

**RST**

Refugee  
Survival  
Trust

# ***ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT***

**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-2022**

Report of the Directors



# ***OVERVIEW***

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Refugee Survival Trust (RST) Board members, who are the directors and trustees of the charitable company, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

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# VISION & MISSION

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The **vision** of RST is 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.

RST's **mission** is to provide refugees and people seeking asylum with practical support when it is most needed, build connections between people and use what we learn to campaign for change.

# OUR VALUES

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Refugee Survival Trust is committed to:

- promoting equality, social justice and social inclusion;
- upholding human rights;
- always behaving with honesty and integrity.

To uphold these values, we will act in ways that:



achieve high standards of effective professional practice and proper evaluation of our work;



are adaptable and innovative in response to need;



ensure that our processes are transparent and properly evaluated;



work in partnership with any individual or organisation operating in the same field sharing complementary aims and values.

# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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This annual report provides an overview of the work of RST in the most challenging of times. Covid-19 has amplified inequalities that were already present in our society. The UK Government's Nationality & Borders Bill presents a significant negative change in the asylum policy, and we are deeply concerned about the harmful effects of this policy.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has worked so hard during this time to support some of the most vulnerable people in society.

RST has had to significantly change the way it operates in response to Covid-19. Our work has moved away from physical meetings and the office to make more use of virtual meeting with colleagues. We have refocused our activities to help us better understand and manage the implications of Covid-19 on our work and on the people we support. We introduced safe, digital and contactless methods of getting support to people quickly, and this has worked extremely well. We intend to continue with these methods and extend them to include digital bus passes.

We reviewed our strategy during 2021 to reflect these changing circumstances and will be releasing our strategic plan for 2022-2025 later in 2022. We have listened to stakeholders, partners, service users and have carefully considered what our focus over the next few years should be. Key features of our future work will continue to be the prevention and alleviation of destitution and homelessness, to highlight inequalities and to advocate for a statutory safety net in Scotland.

Since the beginning of 2022, we have been working with Sarah Joynt-Bowes of Prosocial Strat to ensure that we are doing everything we can to best support people moving forward. 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 to change our name and update our vision, mission and values. Soon after we will launch our new, accessible website.

# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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We will continue to oppose the UK Government's Nationality and Borders Bill based on the need to protect fundamental human rights aligned to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) 1950, and the 1951 Convention guaranteeing refugees' human rights and its 1967 Protocol. We will continue to collaborate and campaign to influence positive asylum policy change, all with a clear focus of the impact of the pandemic on communities and individuals.

## ***TEAM DEVELOPMENT***

Our small, dedicated team changed and was strengthened throughout the year by reviewing roles and responsibilities, recruiting a Fundraiser, Destitution Coordinator and a Finance Officer. We welcome this organisational development and thank everyone who contributed. Eva Zuckschwerdt, trustee, resigned on 14th December 2021 to pursue exciting new opportunities in another country. I would like to thank her for her contribution during her time as Trustee, particularly for her work on our risk management system.

We added to our Board skills and experience, and welcomed three new trustees: Dr Emily Finer, Shan Saba and Ronnie Tagwireyi. I would like to thank Trustees for volunteering their time and contribution.

### **Directors (Trustees) at the date of this report:**

Dr. Emily Finer - Joined 30/09/2021  
Shan Saba - Joined 19/12/2021  
Ronnie Tagwireyi - Joined 27/10/2021  
Monojit Chatterji  
Agatha Kai Kai  
Amy Westendarp  
Ajmal Yamin, Treasurer  
Christopher Murray, Co-Chair  
Katrina Wilson, Co-Chair

# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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## ***ACTIVITY***

Our Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS) project ended in November 2021, with the end of multi-year funding from the Oak Foundation. The end of this significant multi-year grant presents continuing challenges for RST; however, we were able to secure funding to continue to deliver necessary temporary community-based accommodation, with the development of our new accommodation project, Breathing Space.

The Fair Way Scotland Partnership received funding for its first phase of delivery. RST is a partner, along with Safe in Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council, Simon Community Scotland, Turning Point Scotland, Homelessness Network Scotland, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Heriot Watt University. We hope that this pilot partnership will grow from strength to strength and provide an evidenced solution to asylum destitution and homelessness.

