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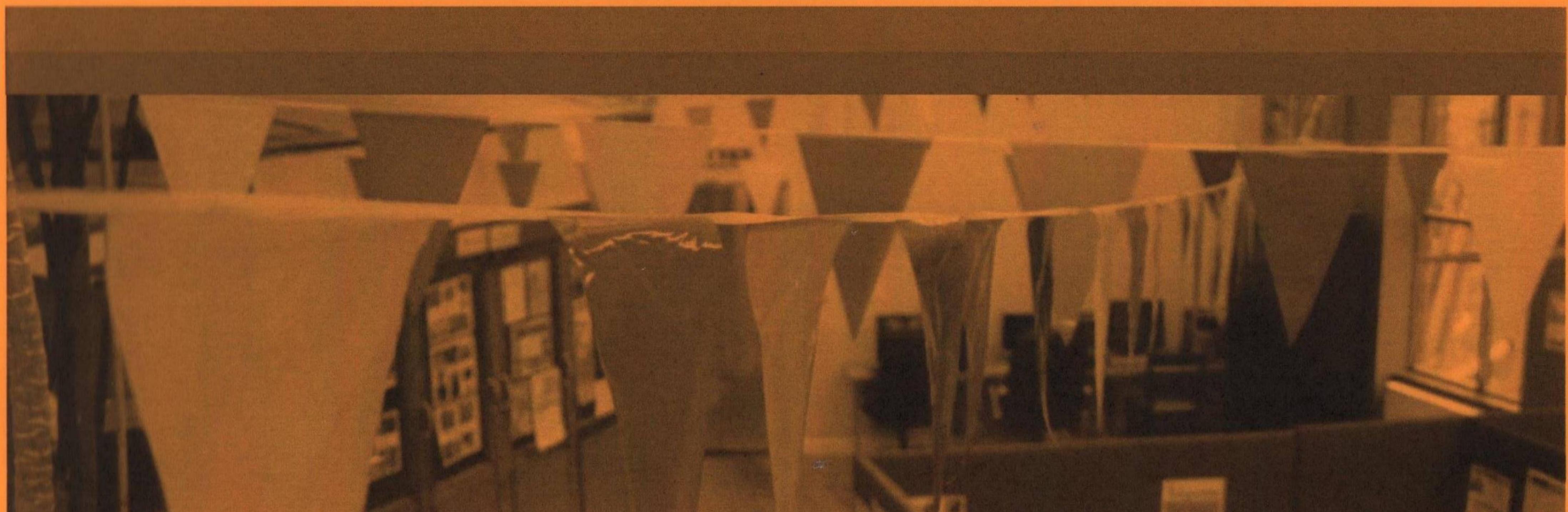


Russell Press Ltd.
Russell House, Bulwell Lane
Nottingham NG6 0BT
Tel: 0115 9784505
info@russellpress.com
www.russellpress.com

Image above: Gothic arches in Salisbury Cathedral. Source: Jan van der Crabben (Photographer)

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum

Annual Report 2014



Vision and Aims Statement

Our Vision

A society where Asylum Seekers and Refugees are welcomed, receive just and compassionate treatment and support in rebuilding their lives.

Our Mission

To support Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Nottingham & Nottinghamshire to gain fair and just outcomes, rebuild their lives and integrate into society.

We seek to achieve this by:

- Providing a welcoming community centre.*
- Offering specialised advice & support services.*
- Providing programmes to develop confidence, skills and knowledge.*
- Campaigning for a just and generous response to Refugees and Asylum Seekers from government and the host community.*
- Advocating on behalf of individual Asylum Seekers and Refugees in cases of injustice and hardship.*

Registered Charity number: 1121560 Company

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WHO'S WHO AT THE REFUGEE FORUM 2012-2013

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WHO'S WHO AT THE REFUGEE FORUM 2013 – 2014

Executive Officers:

Chair:	Patsy Brand	Secretary:	Maggie Jones
Treasurer:	Barry Clarke	Vice Chair:	Leo Keely

Other Management Committee Members

Ali Ahmed	Jake Jackson
Jan Callaway	Pete Lowenstein
Richard Chamberlain	Clara Ndlovu
Maxine Cockett	Allan Njanji
Melissa Hatcher (from July)	Mike Scott
Dave Hewitt	Lynda Wilson (until July)
Amdani Juma	

The Committee (which acts as the Board of Trustees in terms of the Charity Commission and as Directors in terms of Companies House) met 12 times in the past year.

Refugee Forum Staff - December 2013 – November 2014

Centre Manager	Fiona Cameron
Deputy Manager	Rakiba Khatun
Senior Administrator	Erica Stirrett (From March 14)
Adviser/Interpreter	Bahman Mohammed
Administrative Assistant	Teresa Pacey-Devlin
Finance/Administrative Assistant	Zanele Ndhlovu (May 14)
One-Stop-Shop Adviser	Simon Breen, Fiona Broome, Julie Whitehead
Welfare Rights Adviser	Mussie Kidane
Health Access Project Workers	Kinsi Clarke, Dan Roberston, Sayka Naz (from Oct 14)
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Barbara Spreiz
Anti-destitution Co-ordinator	Gemma Pillay
Children & Families Worker	Liz Burrell
Youth Project Worker	Naomi Jemmett
RCO Support Worker & Communications	Stuart Brown

CHAIR'S REPORT - A Retrospective

As I will not be seeking re-election as Chair of the Management Committee, after nearly a decade in the role, I will take the opportunity to look back over that period which nearly coincided with the Forum's occupancy of the Square Centre.

From 2001 to 2004 the Forum was based in a cramped Victorian terrace at 118 Mansfield Road (now being converted into 'luxury' houses) where queues of asylum seekers, desperate for assistance, stretched on to the pavement and up the rickety stairs, with standing room only.

After a long search and considerable alterations, we were delighted to move into the Square Centre which provided space to increase the range of services and activities we could offer in order to meet the widening needs of refugees and asylum seekers as more were settled in the City. Over the next few years these included a Refugee Women's Group (now evolved into the independent Women's Cultural Exchange), a Children and Families project, Into the Mainstream health access project, improved support for destitute asylum seekers, the Tuesday Night social project and after the Forum gained certification from the OISC (Office of the Immigration Service Commissioners), assistance with applications for Travel Documents and Citizenship applications. We were also able to host staff from partner organisations whose work complemented that of the Forum eg. local solicitors, Refugee Action, and in more recent times, The Red Cross, Migrant Help and HOST Nottingham.

In the early years at 118 the vast majority of asylum seekers coming to the Forum were Kurds fleeing from the regime of Saddam Hussain in Iraq and repression in Turkey, closely followed by the number of Iranians and Afghans. By the time of the move to the Square Centre, there were an increasing number of Africans particularly from DRC (Congo), Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan and Zimbabwe and Eritrea. The range of nationalities has increased steadily in response to new conflict situations, repressive regimes and discrimination against minorities, most recently with increased numbers of asylum seekers from Syria and Pakistan. More than 90 nationalities have been recorded at the Forum.

Such a diverse mix of ethnicities, religions, political affiliations can lead to occasional tensions but provides a rich multicultural environment where diversity is respected and celebrated.

Over the past decade, thanks to the hard work & dedication of its staff, trustees and volunteers, with support from a range of funders, the Forum has evolved into a diverse, mature organisation, offering a model of good practice in supporting asylum seekers and refugees through the difficulties they face at each stage of their journey in attempting to rebuild their shattered lives. The new centre will provide even greater opportunities for the Forum to respond to developing needs, whilst providing improved conditions for all concerned.

I have been privileged to play a part in the development of the Forum and wish to thank all those who have worked with me and supported me over the years.

Patsy Brand – Chair of the Board of Trustees

MANAGER'S REPORT

It's been an exciting year since I came into post in November 2013. First and foremost has been the move to a new building. The move has been long and eagerly anticipated, and now you can see the fruits of all our hard work. The new building gives us an opportunity to provide more privacy and confidentiality to our clients, and separate office space for our advisors and we're looking forward to working in this new environment.

The year has not been without its challenges both internally and externally. We have seen large rises in the number of asylum seekers nationally and in the Nottingham area, where dispersals have increased dramatically in the last few months. The general climate towards asylum seekers has become more hostile in the run up to the election and with the rise of UKIP. In the face of these challenges, NNRF has upped its participation in national campaign forums such as Right to Remain, Still Human, Still Here, and the People's Health Movement. We hope to build on this in the coming year.

We've welcomed onto the staff a new general advice coordinator whose job it has been to streamline general advice, and this is going very well. We hope to develop all our advice services in the new building as previously mentioned. Another new addition has been our Unaccompanied Minors and Youth Project which is proving very successful.

We have developed new partnerships, in particular with Migrant Help, to work on filling the gap in services left behind when Refugee Action lost the contract for Asylum Support, and we continue to work closely with the British Red Cross, HOST Nottingham, Nottingham Arimethea Trust, the Women's Cultural Exchange and others, thus increasing our limited capacity and reach substantially.

We are only able to provide the services we do, thanks to the many volunteers who work at all levels from board members to receptionists and everything in between, and our thanks goes out to them for all their incredible work. And last, but most certainly not least, to our funders who enable the Nottingham Refugee Forum to do their work.

Fiona Cameron – Manager

THIS YEAR AT THE FORUM: Oct 2013 – Oct 2014

Number of visits: 7173

Averaging 593 per month*

NB. In the case of a couple or family, only one name (usually the man's) is taken, so the actual number of users is much higher.

*Due to the closure of NNRF during the move and delay in set up of IT systems the Oct 2014 figure has been disregarded when calculating the monthly average.

DEPUTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Over the past year, there have been significant developments, both within the sector and within the organisation. This includes the introduction of new and more stringent immigration legislation, changes to the service delivery for asylum support matters, the increase in dispersals to Nottingham, as well as the on-going impact of reduced legal aid. For the Refugee Forum, the relocation to new premises, the extended drop-in advice service as well as working with new partner agencies.

The changes within the sector have resulted in an increase to service users accessing our drop-in advice and legal services. The early part of the year, when Migrant Help introduced the telephone advice service, there were a high proportion of queries relating to asylum support applications. This resulted in Bahman Mohammed offering advice and assistance with asylum support applications. This was offered alongside weekly outreach service offered by Migrant Help which has meant that we were able to meet the needs of our service users. We have also built on established partnerships with local legal aid providers as well as having new providers offer outreach service through referrals made by the legal project.

The new premises have afforded us opportunities to meet the increase in dispersals by extending drop-in advice which has been made possible through the support of our dedicated advice volunteers. Also, with the addition of Joanna Cavill as the general advice co-ordinator has meant that volunteers are being supported during the busy advice sessions.

We have also made improvements to our data management in order to introduce an electronic case management system. The focus for the year ahead will be on improving standards in order to gain an advice quality mark.

The legal advice project is regulated by the Office of Immigration Commissioners (OISC) and provides legal work at level 1. The immigration advice service is delivered by Bahman Mohammed and Volunteer Adviser, Kate Mack provides assistance with the following applications:

- Travel documents both for Refugees and non-Refugees (Indefinite Leave to Remain and Discretionary Leave to remain) adult and children
- Transfer of visas
- Replacement Biometric Residence Permit
- Child of a Refugee born in the UK
- Naturalisation applications for adults
- Registration applications for children

In addition to the above, Volunteer Advisers Barrie Ward and Pete Lowenstein provide legal support work in the following ways:

- Liaising with solicitors with on-going applications on behalf of clients
- Referrals to solicitors for Legal aid work
- Advising on non-legal aid work
- Assisting clients with preparations for further submissions
- Chasing up solicitors not in contact with clients

The legal project has continued to be in demand by our service users, often wanting assistance with applications that are no longer funded under the legal aid scheme. While the changes to the requirements for British citizenship applications has resulted in lower numbers in comparison to previous years, there have been a significant increase in travel documents applications. This has been the case due to our service users returning to make new applications after gaining settlement. As part of this work, assistance with applications for children of Refugees born in the United Kingdom and other residence document applications are also offered as part of this work.

Another important aspect of the legal project has been the legal support which has continued to be offered. There have been challenges in assisting our service users with obtaining legal representations, particularly where there has been limited capacity following the legal aid reforms as well as the challenges to our service users resulting from applications requiring legal fees.

Over the course of 12 months:

- Travel documents for new refugees: 98
- Travel documents for refugee with Indefinite Leave to remain: 113
- Citizenship naturalisation and Registration applications: 156
- Replacement Biometric Residence Permit applications: 7
- Child of a Refugee born in the UK: 11
- Referrals to local solicitors: 184
 - Legal aid matters: 52
 - Fee paying matters: 8
 - Legal aid matters: 39
 - Legal aid matters: 13
- In addition, service users are signposted to solicitors directly: 54
- Outside of Nottingham referrals: 15
- A high proportion of dispersal cases have obtained legal representations in Birmingham

In order to meet the Continuing Professional Development requirements set out by the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner, Asylum and Immigration Law training was delivered by Keelin McCarthy, a barrister from Lamb Building which was attended by Bahman Mohammed, Barrie Ward, Pete Lowenstein and Kate Mack all whom are OISC level 1 Advisers. Going forward, with the prospect of further funding, there remains an exciting possibility of expanding our legal work within Refugee Forum.

Rakiba Khatun – Deputy Manager

GENERAL ADVICE SERVICE

From Monday to Thursday we run a General Advice service at the Refugee Forum. The General Advice service offers advice, guidance and information on a variety of issues including health, education, housing, legal, destitution, welfare benefits and asylum support. This is one of the first ways in which new service-users engage with Refugee Forum services. We also support existing service-users who are either assisted by Volunteer Advisers or signposted to the relevant in-house projects or outside agencies.

The General Advice service operates on a drop in basis and relies on the assistance of a team of skilled Volunteer Advisers. Volunteer Advisers have helped to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for asylum seekers and refugees from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They have managed to get a good grasp on a wide variety of issues and know how to signpost and make appropriate referrals to both internal and external services. Volunteer Advisers have coped with some stressful and demanding cases and have helped to manage service-users' expectations.

This year we have recruited a number of new Volunteer Advisers who have gained a good understanding of the challenges of the asylum process and are able to comprehend the challenges faced by our service-users. New volunteers are invited to shadow experienced volunteers for a few weeks to gain an oversight of the services offered before attending a two-day training course. This consists of an overview of the asylum process and asylum support followed by modules on Adviser Skills including interviewing skills, identifying key issues, recording information and working with interpreters. Trainee volunteers are then given the opportunity to work independently, with the support of the advice session supervisors.

On average we see over 80 service-users per week, the majority of whom are asylum seekers. The most common issues dealt with in General Advice are problems with asylum support, access to legal advice and accommodation needs, including destitution and homelessness.

At advice sessions we work closely with partner agencies which provide regular or one-off in-house advice surgeries. The British Red Cross has a regular presence at the Refugee Forum and is able to provide immediate access to one off or short term crisis support for vulnerable service-users. Staff from Asylum Help have been on hand to make asylum support applications for new and existing asylum seekers. We have also liaised with Refugee Action which supports asylum seekers who wish to voluntarily return to their home countries. Finally, Belong has provided CV skills and employment advice to refugees.

Since we moved to our new building in October 2014, demand for General Advice services has increased and we have extended our operating hours resulting in reduced waiting time for service-users. This has resulted in a very busy and bustling environment at the Refugee Forum. However thanks to the friendly new Welcome Volunteers in the café/ waiting area, the general atmosphere has improved and service-users can enjoy a cup of tea and a chat before they see an adviser.

I'd like to thank our volunteers for their enthusiasm and hard work and especially to those who have helped with the extra administrative and logistical tasks that have come with the move. Your commitment and support is valued and appreciated by both staff and service-users. Thank you for always being willing to go the extra mile to help vulnerable asylum seeker and refugees.

