

RST NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022 • ISSUE 35





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

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

LETTER FROM THE CEO

STATEMENT ON THE NATIONALITY AND BORDERS BILL

Sadly, The UK Nationality and Borders Bill has been passed by parliament, without taking on board the mindful, practical objections and proposed amendments from the House of Lords. The Bill will become law.

I have no wiser words nor sentiment than the (UNHCR) statement, "The Refugee Convention is as relevant as ever and continues to uphold the rights of refugees. Even after the Nationality and Borders Bill becomes law, UNHCR will continue to advocate against this damaging legislation and to protect refugee rights in the UK and around the world. Refugees should not be criminalised for seeking sanctuary in the UK. UNHCR will continue to argue for the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless people, regardless of how they arrive. Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right."

This change to UK law will have far reaching, long term consequences for every ordinary person who faces the extraordinary circumstance of having to flee their home country to safety elsewhere.

This is a historic moment for the UK, whose Government has vigorously pushed ahead with legislation that will not serve nor help to uphold the rights of refugees around the world; however, over 200 UK charities will.

With resolve to fight this,
Elaine Cameron

RST ON UKRAINE



STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT HORRIFYING SITUATION IN UKRAINE

Since 24th February 2022 it is estimated that 5.1M people have been displaced and fled Ukraine, with a further 7.7M displaced and/or trapped inside Ukraine. Poland has seen the highest number of Ukrainian refugees at an estimated 3.5 million, of which 94% are women and children. The Home Office put the number of Ukrainians who had arrived in the UK as of 29th May 2022 at 65,700 – equivalent to about 10 refugees per 10,000 population. The UK has taken in fewer Ukrainian refugees per capita than all but one of 28 European countries, per a Guardian analysis of official figures from across the continent. While countries like Poland are the entry points for refugees, it's worth noting that many refugees ultimately make their way to many other places throughout Europe and the world. For example, Germany has accepted 780,000 Ukrainian refugees since the start of the war, despite not sharing a border directly with Ukraine.


The announcement by the UK Government of extending the visas of Ukrainians already in the UK, visas for dependants of British nationals and visa fee waivers is simply not anywhere close to enough. The UK Government is ill prepared to meet its responsibilities with the scale of need of displaced people and must go much further and faster. We call on the UK government to: –

- Remove all visa requirements for Ukrainians to fly to the UK, as Ireland has announced. And, as European Union countries are planning, to offer immediate ways to get temporary protection status without requiring people to claim asylum.
- Provide clarity on what the official routes to safety to the UK are for Ukrainians.
- To put in place a long called for sustained refugee resettlement system that plans for a minimum of 10,000 refugees to be resettled each year in the UK.
- To scrap the Nationality & Borders Bill, which for Ukrainians who make their own way to the UK would criminalise them and remove the right to claim asylum and replace it with a humanitarian approach. (The Scottish & Welsh Governments have declined to give legislative consent to this Bill).

Words are not enough; we need the UK Government to match the public's commitment to refugees to live in safety. Thank you to Social Good Connect for putting this together. Ways you can help the Ukrainian people.

NATIONALITY AND BORDERS BILL

TIMELINE

- 
- 24 Mar 2021 - New Plan for Immigration published
 - 9 Jul 2021 - Nationality and Borders Bill, the "cornerstone" of the UK's New Plan for Immigration, first introduced to the House of Commons
 - 19 Jul 2021 - second reading of the Nationality and Border Bill, the first opportunity for MPs to debate the main principles of the Bill.
 - 8 Dec 2021 - third reading of the Bill, the final chance for the Commons to debate its contents
 - 9 Dec 2021 - first reading of the Bill in the House of Lords, a formal introduction with no debate
 - 5 Jan 2022 - Bill debated by the Lords
 - 14 Mar 2022 - third reading of the Bill in the House of Lords, amendments still possible at this stage
 - 22 Mar 2022 - Programme Motion of the Nationality and Borders Bill
 - 27 Apr 2022 - Consideration of Lords Message. Notably, Labour MP Stephen Kinnock informs,
"the Bill is emblematic of the Home Secretary's tendency to make the challenges of our asylum seeker system even harder to overcome. She claims that the Rwanda offloading plan will solve the challenges that our immigration system faces, but her Minister for Refugees dismissed the plan as impossible just a week before the announcement, saying:

"If it's happening in the Home Office, on the same corridor that I'm in, they haven't told me about it...I'm having difficulty enough getting them from Ukraine to our country. There's no possibility of sending them to Rwanda."
● 28 Apr 2022 - Royal Assent of the cruel and ineffective Nationality and Border Bill, making the Bill an Act of Parliament

NATIONALITY AND BORDERS BILL

Scotland's View: UK Nationality and Borders Bill

An excerpt from a letter written by MSPs Paul Sweeney, Mercedes Villalba and Pam Duncan-Glancy (Glasgow and North East Scotland Regions) dated 7 December 2021 reads:

"...the proposed Bill will do nothing to alleviate the suffering at the UK Border. It won't help create safe routes for asylum seekers - the vast majority of whom have valid grounds for claiming asylum- so they don't feel the need to risk their lives crossing the Channel.

It won't offer an option to regularise their status to those who find themselves with lapsed papers but will push them further into exploitation. It won't help families who can't afford the prohibitive costs of passports and visas, including armed forces personnel from the Commonwealth. It won't offer security to EEA nationals relying on an entirely digital immigration status. In fact, it will further criminalise migration, and hang the theatre of citizenship removal over naturalised British people in clear violation of international human rights agreements and basic principles of decency and fairness.

Ultimately, the Nationality and Borders Bill is as cruel as it is impractical. It does little to address the urgency of people risking their lives to reach safety in the UK. It also contradicts the shifting public opinion on immigration, which is moving towards a more positive outlook. Despite migration policy being reserved to the UK Parliament under Schedule 5 of the 1998 Scotland Act, we nonetheless feel the urgent need to use our parliamentary platform on behalf of our constituents to seek for the rights of all those living in Scotland and across the UK who will be harmed by this legislation, and to speak on behalf of the majority of Scots who want a rational and compassionate approach to immigration policy."

RST have already issued a statement opposing the Bill and intend to continue to raise awareness and campaign against the Bill.

We continue to encourage you to use social media, your networks and your MPs to raise your concerns about this inhumane Bill.

MEET OUR STAFF

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



LINDA CHAU

Finance Officer Linda has previously worked with Scottish Refugee Council for 6 years before moving onto the Finance team at the University of Strathclyde in the Student Funding team. She has worked directly with people; helping them to gain a better student experience. Linda hopes that by working with RST, together we can help refugees have a better life experience.

Outside of work, Linda is a mother to two teenage boys and has a grey tabby cat. She loves reading, going for long walks and catching up with friends over coffee.



AREF GHORBANI

Our Destitution Coordinator Aref is an Iranian trained classical musician and came to Scotland as a refugee in 2018. He has MSc in Animal Genetics and Breeding from Iran but leaving his home country and becoming a refugee in Europe has changed his life. He has been working within the refugee sector since 2016 in Greece and after arriving in Scotland continued work in various refugee projects, along with working for the Scottish Refugee Council as an advisor.

Aref has recently finished his studies in Global Migrations and Social Justice from University of Glasgow and is also a facilitator of Musicians in Exile, a project that brings together musicians with lived refugee experience in Govan.

In 2019, he received the National Diversity Award and EPIC Awards of Scotland.

Aref is also the Founder and Director of artist network Iranian Scottish Community, a community interest company aiming to support Iranian artists and those who have made Scotland their home with integration through art.

You may have spotted Aref performing in numerous festivals, including Refugee Festival Scotland, COP26, Edinburgh Fringe, MELA Festival and SOLAS Festival and you can experience his musicianship this summer within the Edinburgh International Festival in VOCAL: a performance of Persian classical and folk music interspersed with conversation around the censorship of music and cultural expression.

COMMUNITY NEWS

TRAVEL GRANTS

With restrictions lifted 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 – which was bolstered by our travel-themed Winter Giving Appeal.



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 are winding down this fund in line with current need and our strategic aims to alleviate and prevent destitution and homelessness. The fund has helped more than 300 people over the years to access or continue education and employment in Scotland.