We continued to advocate and campaign for positive change on areas such as the Right to Work campaign and to influence UK and Scottish Government Policy in relation to providing adequate support for people seeking asylum and refugees during the public health crisis.

We participated in the consultation on the UK Government's Nationality & Borders Bill. Unfortunately, much of what we and other organisations said was not included in the Bill. We are extremely concerned that the Bill will have a devastating effect on the people we support, potentially pushing more people into destitution in Scotland. We will provide full details in next year's 2022-23 annual report.

We worked with Pro Bono Economics to produce an analysis of the economic and personal costs of poor Home Office decision making. "An Unstable Environment: The economic case for getting asylum decisions right the first time" was published in September 2021 and was accompanied by an article in the Independent.

In October 2021, in partnership with British Red Cross, we published "How Will We Survive: Steps to Preventing Destitution in the Asylum System". This peer research led-report examined the causes of asylum-related destitution, with peer researchers actively involved in interviewing participants, designing the surveys and in the analysis of findings.

# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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## ***WAYS WE SUPPORT***

### **Destitution Grants**

2021-22 was another unprecedented year. Our Destitution Grants continued; however, the nature and levels of delivery changed. Changes to government policy around the provision of statutory services due to Covid-19, on health grounds continued, for many people who previously would have been ineligible for support. We continued to develop digital, contactless systems to distribute our grant aid, developing a safe and fast system of getting financial assistance to people in need. We increased our individual grant levels to reflect the increases in cost of living and the realities of destitution in 2021.

### **DASS**

This year saw the final months of the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS), which came to an end in November 2021. DASS has been operational for almost seven years, working with people seeking asylum who are homeless and living without financial support. DASS continued to operate during lockdown with legal support, casework and advocacy moving to telephone-based services. Night shelter and temporary accommodation services continued to operate and adjusted in line with public health guidelines. Referrals to DASS dropped during this period, as people who would otherwise be street homeless and destitute continued to be provided with temporary Home Office accommodation on public health grounds. This arrangement has now come to an end and the Home Office is seeking permission to restart "cessations", moving people whose asylum appeals have been unsuccessful out of their accommodation.



# CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY

## WAYS WE SUPPORT

### Travel Support

COVID travel restrictions and lockdowns had a significant impact upon our Travel Grants programme, as face-to-face meetings, such as legal and Home Office substantive interviews, were suspended in 2020-21. Most face-to-face services, including food banks and social activities were suspended; however, we were able to support necessary travel when restrictions were lifted at various points in the year.

We continued the distribution of our daily bus passes for essential travel. Mobility is crucial to the asylum application process and to be an active citizen in Scotland; however, this mobility was severely impaired by COVID travel restrictions. We introduced contactless E-bus tickets and joined the campaign to extend the National Concessionary Travel Scheme in Scotland.



Our Bump & Baby Bus Pass scheme continued to be a vital support for new and expectant mothers during times where travel was possible and necessary to allow people to get to the food bank, get their children outside and to attend any important meetings and of course for their wellbeing. These grants were limited due to public health restrictions; however, we saw a sharp increase in demand later in 2022 when restrictions eased. We aim to expand this programme.



# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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## ***WAYS WE SUPPORT***

### **Access to Education & Employment (AtoEE) Grants**

We were keen to reduce the impact of digital exclusion and poverty on refugees and people seeking asylum. We increased our individual AtoEE grant amount from £150 to £300 in response to the requirement for many people to study and work remotely, when items such as laptops and tablets were more needed.



# ***CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY***

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## ***EVENTS & FUNDRAISING***

Unfortunately, we were unable to hold any in-person events in 2021-22 due to Covid-19. We held our 2020-21 AGM virtually for the second time and would like to thank the people who contributed and our members for their continued support.

2021-22 was a difficult year for all of us, particularly in relation to funding, which resulted in an overall decrease; however, we greatly appreciate the many individual donors and funders who continued to provide funds to support refugees during this particularly difficult period.

Grants and Trusts accounted for most of our income, and we would like to thank all funders for their support and for enabling RST to continue to help refugees.

Donations from individuals made up about 16% of our total income. RST is grateful for the continued support of dedicated members and people who passionately want to help refugees.

In December 2021, we launched our Winter Appeal. This raised a total of £1,751, which we used to purchase local bus tickets for refugees who are destitute, enabling them to attend necessary appointments and to visit friends and family during the cold winter months.