Joanna Cavill - General Advice Coordinator

THE ONE STOP SHOP ADVICE PROJECT

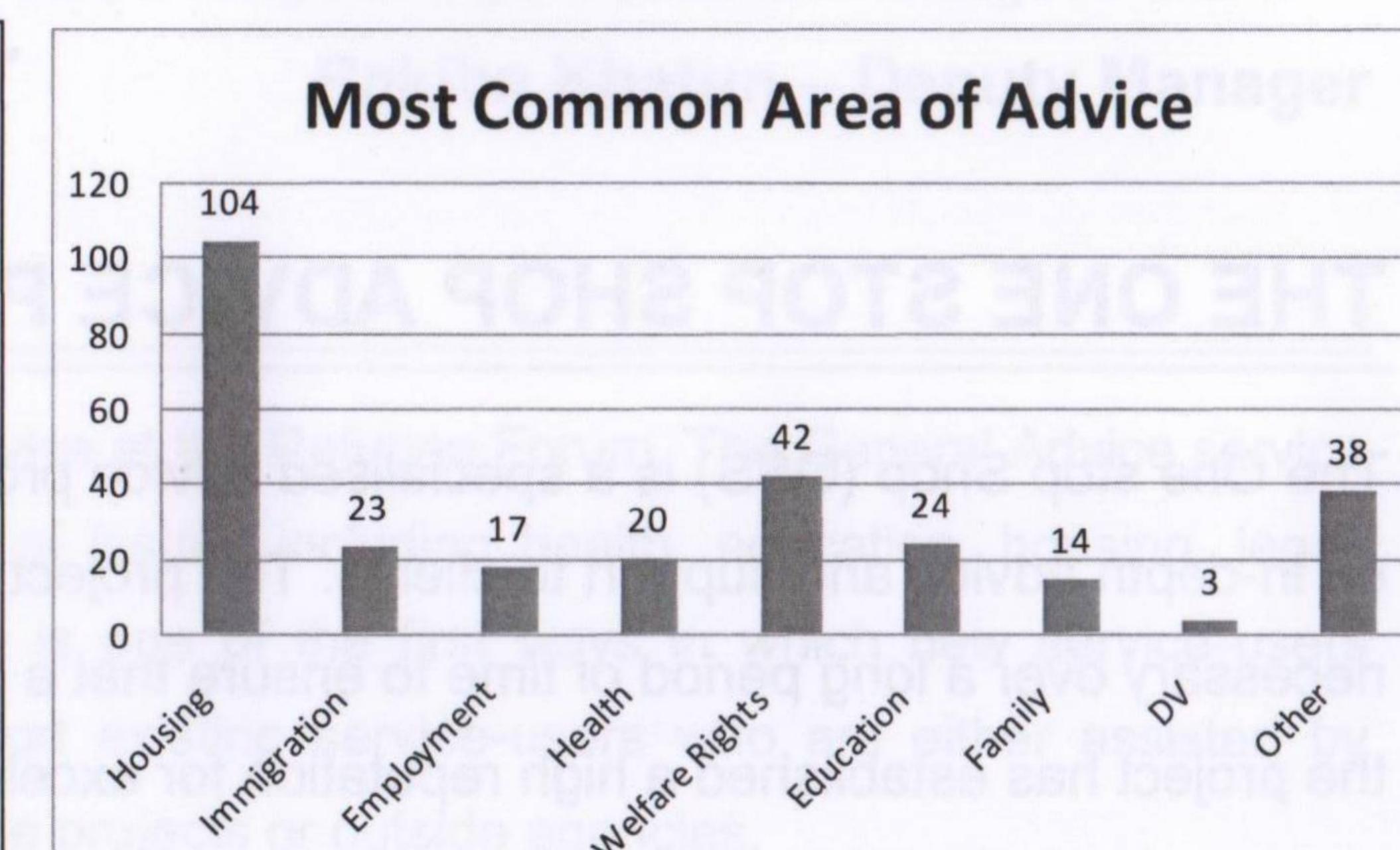
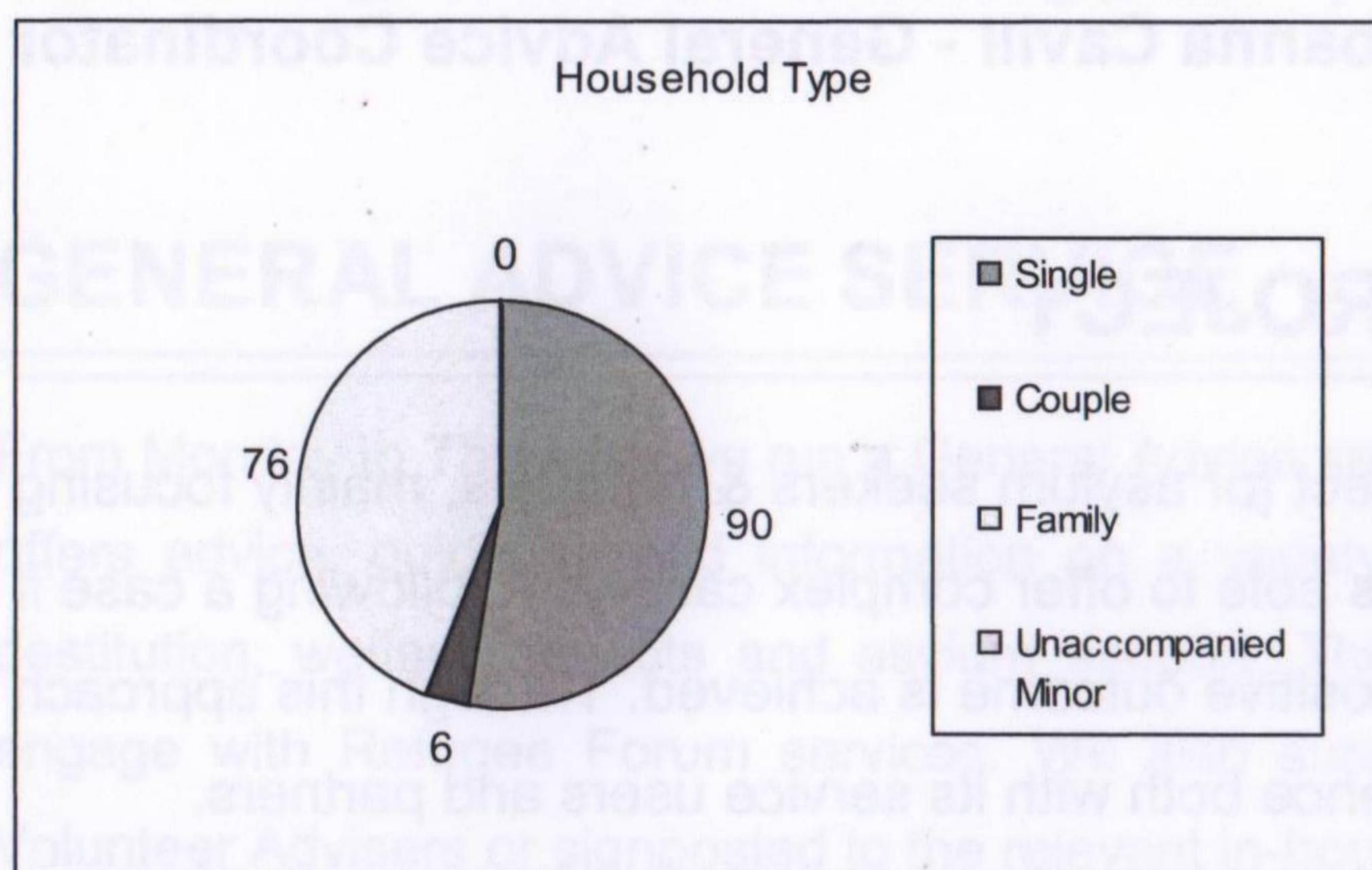
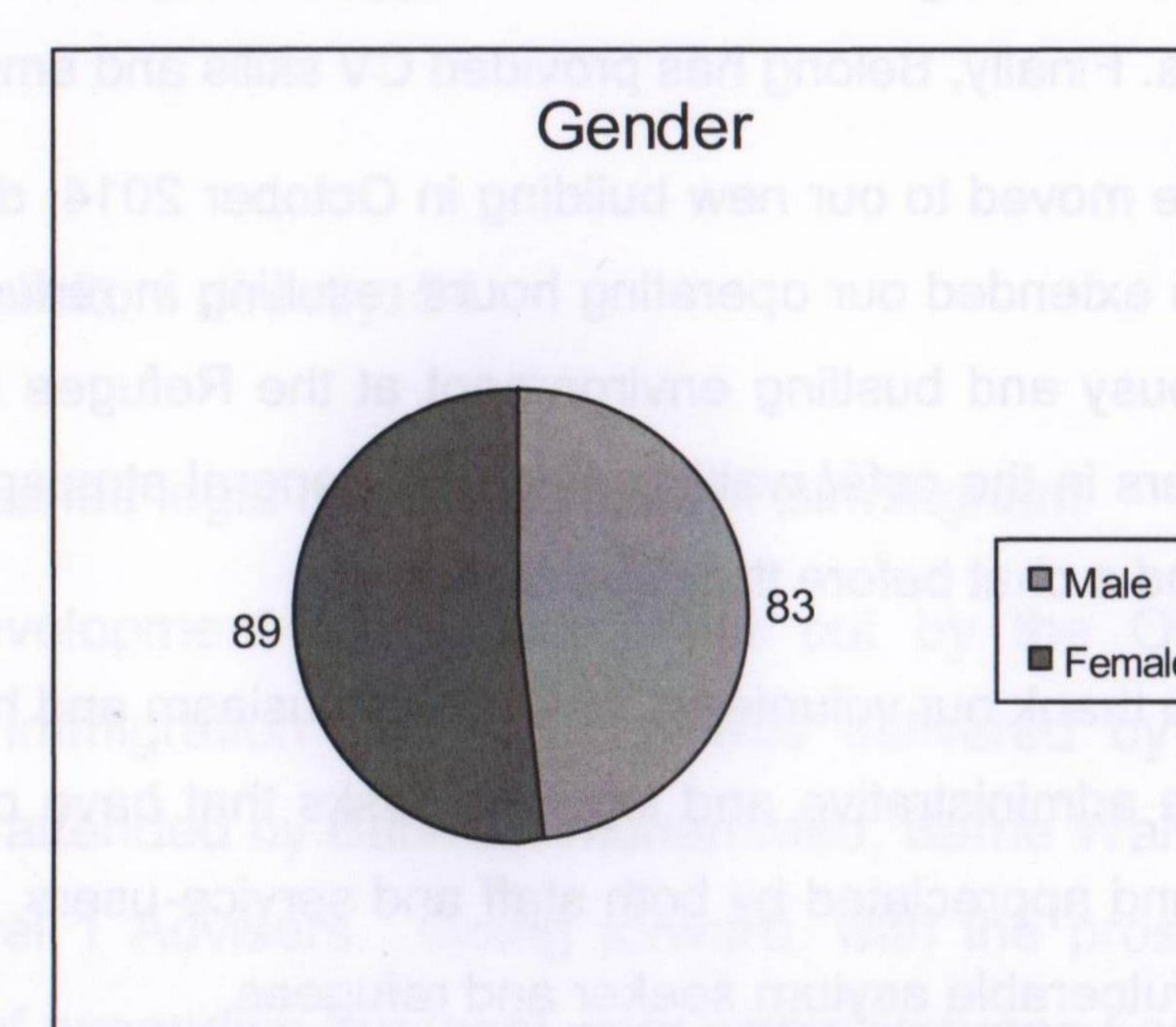
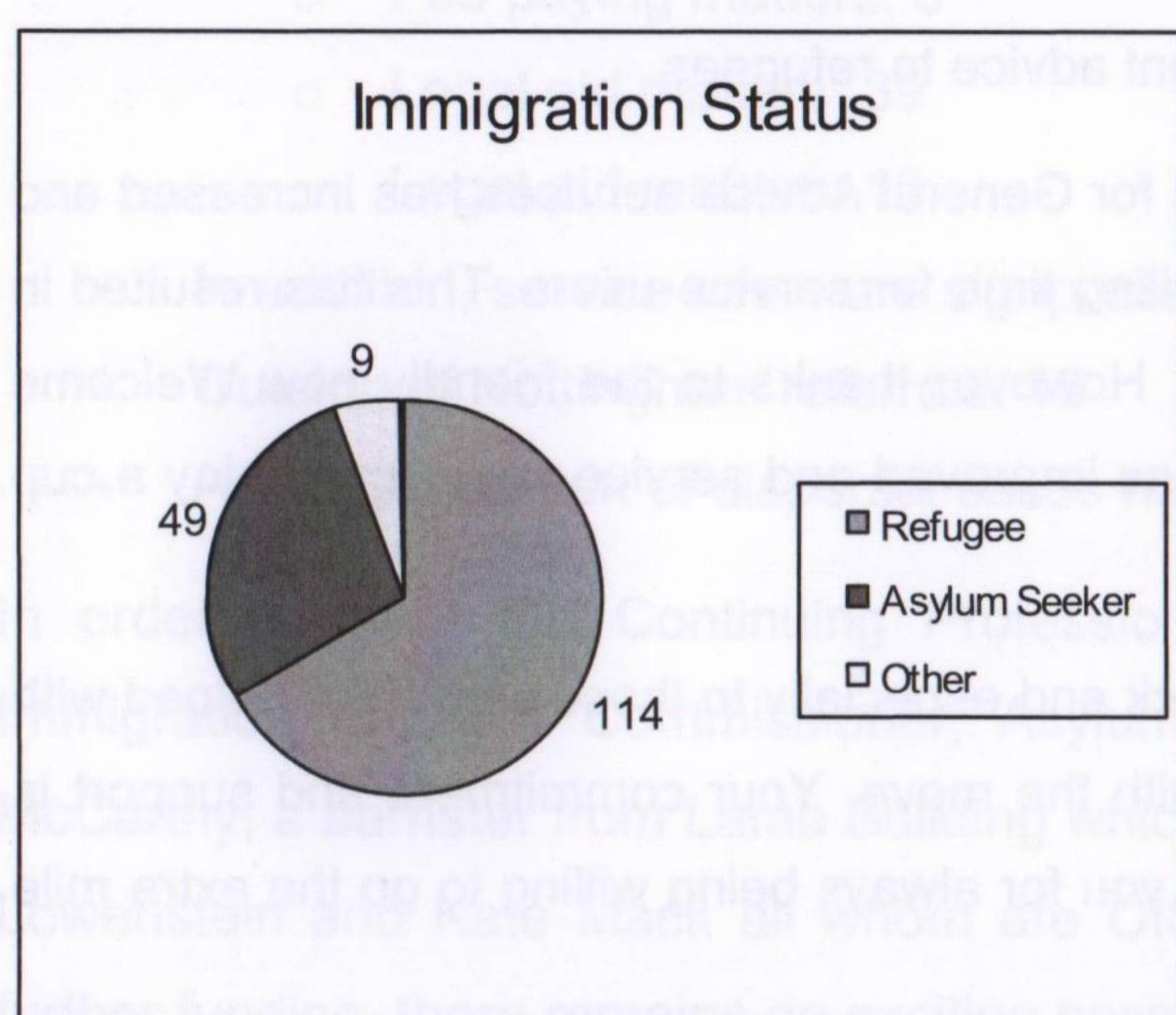
The One stop Shop (OSS) is a specialised advice project for asylum seekers & refugees, mainly focusing on in-depth advice and support to clients. The project is able to offer complex casework following a case if necessary over a long period of time to ensure that a positive outcome is achieved. Through this approach the project has established a high reputation for excellence both with its service users and partners.

