thousands to protest a hostile deportation on Eid of two people seeking asylum. It was successful, and both men were released, the crowds chanting, "These Are Our Neighbours - Let Them Go!"

We condemn Home Office dawn raids and affirm human rights-based immigration policy.



#FreedomToCrawl

In Glasgow, 20+ mothers & babies are living in cramped bedsits run by Mears on behalf of the Home Office. RST has joined the campaign to close the unit and end all institutional accommodation for people seeking asylum. www.freedomtocrawl.org



ASPEN Card Blackout

In May, avoidable operational errors in the Home Office ASPEN card provider transition resulted in thousands losing their financial support for weeks - forcing vulnerable families into destitution. RST provided emergency grants to 46



New Immigration Plan

The UK Government have published their **New Plan for Immigration**, and we have published our response to the inflammatory and divisive document in our latest blog. Click below read more on speaking out against these dangerous plans.

UPDATES TO GRANTS PROGRAMMES

DESTITUTION GRANTS



For the first time in recent years, RST has increased our grant amounts. We have more than doubled the maximum grant amount from £36/week per person to £60/week per person, a **67% increase** from the former rates.

Chief Executive Elaine Cameron comments, "We have reviewed models and recommendations on living income levels, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation income standards. We believe the current UK Government support rates for people seeking asylum are too low for a person to live on and will continue to campaign for an increase on these grounds."



BUMP & BABY BUS PASS

Our BBBP programme has gone digital! Antenatal and newly postpartum refugees and people seeking asylum who've been granted a 10-week bus pass can now access this via the First Bus app. This will protect the tickets from being damaged or lost in the post.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

We have doubled our maximum grant allowance from £150 to £300. This will allow for our second significant change to the AtoEE programme - we now accept applications requesting laptops and digital/IT equipment! The pandemic has created a global migration to a digital work and education environment, and we wish to respond to this and support our service users appropriately.



TRAVEL GRANTS

With restrictions slowly lifting throughout the UK, more in-person appointments have become necessary for our grant recipients, and we have responded to this through our travel grants programme, with the addition of a specific Glasgow > Edinburgh grant of **£20**, which includes food provisions.



BRITISH RED CROSS HARDSHIP FUND

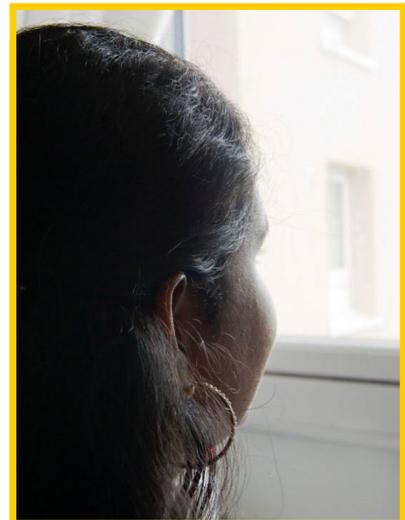
From August 2020 to the end of June 2021, RST worked with the British Red Cross to provide grants through their Hardship Fund to refugees and people seeking asylum. This partnership led to RST approving 219 grants, resulting in £43,680 provided from BRC to people and families seeking asylum. 133 of those recipients are experiencing homelessness, and 31 children were supported through this work.



RST 2020 COVID EMERGENCY AID FUND

Between 10th of May and the end of July 2020, 731 grants were approved as part of an Emergency Aid partnership between RST and African Challenge. RST processed 571 of these grants, and 979 people, including 191 children, were ultimately supported by the fund in total. The partnership culminated in distributing £73,616.40 in total to recipients during this time, with £49,299.20 of that supplied by RST. Thank you to our supporters!

		Total applications	Primary applicants	Number of people who benefitted	Value
Living Expenses	RST	552	309	572	£33,900.0
	AC	154	125	404	£15,100.0
	Total	706	434	976	£49,000.0
Travel	RST	500	285	460	£7,519.2
	AC	154	125	404	£3,407.2
	Total	654	410	864	£10,926.4
Phone top up	RST	522	301	359	£6,480.0
	AC	154	125	208	£2,730.0
	Total	676	426	567	£9,210.0
Fuel top up	RST	70	34	97	£1,400.0
	AC	154	125	404	£3,080.0
	Total	224	159	501	£4,480.0
Total Value					£73,616.4



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



RST raises most of its funding from Trusts and Foundations and recently we have received large grants from the Oak Foundation, Nationwide Community Grants, the Albert Hunt Trust and the Folio Trust. Our individual giving plays no small part, however, in our overall fundraising. Individual one-off or monthly donors, along with small community groups, make up a large part of our donations, and we couldn't offer the practical support we do without them (and you!).

Although the pandemic has been difficult for all, the people we support have been hit disproportionately hard, and our funding from the community has taken a hit as well, as being unable to put on in-person events has reduced our reach. Thank you, dear Member, for your continued interest and

involvement in RST. Just being a member is a valuable contribution as it shows prospective funders that we have a strong, supportive community.

Other ways to support include:

- Visit our [Local Giving](#) page and make a donation.
- Birthday coming up? Host a fundraising campaign on Local Giving for RST!
- Use [Amazon Smile](#) to shop so that .5% of your eligible purchases go to RST
- Support RST through the [Glasgow Community Lottery](#) - tickets are only £1 and 50% goes straight to RST (and there's a chance to win £25,000!)
- Some choose to leave a gift to RST in their will upon consulting their solicitor.

Free ways to support RST:

- Follow us on social media! We share important community updates, campaigns and donation drives across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Sharing our content on your own personal accounts makes a HUGE difference to spreading information about the asylum system, the refugee community and about opportunities for more donations.

We are always blown away by the generosity of our supporters. Thank you again, from the Team at RST.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

7th October 2021 2pm

RST
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING
2021

RST

Refugee
Survival
Trust

We rely on help given by our supporters.

Thanks to you we are able to help hundreds of vulnerable and destitute people each year.

COVID-19 has made things harder.

On top of increasingly hostile legislation and an often ineffective asylum system, our grant recipients have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, forcing many more into destitution and relying on emergency grants like ours to survive. We need your help more than ever.

Encourage friends and family to join RST as a member.

Pass on this newsletter and ask them to make a donation or volunteer their time! Each member we gain helps us in our fundraising applications.

New ideas?

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you'd like to organise an event, collect sponsorship or volunteer!

Refugee Survival Trust

Our offices remain closed at the moment, so please contact us at
info@rst.org.uk
www.rst.org.uk

Charity no: SC02438