In March 2022, a long-standing supporter of RST, Michelle Lowe, raised £585 for RST by offering a piece of her work, a large, handcrafted teapot in a charity draw. Michelle also donated a further £347 raised in proceeds from sales at this event. This is a great example of the impact individual fundraising campaigns can have upon RST.

RST also raises funds through Glasgow Community Lottery 'Yaldi' where people can choose to support our work while getting the chance to win the £25,000 jackpot. Tickets are available online and cost £1, with 60p of that going straight to RST as a selected good cause.

We continued to receive vital donations through Local Giving.

Finally, on behalf of all at Refugee Survival Trust - a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout this challenging year.

# CHAIR'S REPORT & SUMMARY

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OVERVIEW

Our **total income** in 2021/2022 was



Over the same period **our expenditure was**



The income recognised this year includes £397,373 of restricted income and the expenditure includes £470,205 of restricted funds.

Staff costs, including employer NI and employer pension, totalled £177,139.

Our expenditure exceeded our income in 2021-22, mainly due to the end of the multi-year Oak Foundation grant, for which, the charity had been carrying restricted funds. All final expenditure relating to this grant was completed in 2021-22. Overall funding decreased in 2021-22, and a funding strategy is in place to mitigate against this.

# OUR AIMS

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- To **focus particularly on contributing to the prevention and alleviation of destitution** among refugees and people seeking asylum by meeting basic needs



- To **increase opportunities** for refugees and people seeking asylum to be active citizens



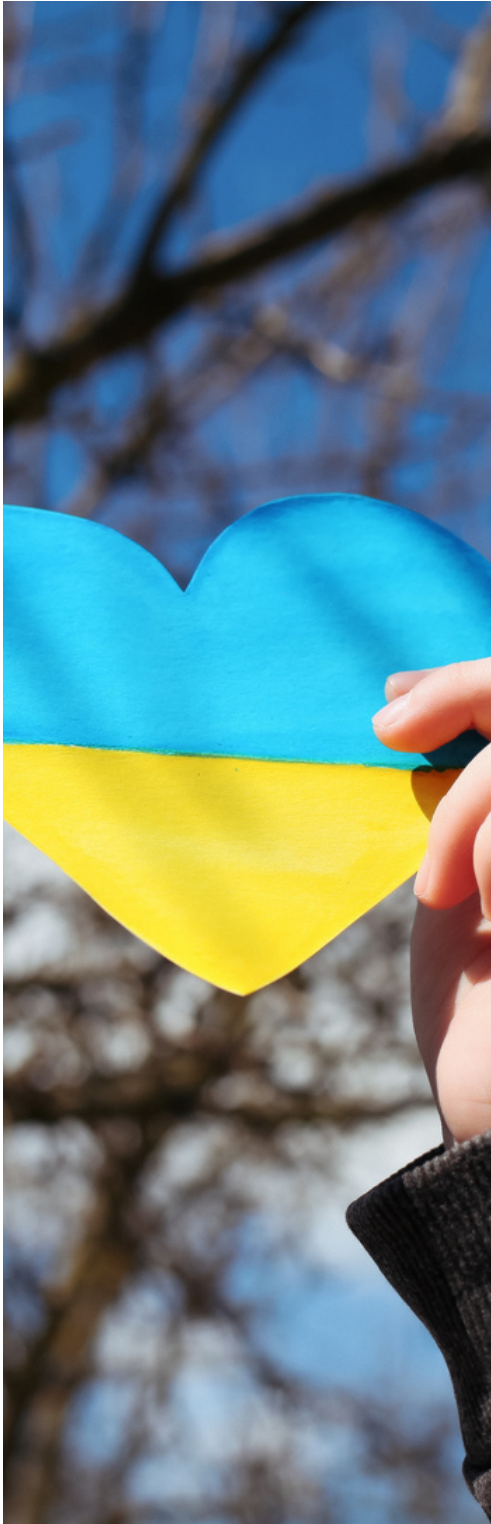
- To **contribute to policy and good practice** for supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, with a focus on destitution



- To **raise awareness and campaign** on the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly destitution, and for a more humane asylum system



## HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR AIMS



- **To focus particularly on contributing to the prevention and alleviation of destitution**

1. We ensure the delivery of destitution support and information provision to enable people to meet their basic needs;
2. We seek to expand our capacity to provide short term accommodation for destitute people seeking asylum, and support for those in any form of temporary accommodation;
3. We work in partnership with a range of organisations in order to provide practical support to people who are destitute and to prevent and alleviate destitution.