Firstly we would like to say a few words in memory of Aster Measho who sadly passed away earlier this year following her courageous battle with cancer. Aster has been a client of Refugee Forum for over a decade. Aster was a wonderful woman and an amazing Mum; kind and caring, quietly unassuming and hugely considerate. She is missed by many. Our prayer's and blessings go out to all her family members and in particular her children.

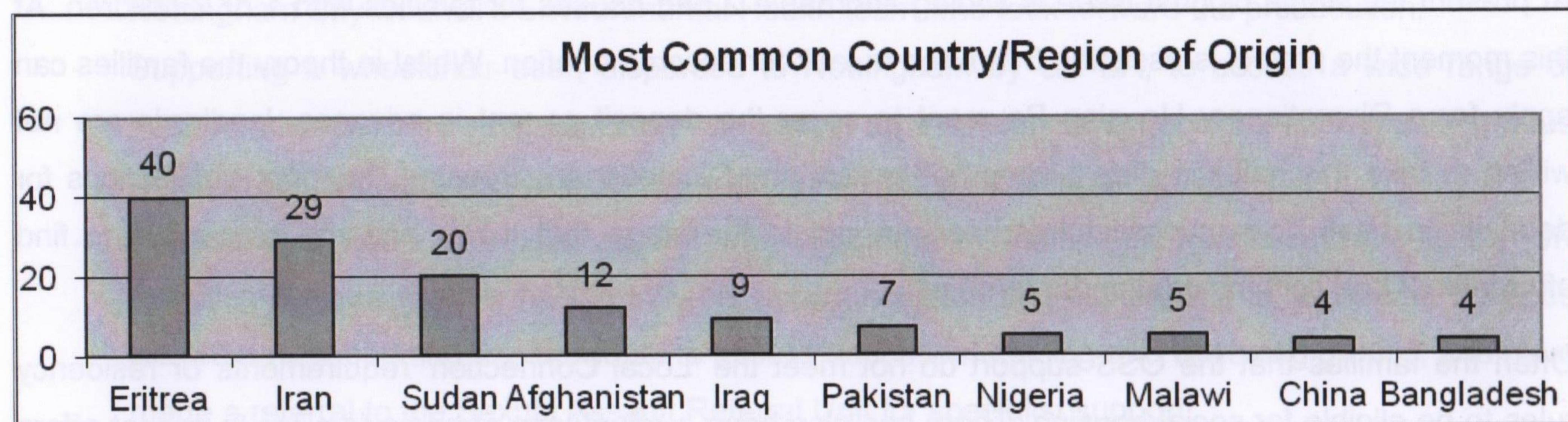
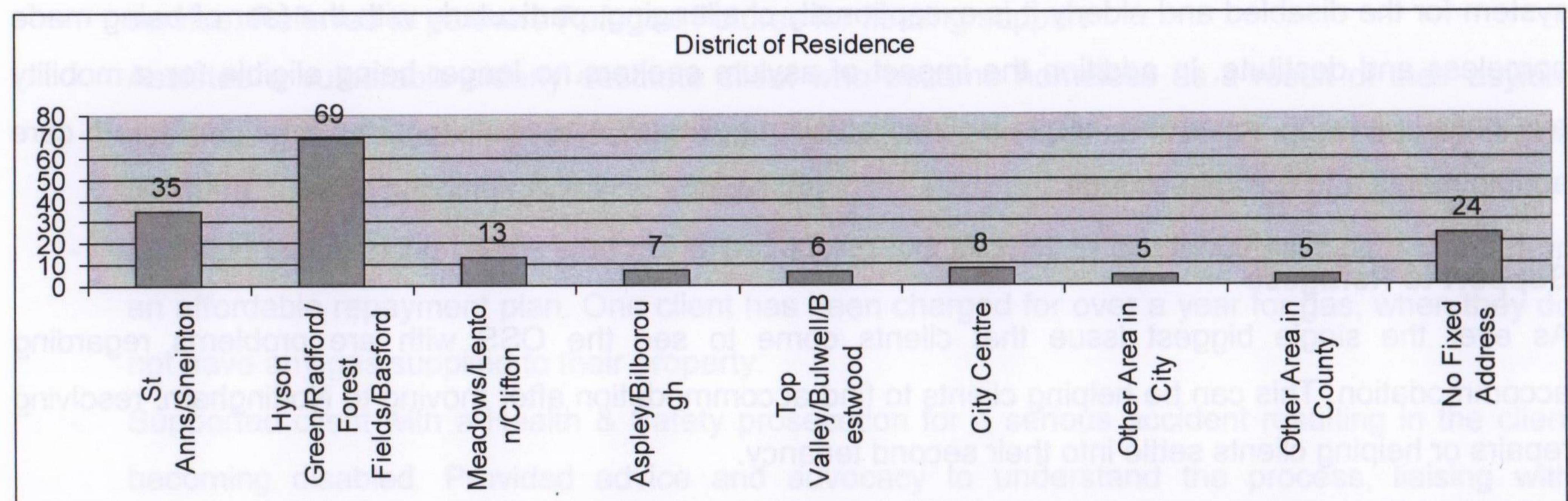
Over the past year the project has undergone a major change in that it is now funded by Nottingham City Council's Communities of Identity grant. Operationally, this has only meant a change in the way that the project monitors and records its information in that we now record individual clients rather than the number of contacts. Otherwise there are no changes in the way we offer the advice service.

The other big change for the OSS is that Fiona Broome has returned back to the project after maternity leave. The project current has three members of staff; Fiona Broome, Simon Breen and Julie Whitehead who all work part time. The project is currently supported by three volunteers Jasim Ghafur, Elena Genova and Ingrid Green to whom we are very grateful for their commitment and hard work. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Sayka Naz and Behrooz Tavassolian who have volunteered with the project over the past 12 months.

For this year's annual report the OSS has taken the liberty to only give 6 months statistics as the way we now record and monitor information means that it is incompatible with the old monitoring system. Below is a breakdown of the individual clients that the OSS has supported over the past 6 months: In total the project has supported 172 individual clients.



Refugee Forum Ltd is a registered charity and a registered company. Our registration numbers are 1000000 and 02000000 respectively. We are a member of the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Assembly.



Support to Asylum Seekers

The project continues to work with asylum seekers around the issue of the quality and provision of accommodation which is being provided by G4S with clients seeking to be relocated to another area or type of property. A lot of the issues involve managing client's expectations, or resolving repairs. At times G4S have actively sought the projects assistance to provide impartial advice and assistance to service users.

Accessing schools and in particular secondary schools for 14+ year olds have been very difficult due to a shortage of places in particular year groups and the variety of applications processes now that many schools have become academies each with their own admission procedure.