RST continues to advocate for this type of support as a crucial aspect to building a new life in Scotland. However, there are now a range of other supports and funds, which may not have been in place when RST began our grants, in particular the Scottish Government New Scots strategy and funding, Colleges and Universities providing more support and specific refugee organisations with dedicated education and employment services. Therefore, we feel it is an appropriate time to focus our resources on our other destitution work. In particular we intend to offer more travel support, this reflects the overwhelming need and requests for support from the people we work with. As well as providing support for local and asylum related travel and our Bump & Baby Bus Passes we have joined the campaign to extend Scottish National Concessionary Travel to people seeking asylum and refugees.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Refugee Survival Trust has been supporting refugees and people seeking asylum who face destitution and homelessness in Scotland since 1996. Our name, mission, vision, branding and logo were created 26 years ago; since then our work has evolved to meet need. We work in an uncertain and ever-changing area, externally, Government policy, legislation and the Asylum system are continually changing, which impacts the people we support and our work. In January 2020 a special resolution was passed at our Annual General Meeting to update our objectives, since then things have changed more than anyone could have predicted. The Pandemic, the Nationality & Borders Bill, the Rwanda Plan and Brexit are just some of the major changes over the last two years. We have, during this time also seen changes to the Board of Trustees, staff team and we employed our first Chief Executive in September 2020.

During the pandemic we had no alternative than to change our working practices. This was a difficult time for everyone; however, some great things happened. We innovated; we have kept the digital systems we introduced during the pandemic because we can get financial support (and even bus tickets) to people more quickly and more effectively and importantly the people we support say these methods are dignified and gives them more choice. Our team work mainly at home now; we have internally re-organised and are building our volunteer base again. Funding is a significant challenge and we must be mindful of what funders are doing and of how their policies and practices have changed. In light of significant change, the beginning of 2022 seemed an appropriate time to work with a consultant, an expert in strategy, communications, branding and website design to ensure that we are doing everything we can to best support people moving forward.

We have been working with Sarah Joynt-Bowe of Prosocial Strat for several months now. Sarah has over 20 years' experience in branding and communications and has worked with several organisation supporting refugees in recent years. This process has confirmed the need to make some changes and updates to our strategy, branding and communications, and this includes a name change. Therefore, we will be proposing a special resolution at our 2022 Annual General Meeting, date yet to be set, to change our name and update our vision, mission and value.

We will send further information to members in the coming months and hope that you will support our new plan.

BREATHING SPACE

BREATHING SPACE is a unique accommodation service

It prevents people becoming destitute by providing safe temporary accommodation and legal advice to people while they work to resolve their situation.



Breathing Space fills a crucial support gap for people seeking safety in Scotland through the asylum system who have become homeless and have lost their entitlement to support.

This accommodation service prevents people becoming destitute by providing safe temporary accommodation and legal advice to people while they work to resolve their situation. Breathing Space developed from the accommodation provided as part of the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS). DASS was a Refugee Survival Trust-led partnership project that ran from 2014 to 2021. In designing our new service, we have listened to feedback from former service users who told us that what they most valued was the ongoing support of staff, along with the weekly cash allowance and bus pass, which gave them the freedom to live an independent life despite their circumstances.

People seeking asylum in the UK have very few entitlements over and above what is provided by the Home Office. If these entitlements are lost or suspended, even for a short period, people are left completely destitute, with no home and no income.

BREATHING SPACE



It's hard for us to imagine how we would get by in times of trouble if we did not have the safety net of our benefits system and homelessness services, but people living in Scotland who are seeking asylum cannot access these services so if things go wrong, they have nowhere to turn.

Breathing Space provides this crucial safety net when it is most needed.

Refugee Survival Trust is grateful for the support of The Robertson Trust, Nationwide Community Grants, the Steele Foundation and the kindness and generosity of individual supporters, through which we are able to provide this much needed service.

We look forward to working with other organisations in the refugee sector including Scottish Refugee Council, British Red Cross, Govan Community Project, Central and West Integration Network, Ubuntu and Amina along with our legal partner, Strathclyde University Law Clinic.

Please see [here](#) for application criteria for referrers and more information on the service.