- **To increase opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum to be active citizens.**

1. We provide Access to Education & Employment support to remove barriers which can prevent people from moving forward in their lives;
2. We provide a range of volunteering opportunities in order to support and promote integration;
3. We seek to ensure that the voices of refugees and people seeking asylum are included in all aspects of our work.



- **To contribute to policy and good practice for supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, with a focus on destitution.**

1. We use data and evidence collated from our work to influence policy and practice in relation to destitution;
2. We develop clear messaging and clear policy positions, building on our expertise in this area;
3. We work with partner organisations within Scotland and across the UK to influence policy and to ensure a strong voice for advocating solutions to destitution.



- **To raise awareness and campaign, on the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly destitution, and for a more humane asylum system.**

1. We continue to improve our digital and print communications to raise awareness of our work and relevant key issues;
2. We support staff and volunteers to organise, deliver and speak at events to promote our work and raise awareness of key issues;
3. We engage with the media and support refugees to have their voices heard wherever possible.



# ***ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE***

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Whilst RST core projects and services continued to operate during Covid and subsequent lockdowns, we adapted our work and responded to the crisis, carrying out our work in different ways to meet need. We were able, through collaborative working and employing new methods to continue our support during the year. We supported over 1,000 people.



## ***ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE***

### ***DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKER SERVICE (DASS) PROJECT***

This year saw the final months (April 2021 - November 2021) of the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS). Although lockdown restrictions were eased over this period, services continued to be delivered mainly online and via telephone. Destitution advisers continued to support DASS service users to access financial assistance, food and accommodation and ongoing support to new and existing clients. The Asylum Project (TAP) based at the Strathclyde Law Clinic worked with 22 people, providing legal advice and helping with case preparation. Throughout this period, DASS accommodation services provided by Safe in Scotland, Castlemilk Community Church and Refugee Survival Trust continued to provide a safe place to stay for people who would otherwise be street homeless.

Key achievements and performance for 2021-22:

- 55 new referrals were processed
- 36 people were assisted with Section 4 applications to return to Home Office accommodation and support
- 9 people achieved Leave to Remain status

The DASS project came to an end after 7 years, having established a successful model of practice to asylum-related destitution.



**SCOTLAND**  
Welcomes you

## ***ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE***

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### **Case Study - JK (DASS Project 2021)**

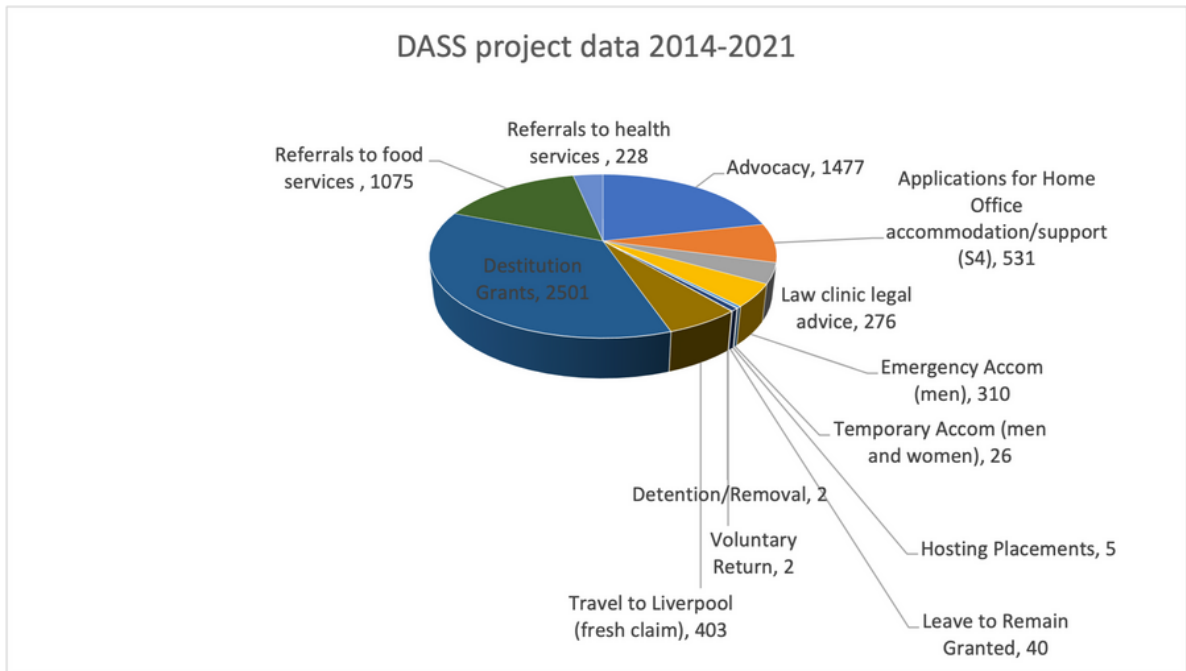
This year, DASS helped a young homeless father with temporary accommodation in Glasgow and provided him with cash for food and a bus pass so that he could visit his baby daughter. Destitution advisers worked with him to submit a 'Section 4' application which was successful. He has recently moved back into Home Office accommodation and his support has been reinstated.