I would like to raise the issue of clients in receipt of Section 4 Support or who have No Recourse to Public Funds not being eligible for free school meals. This puts a great strain on some of the most deprived and vulnerable families in Nottingham. From September 2014 all year 1 and 2 children are eligible for free school dinners but this does not address those children who are older. I think this issue needs to be raised with Nottingham City Council to change their policy regarding the eligibility for free school meals.

The single biggest observation over the past year is the increase of very vulnerable and elderly clients who are asylum seekers. There has been a significant rise in severely disabled clients who have been accommodated by G4S. It has been very challenging trying to get the support needs of these clients met. Getting an Adult Social Care assessment or Occupational Therapy assessment has been problematic with clients waiting up to six months for an appointment.

There has also been an increase of elderly asylum seeking clients (60+) presenting often with significant

health and mobility issues. In one example, the project has been assisting a 64 year old client who became destitute and homeless. Whilst it is very difficult for most asylum seekers to navigate the asylum system for the disabled and elderly it is exceptionally challenging, particularly with the fear of being made homeless and destitute. In addition the impact of asylum seekers no longer being eligible for a mobility bus pass is leaving vulnerable adults isolated and struggling to manage shopping, attending health care appointments and going to college.

Support to Refugees

As ever the single biggest issue that clients come to see the OSS with are problems regarding accommodation. This can be helping clients to find accommodation after moving to Nottingham, resolving repairs or helping clients settle into their second tenancy.

At present the single biggest issue is finding affordable 2 bed houses for families with 1 or 2 children. At this moment the project is assisting 5 families to look for accommodation. Whilst in theory the families can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to cover the deposit or rent in advance, landlords are not willing to take this risk. To date I have not known any Discretionary Housing Payment applications for deposits to have been successful. It has now got to the stage that it has become impossible to find affordable 2 bed accommodation for families.

Often the families that the OSS support do not meet the 'Local Connection' requirements or residency rules to be eligible for social housing. There has also been a reluctance of some families to accept offers of private rented accommodation by the Local Authority, which causes a lot of stress and panic as families face eviction.

Besides accommodation issues, the project has supported a large number of clients with very complex needs, assisting them to access a wide range of services. For example for the last 6 months the project has worked with a family who have very complex disability needs and needed assistance to access Adult Social Care to set up a comprehensive support package for a family member. Both Fiona and myself also supported a client to access palliative care. This was a very sensitive case drawing on both worker's skill, expertise and compassion.

Volunteers

The OSS has been blessed with having a very longstanding team of committed volunteers, Elena, Jasim and Ingrid. I believe everyone now has a minimum of 2 years experience. By having competent excellent volunteers who are able to take on cases, manage them from start to end, this has enabled the project to increase its capacity to provide a service to our clients. Over the past year the volunteers have fine-tuned their skills in working with challenging and difficult cases.

One of the OSS volunteers Sayka Naz left the project to take up employment with the NHS but she will now be returning to Refugee Forum to work part time with Into the Mainstream project.

Once again, I would like to thank our volunteers for their commitment and passion in supporting the work of the OSS.

Examples of Support

- Supported family fleeing domestic abuse to find a property within 48 hours of presenting to the service. Referred to partners Refugee Futures for floating support
- Assisted a vulnerable elderly destitute client who became homeless as a result of their asylum case being refused, to find temporary accommodation within their community whilst an application for more suitable accommodation is applied for.
- Assisted two working clients who are experiencing fuel poverty to challenge their debt and set up an affordable repayment plan. One client has been charged for over a year for gas, when they do not have any gas supplied to their property.
- Supported client with a Health & Safety prosecution for a serious accident resulting in the client becoming disabled. Provided advice and advocacy to understand the process, liaising with Nottingham City Council's Environmental Health team who took forward the prosecution.
- Supporting a wheelchair user, dispersed to Nottingham by UK BA, to access a wide range of health and social care services along with setting up a network of support from community groups which is attempting to relieve isolation and provide some meaningful activity.
- Supporting a victim of sexual assault who relocated to Nottingham from elsewhere in the UK following the attack. After finding suitable accommodation and signposting to healthcare services we are now supporting the individual to access education, training and wellbeing groups, and have made a referral to the Sexual Assault Referral Unit for specialist support
- Supported a family with a severely disabled daughter to find accommodation, access mainstream and disability benefits, access specialist services to support the daughter's needs which includes waiting for a kidney transplant.

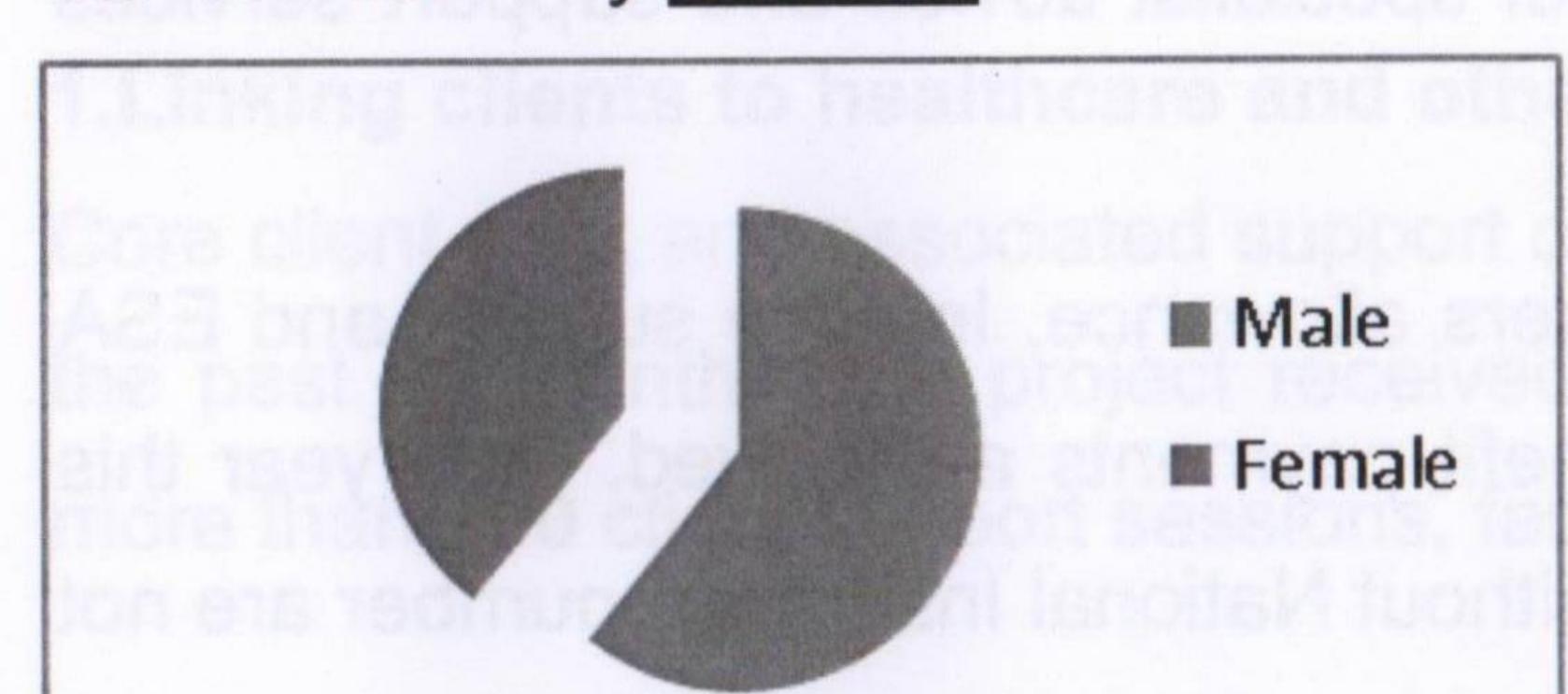
Simon Breen – One Stop Shop Advisor

WELFARE RIGHTS ADVICE

Firstly I would like to thank everyone at the forum (staff and Volunteers) for their dedication and support in a year which has been very uncertain for many of us. It has been a pleasure to work with so many individuals who work passionately and tirelessly to improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. The benefits advice sessions have been extremely busy October 2013 and September 2014 there were a total of 882 visits. Over the last 12 months I have met with clients from 24 different countries, with clients from Iran, Iraq, Eritrean and China being the most common.

The figures below show the detailed breakdown of clients according to their nationality, gender and household type.