**Many thanks to our
Board of Trustees:**

**Kat Wilson
(Co-chair)**

**Chris Murray
(Co-chair)**

Agatha Kai-kai

Amy Westendarp

Monojit Chatterji

Ajmal Yamin

Dr. Emily Finer

Ronnie Tagwireyi

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

Get in touch with us here:

info@rst.org.uk

Board members like Monojit and Ronnie are invaluable to Refugee Survival Trust. They offer good governance, financial and strategic planning and oversight along with their own passions for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Britain. They dedicate their time to support the vision and mission of RST.

Trustee Profile

Ronnie



Born in Zimbabwe, Ronnie has a passion for excellent customer service having worked in customer service roles at BT and other companies. He brings an essential perspective to RST having lived experience of the UK asylum system.

Trustee Profile

Professor Monojit Chatterji




Bye-Fellow and Director of Studies in Economics at Fitzwilliam College. His research interests are focused mainly on unemployment, growth economics, trade unions and inflation. Born in Bombay, Professor Chatterji has academic appointments at several US, Indian and Australian universities.

RST GIVING







We recently ran a Winter Giving Campaign that culminated in £1,751.30 raised, which provided bus passes to refugees and people seeking asylum in Glasgow.


Did you know our donation hosting site, Local Giving, allows individual users to host their own giving campaigns? You can host your own fundraisers for RST and share them with your network, just like Michelle Lowe did here with her Charity Prize Draw for handmade pottery.



Find a charity, fundraiser or appeal



JoinLogin




CHARITY PRIZE DRAW
for Refugee Survival Trust

Michelle Lowe Pottery - Charity Prize Draw
by Michelle Lowe

RAISED	DONORS	TARGET	
£585.00	35	£250	234%

Fundraising ended

Photos



About

As part of The Great Charity Pot and Print Fair I will be offering a large hawthorn berry teapot to be won in a charity prize draw to help raise money for Refugee Survival Trust (RST). This is a charity close to my heart as I have seen first hand the impact that this brilliant small charity makes in challenging refugee desitution in Scotland and supporting individuals seeking asylum here.

To enter you can make a donation (of any size) to RST or you can enter for free by filling in the form below.

[Read more](#)

Donations

Lyn Lowe Top Donor ★ 18 Feb, 2022

Such a good cause - well done Mich . What a prize . I know the days that go into making a teapot xx

£50.00

Michelle's fundraising stats

Online donations:	£585.00
Match funding:	£0.00
Raised offline:	£0.00

Share

Tweet

GIFT AID DECLARATION



WE NOW PLAN TO EMAIL OUR DONORS TO COMPLETE A GIFT AID DECLARATION!

Time to make sure that our home addresses are correct and re-confirm that we continue to pay enough income or capital gains tax to cover the Gift Aid on donations.

OUR SUMMER 2022 CAMPAIGN IS LIVE

[Click here](#) to learn more and to donate!



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



RST raises most of its funding from Trusts and Foundations and recently we have received large grants from The Robertson Trust and Steel Charitable 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. Thank you, dear Member, for your continued interest and 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.

SAVE THE DATES



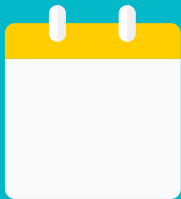
19 June

STAND AGAINST THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants shares, "2022 marks 10 years of the Hostile Environment.

From the 'Go Home' vans, to passport checks in hospitals and workplaces, to the Windrush scandal; the Government has created a climate of fear and hostility for migrants in the UK.

These rules have caused harm and pitted communities against each other – but they've also sparked a decade of resistance and resilience."



16 - 26 June

REFUGEE FESTIVAL SCOTLAND

People from refugee backgrounds make a huge contribution to life in Scotland and we believe this is something worth celebrating.

Refugee Festival Scotland takes place every year in the lead up to World Refugee Day, on 20 June. Each event helps to shine a light on the cultural richness and diversity of our communities. It is a celebration of the food and drink, music and poetry, art, dance, language and ideas that people bring with them when they settle in Scotland.

RST is participating in our own event this year as part of the festival! This will be on 24th June:
Celebrating the Positives - Refugee Festival Scotland

[Link here for more](#)



Thank you for reading our latest newsletter and for continuing to be a valued member of Refugee Survival Trust.

Don't forget to share with your network and follow us along on social media for more updates to our work in the community.

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