He shares, "I want to take this opportunity to thank you so much for all the assistance your organisation rendered to me during my stay at your accommodation. You came to my aid when I needed it the most. By saying just thank you is not enough, as I very much appreciate every assistance you rendered. I hope to keep you posted on the progress of my application."

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# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

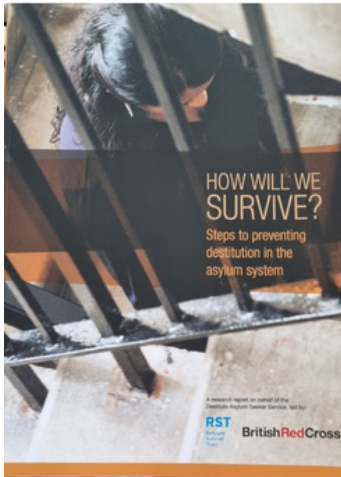


## DASS PROJECT DATA 2014 - 2021

The legacy DASS leaves behind boasts strengthened partnerships in the field of destitution work, new cross sectoral partnerships and a model of practice that can be replicated and developed. DASS project partners have played an active role in developing the current Scottish Government anti-destitution strategy, "Ending Destitution Together: A Strategy to Improve Support for People with No Recourse to Public Funds Living in Scotland (2021-2024)" and some are now involved in the Fairway Scotland programme, which aims to end destitution among people living in Scotland with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

We would like to thank all our partners for their hard work and dedication over the last 7 years: Scottish Refugee Council, Safe in Scotland, The Asylum Project- Strathclyde Law Clinic, Castlemilk Community Church, British Red Cross and Rehoboth Nissi Ministries.

# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE



## How Will We Survive? (DASS Research Project)

October 2021 saw the publication of a second major piece of destitution-related research, "How Will We Survive?". DASS partner British Red Cross (BRC) trained and supported a team of four peer researchers to explore how destitution within the asylum process could be prevented. The researchers conducted 26 interviews and were involved in the research design and analysis.

### Research Findings (selected)

- The first 6 months are most difficult
- Experiences of destitution are widespread
- Being moved multiple times increases the risk of destitution
- Good quality advice and advocacy are paramount
- Developing social connections is key in preventing destitution

### Research Recommendations (selected)

- Asylum support should be sufficient to ensure agency and choice
- Trauma-informed Home Office processes and procedures
- Provide information/advice early
- Improve emergency provision and access to mental health services

### Publications:

"From Pillar to Post" Destitution Among People Refused Asylum in Scotland (2019)

"How Will We Survive" Steps to Preventing Destitution in the Asylum System (2021)

"An Unstable Environment" (Pro Bono Economics) The economic case for getting asylum decisions right the first time. (2021) Marie Oldfield, Jade Siu and Sadia Sheikh



## ***ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE***

### ***BREATHING SPACE ACCOMMODATION SERVICE***

On 1st December, 2021, RST launched a new accommodation service - "Breathing Space". This is a temporary accommodation service, providing up to 18 months accommodation in community-based shared flats for people who are at risk of becoming destitute because of Home Office decisions.