Service users by Gender

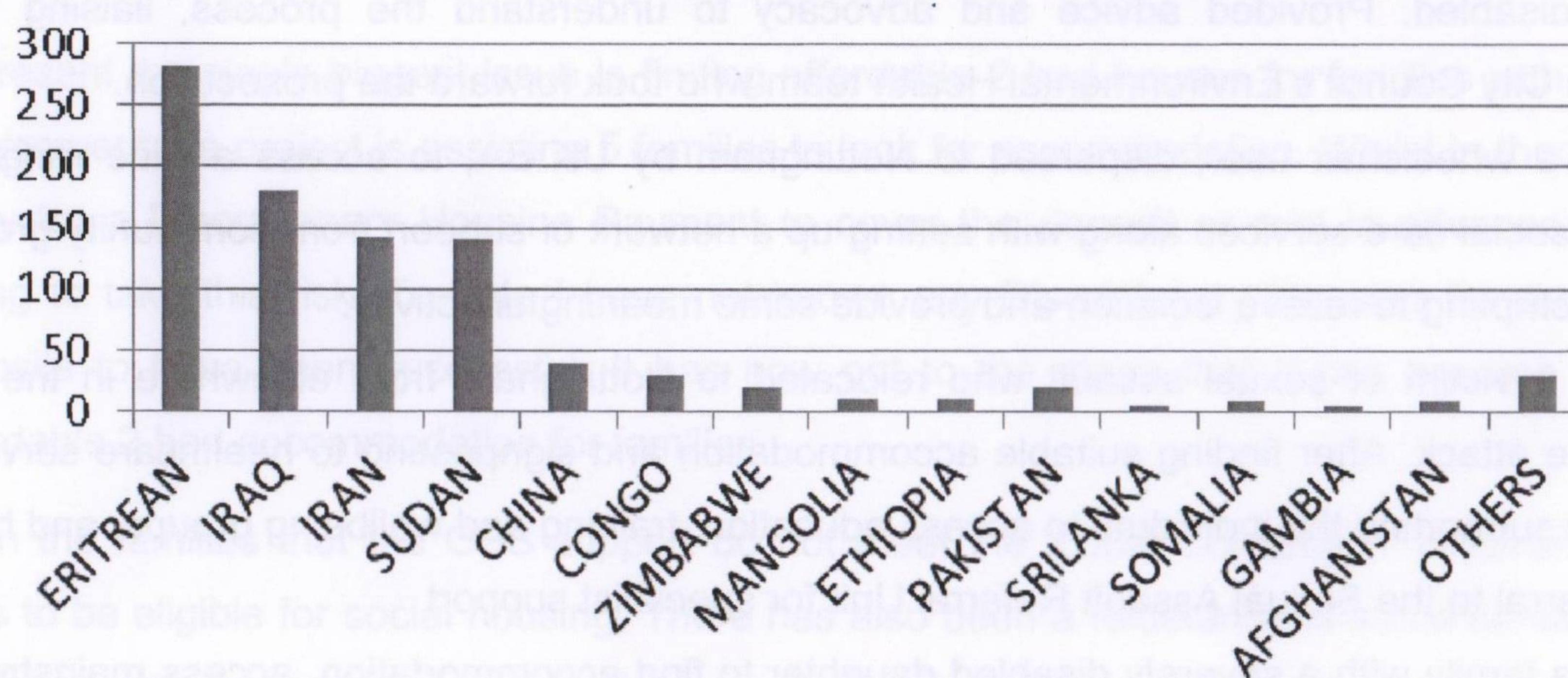


2014 was a year of implementation for the reformed benefits system. Although the biggest change the Universal Credit scheme has yet to be implemented across the nation it has been introduced in some regions. The biggest change so far

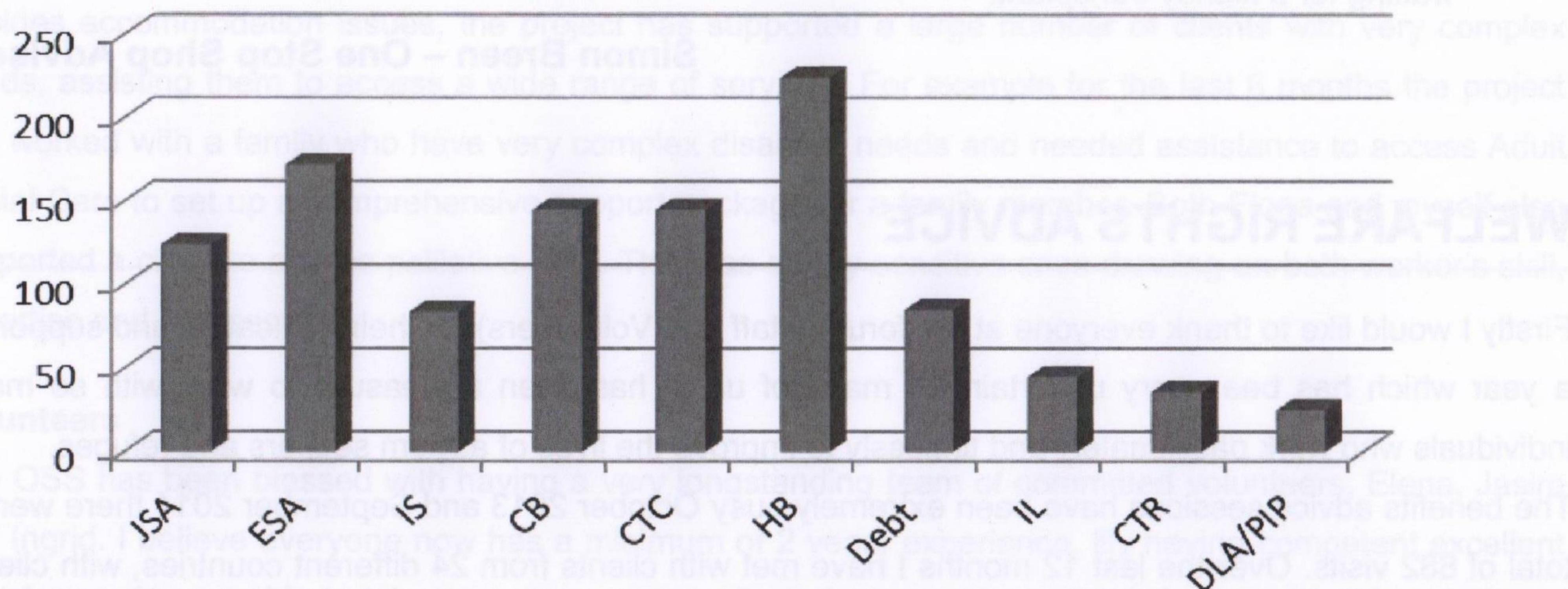
has been the PIP which replaced the Disability Allowance and the council tax reduction which replaced the council tax benefit. The introduction of bedroom tax and council tax reduction has so far been put in place too. The universal credit is expected to be fully implemented in Nottingham city from the start of 2014.

Although the forum and its working partners have repeatedly raised the issue of lack of information given to the hard to reach community groups including refugees, the problem still remains and many families and individuals are not aware how this change will affect them. It has been a busy year for the Benefit Advice with Welfare Reforms starting to show their impact on claimants. Changes to Tax Credit and Housing Benefit allowances will have a significant effect on the lives of many families around UK. With the

NATIONALITY AND NUMBERS OF CLIENTS



BENEFIT ENQUIRY TYPE



introduction of Universal Credit as well as the scrapping of Social Once leave to remain is granted, refugees are entitled to mainstream benefits; the majority of refugees are highly motivated to find employment and come off benefits, however they face various problems including language barriers, de-skilling as a result of years spent as asylum seekers and lack of specialist advice and support services which could enable them to prepare for employment.

After being granted status; refugees who are claiming Job seekers allowance, Income support and ESA there is an average of 6-7 weeks waiting time before their benefit payments are issued. This year this further increased to 7-8 weeks and most importantly claimants without National Insurance number are not

issued payment until their NI number is allocated to them. During the last year there have been other changes which have made the benefits delivery process for refugees a touch more difficult. The changes to working regulations of UKBA when dealing with SET (settlement Visa Applications) means that UKBA are no longer issuing clients with acknowledgement letter once they have received the application pack. Instead an invitation for Bio-Metric scan is sent to clients 4-6 weeks after receiving the application. During this period all benefit payments are stopped and clients are left with no income. In some cases the benefit delivery office has refused to accept Bio-metric invitation letters as prove of entitlement. One of the main problems we have come across during the last year is the amount of JSA sanctions and amount of job search requirements. Many refugees who had been granted leave to remain with a short period of arriving in UK are now expected to carry out 21 job searches per two weeks, most of the applications they must inquire about are only doable through the use of internet. This is unfair and totally unreasonable as most refugee claimants are firstly unable to use the web sufficiently and have language difficulties. The refugee forum is working with its advisory partners and Refugee Futures with the Department of work and Pensions to address those issues at a policy level.

ESA (employment support allowance): this benefit is hugely problematic and it has been criticized nationally as being unfair. Over 90% of clients who apply for ESA fail their medical assessments. Once a client fails an assessment other benefits such as Housing benefit are also suspended. This puts clients in high risk of getting into debt. Challenging ESA decision is made more difficult as the termination of ESA is immediate.

On the positive there is also a reduction in Tax credit enquiries this year. This is mainly a result of many clients who had been granted statuses through the legacy programme are completing Tax review forms for the first time second or third time and are more aware of the deadlines for tax review submission. However the most common issue faced by clients was an overpayment notice and cancellation of award due to non-returned review forms.

Thank you

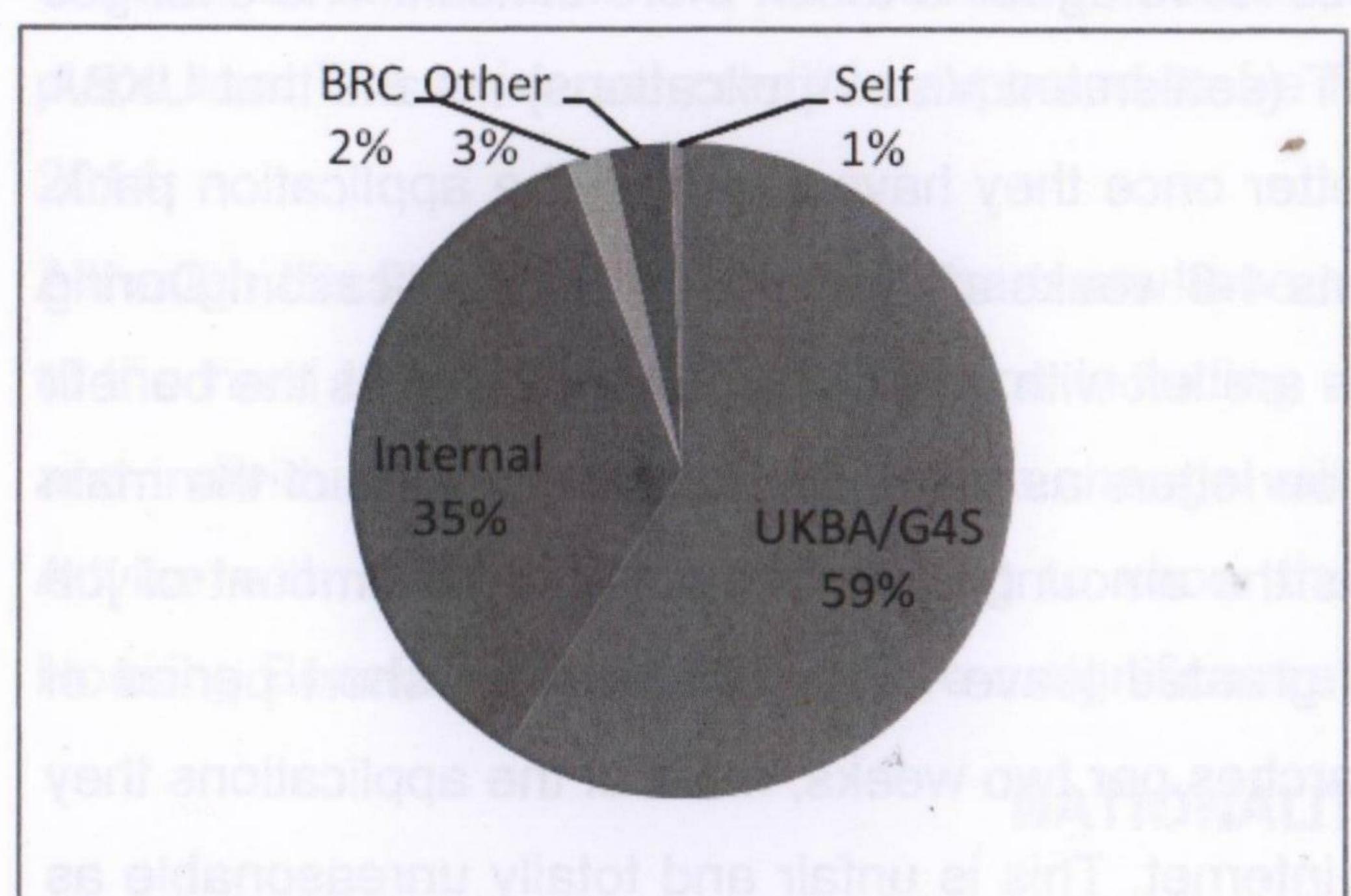
Mussie Kidane - Welfare Rights Adviser

INTO THE MAINSTREAM HEALTH PROJECT

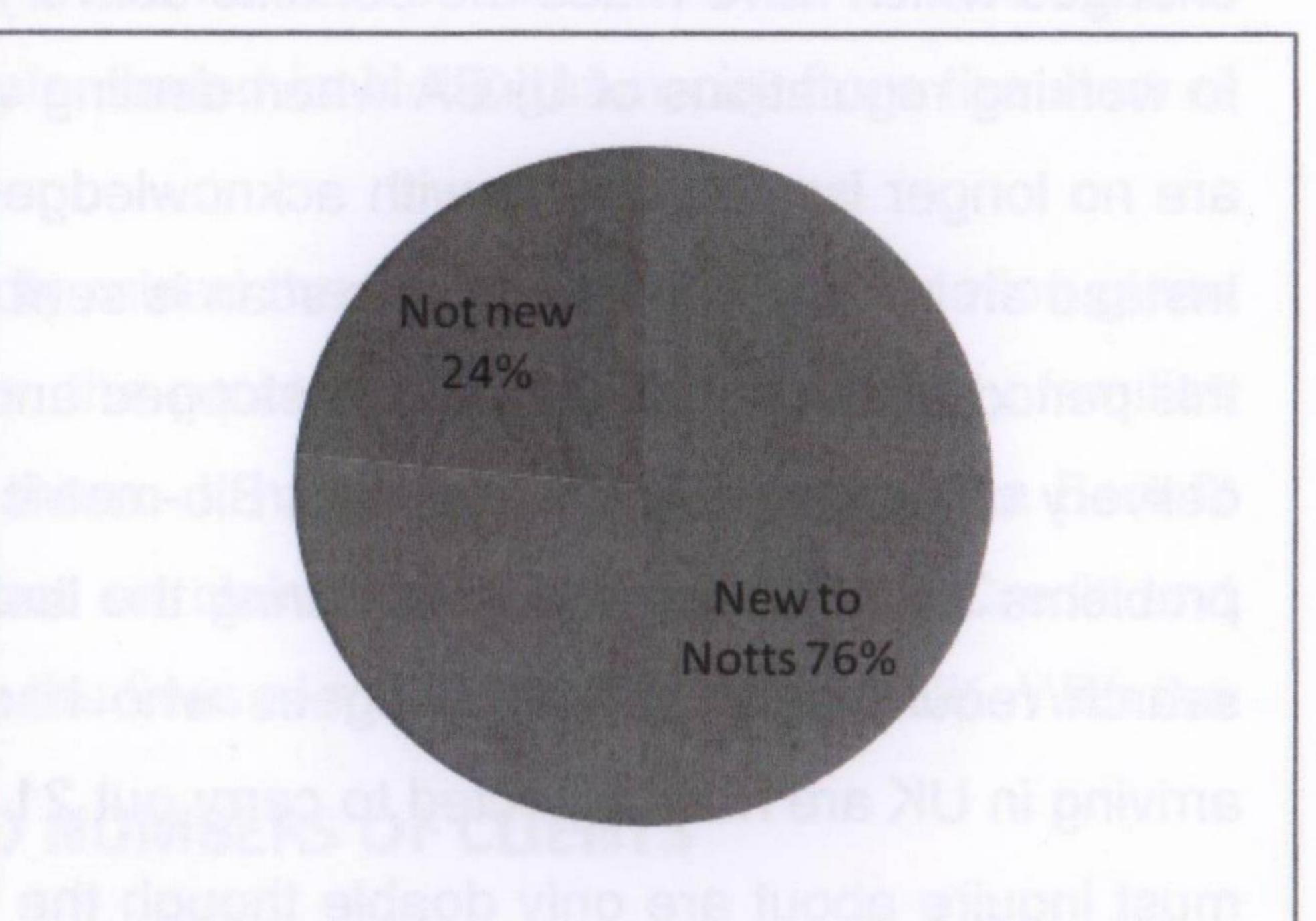
The Into the Mainstream Health (ItM) Project, which is currently funded by Nottingham City Council Public Health, continues to address the needs of clients at individual, organisational and systematic level. Some of the key activities of the project are summarised below, along with a breakdown of client data for the past 12 months.

1. Linking clients to healthcare and other services

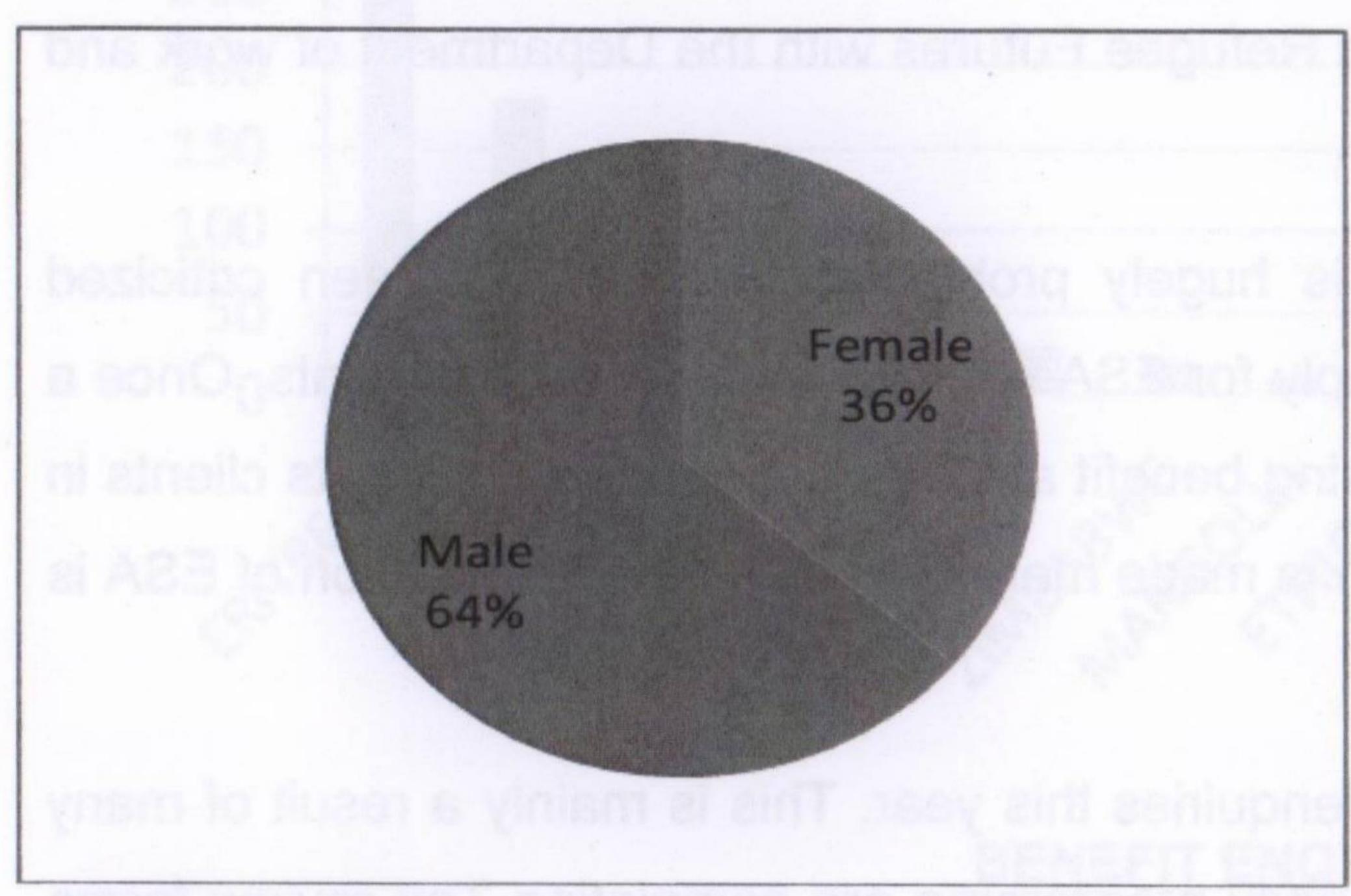
Core client work and associated support continue to be one of the project's main outputs. Over the past 12 months, the project received **324** new referrals (see below for breakdown) and carried out more than **700** client support sessions, face to face and over the phone.