Breathing Space prevents destitution by providing safe temporary accommodation and legal advice to people while they work to resolve their situation. The service developed from the accommodation provided through the Destitute Asylum Seeker Service (DASS). In designing Breathing Space, we listened to feedback from people who had stayed in DASS accommodation previously. They told us what they most valued about their experience and how things could be improved.

Staff capacity has been increased with the addition of a dedicated Destitution Coordinator role. The coordinator will oversee all aspects of the service, with a focus on quality, compliance and development.

We have continued our partnership with The Asylum Project at the University of Strathclyde Law Clinic, which will provide legal advice and guidance to Breathing Space clients along with assistance to prepare fresh legal submissions.

Breathing Space currently provides 8 accommodation places in 4 shared properties. We aim to increase this incrementally via a variety of partnerships with other organisations and through individual supporters.

## ***ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE***

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### ***DESTITUTION GRANTS***

For the past 26 years, RST have been providing destitution grants to people seeking asylum and refugees up to six months after they are granted refugee status, as a safety net when they receive no other type of support. In 2021-2022 RST continued to respond to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis by adapting the operational activity of our destitution and travel grants programmes to the changes and challenges which emerged from the pandemic. We continued to employ different methods of distribution in a world where remote-work and less in-person options for service users quickly became the norm. We engaged with additional and new partners and also temporarily partnered with the British Red Cross who made specific funds available to provide hardship grants during 2021.

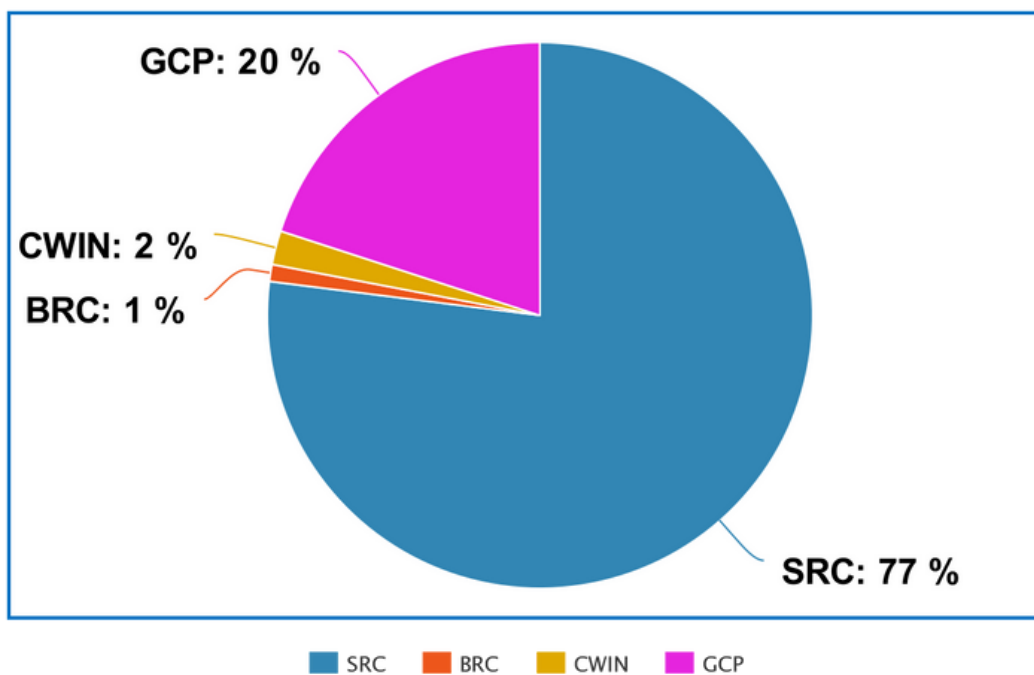
In 2021-2022 a total of **513 destitution grants** were approved, a significant increase compared to the previous year, as 2020-2021 largely saw our destitution grants replaced with our COVID emergency programmes. Out of those 513 grants, 496 were destitution grants while only 17 were travel grants, reflecting the drastic reduction of travel due to Covid-19.

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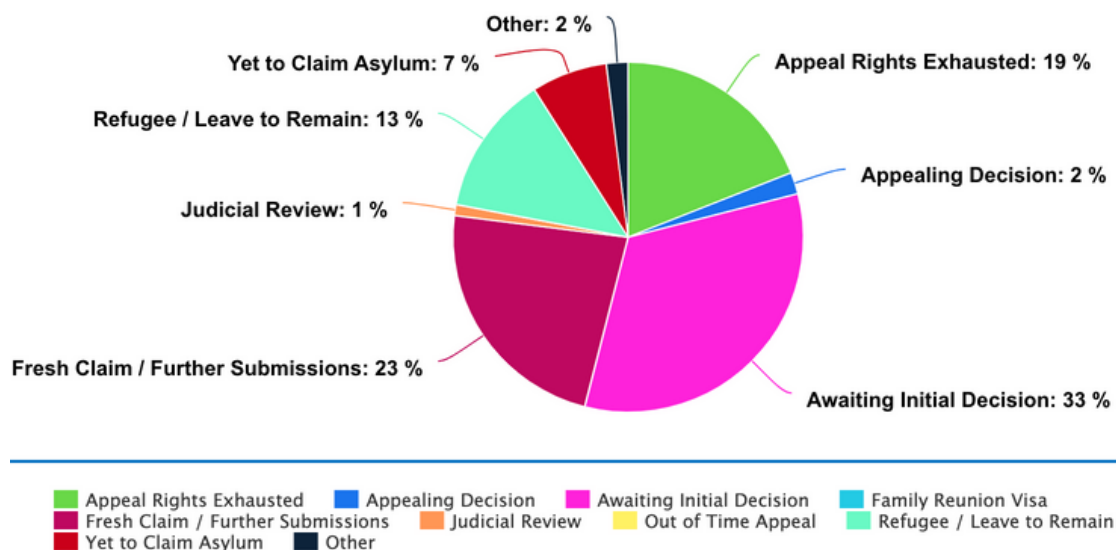
# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

## DESTITUTION GRANTS

### Partner Referrals

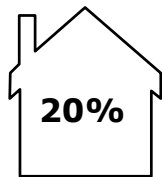


### Asylum Status



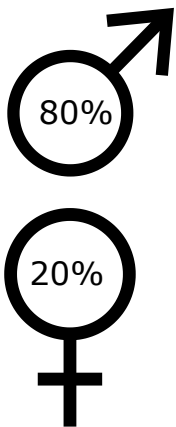
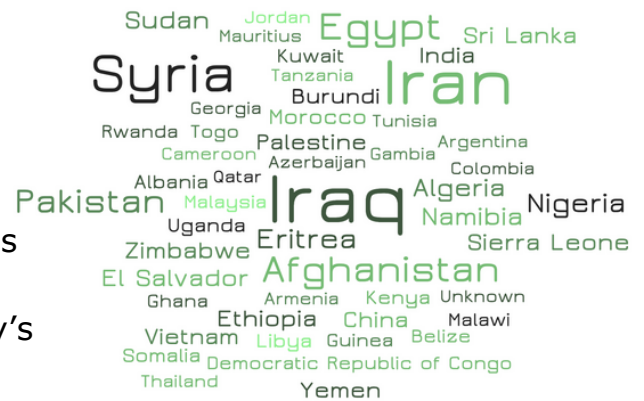
# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

## DESTITUTION GRANTS - DEMOGRAPHICS



**20%** of all grant applicants were experiencing homelessness

Applicants from Iraq comprised the highest number of applications, at a proportion of 15%. This Word Cloud on the right is a visual representation of RST destitution grant recipients' 50 countries of origin. In the Word Cloud the number of grants is indicated by the size of the country's name.



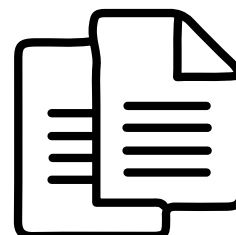
2% were pregnant



11% had spouses with them



13% had children under 18  
134 children were supported in total



19% applied to RST previously



## ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

### BUS PASSES - BUMP & BABY

Our Bump & Baby Bus Pass scheme continued to be a vital support for parents during times where travel was possible and necessary to allow people to get to the food bank, get their children outside and to attend any important meetings and, of course, for their wellbeing.

#### Financial Year 2021 - 2022

A total of 80 bus passes, comprising of 10-, 4- and 1-week passes, were given out.

$$80 \quad \times \quad \img alt="Icon of a bus pass" data-bbox="428 538 531 608"/> \quad = \quad \text{£8,787}$$

Out of those 80 mothers:

- 51% were single parents
- 8% had a physical health condition
- 5% were experiencing homelessness
- 4% had a mental health condition
- 37% had other children (totaling 42 children)



# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

## ACCESS TO EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT GRANTS

Refugees and people seeking asylum who want to study or work can apply to RST for an Access to Education and Employment grant of up to £300 (up from the previous limit of £150) to overcome any barriers to starting a course or a job. Such costs might include translation of qualifications, digital equipment, course materials, exam fees or travel to college or interviews.

### Financial Year 2021-2022

We awarded 46 grants, totalling £10,155



33% were to people seeking asylum

67% were to refugees



35% had at least one child

13% of those applicants were single parents.



61% were male

39% were female



# ***RESEARCH & ADVOCACY***

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## ***STATISTICAL ANALYSIS / DATA***

We continued to advocate and campaign for positive change on areas such as the Right To Work campaign, to support people moved to hotels in Glasgow and to influence UK and Scottish Government Policy in relation to providing adequate support for people seeking asylum and refugees during the public health crisis.

## ***RESEARCH AND INFLUENCING POLICY***

RST continues to conduct and commission research and participate in the national policy debate on asylum. It has had significant success in bringing about changes in procedures affecting refugees and people seeking asylum.

Two research reports were released in the year: the DASS report in collaboration with the British Red Cross, "How can we prevent destitution?" and in collaboration with Pro Bono Economics, "An Unstable Environment", an analysis of the economic and personal costs of poor Home Office decision making.

# ***VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS***

## ***VOLUNTEERS & MEMBERS***

The Charity is supported by members and volunteers, including its Board of Directors, who all provide their services on a voluntary basis and for this the charity is indebted to them. We would like to acknowledge the significant and important contribution our grants database volunteers and peer researchers made in such a challenging year. Thank you also to our members for your continued and cherished support.

## ***PARTNERSHIPS***

All our work is rooted in strong partnerships, including the DASS project and our grants programmes, which are all delivered via partners.

We continue to be active members in a range of local, national, and UK-wide networks, including the Glasgow Asylum Destitution Action Network (GLADAN), the Scottish Asylum Stakeholder Forum group (SASF) with the Home Office, the Third Sector Forum with asylum accommodation provider Mears and the UK-wide No Accommodation Network (NACCOM).



***One of our Breathing Space accommodation flats***

# ***RESERVES POLICY***

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The Board of Directors regularly reviews RST's reserves policy. The pandemic and changing social economic impact have created new risks. The reserves calculation was revised on this basis, and we have worked to increase unrestricted reserves in alignment with up-to-date risk management and mitigation processes.

It is Board policy to maintain a three-month unrestricted reserve of core funds. This allows RST to respond quickly and effectively to changes in legislation that significantly increase demand on funding. It also allows us to meet outstanding obligations should fundraising prove unsuccessful. Amounts held at 31st March 2022 were £69,000.

# ***FUTURE PLANS***

RST will continue to fulfil our core purpose to prevent and alleviate destitution and homelessness, by providing temporary accommodation, emergency financial assistance, asylum related travel support and support with local bus travel. The access to Employment and Education Grants will end in 2022-23 due to reduced applications, lack of funding, increased access to statutory and other specific support and our focus on destitution and homelessness as our core mission.

We will continue our new accommodation project, Breathing Space, in which we intend to increase our accommodation places and apply the learning from the DASS project as well as address needs and inequalities arising from Covid-19 and UK Government asylum policy changes.



## ***FUTURE PLANS***

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Generating income and achieving financial security with a focus on sustainability will be a priority in the coming 12 months with significant multi-year funding ending and demand for our support likely to increase. We will develop our fundraising plan and aim to diversify our income streams.

The Board and staff look forward to continuing its work and reviewing our strategic direction. A renewed clear strategy will support future sustainability with the potential for growth. As part of this process, our Chief Executive will develop the structure of RST and work with the staff team to ensure we have a structure that supports organisational delivery and sustainability.

The Board, with its new membership, looks forward to completing its process of strengthening the organisation and plans to focus on the quality of its governance and make any changes that might be required to best support the development of RST. The Board will be prioritising the review of RST's financial situation and strategic direction.

**THANK YOU FROM THE STAFF OF RST**

How we treat refugees  
reflects who we are



#WhoWeAre