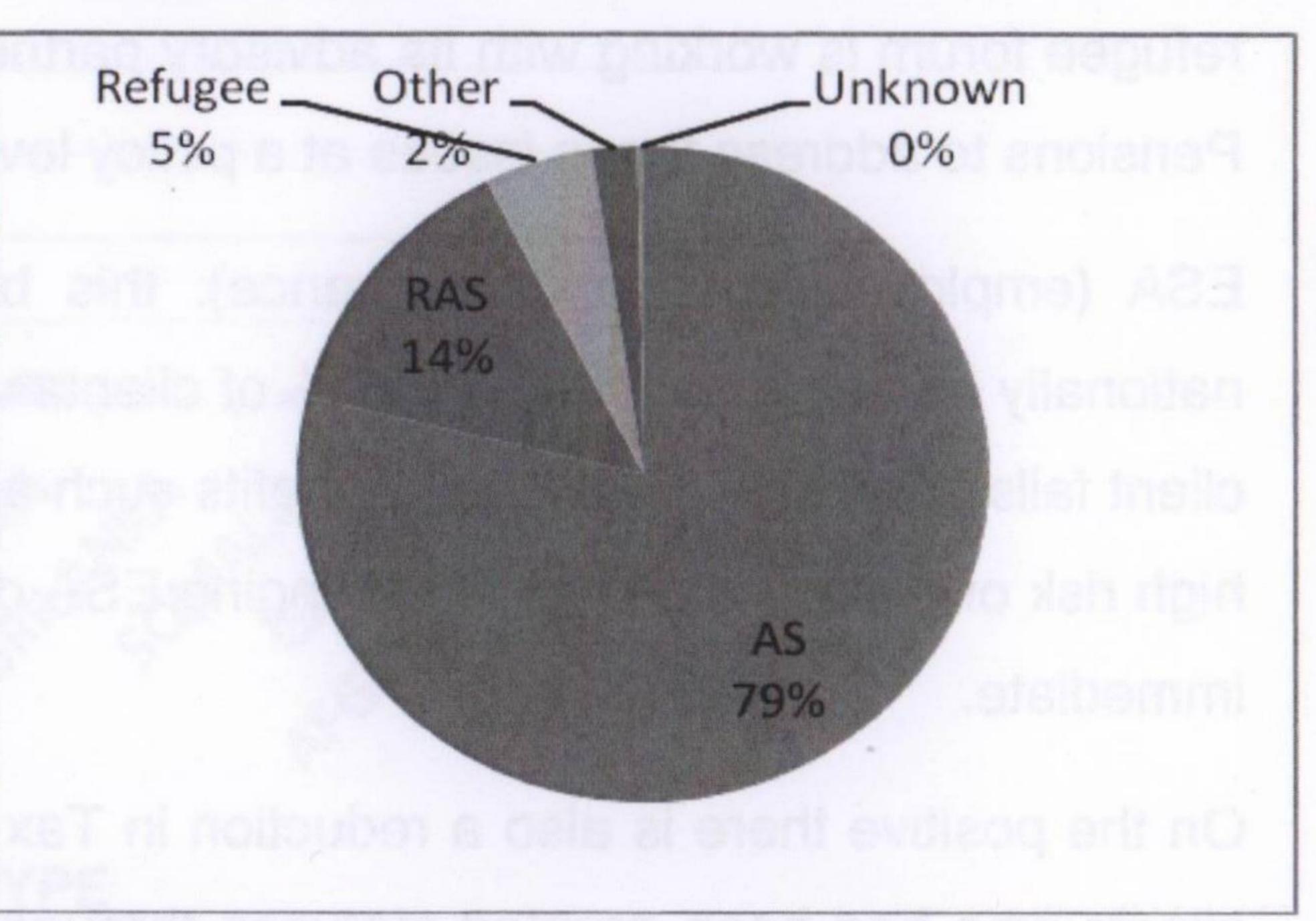
Source of referrals



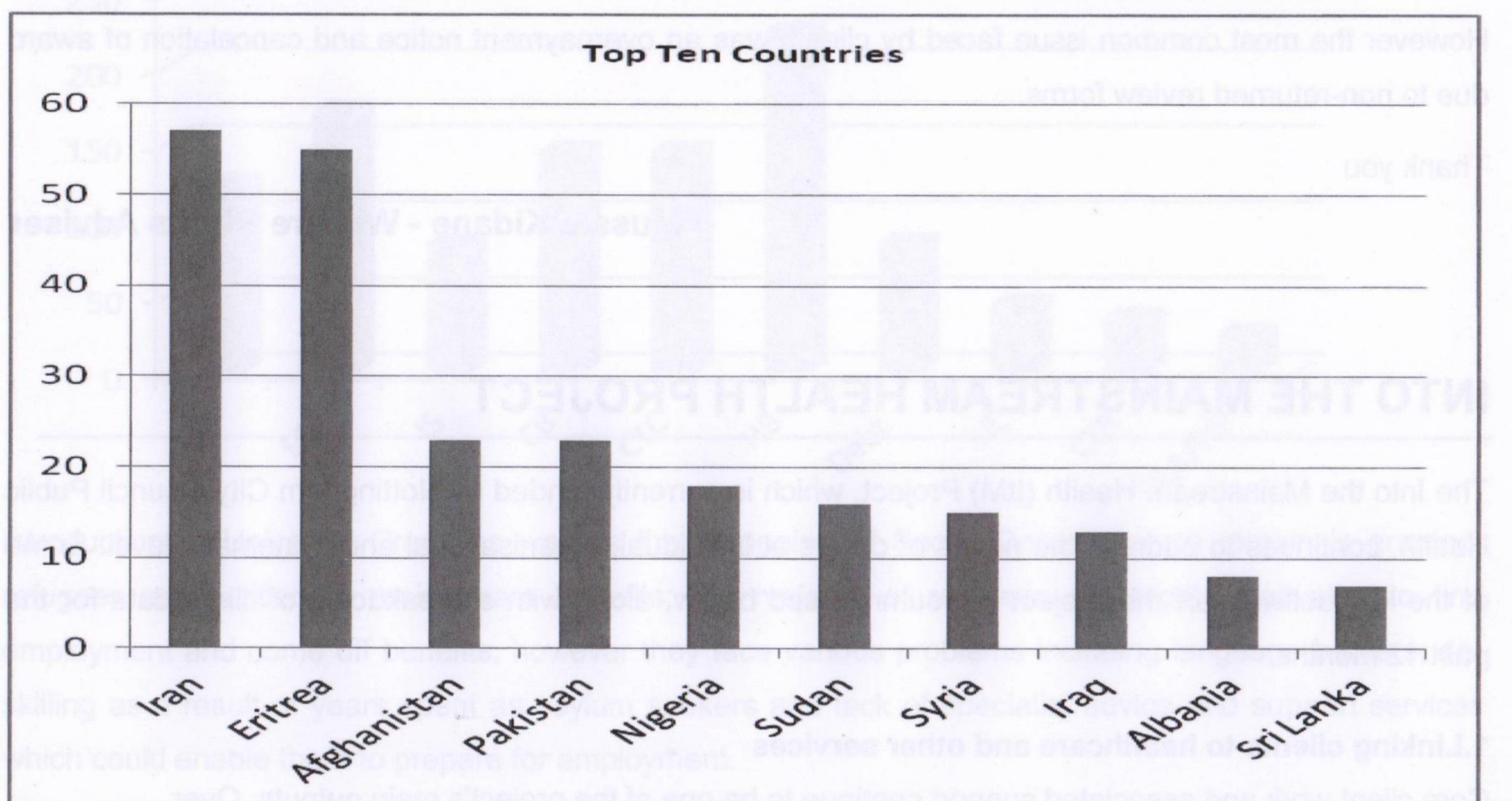
Immigration Status



Gender breakdown



Percentage of clients new to Nottingham



Difficulties around accessing health services: By and large, the majority of GP practices in Nottingham City are now familiar with seeing and serving asylum seekers amongst their patient population. However, that does not necessarily equate to smooth and trouble-free care or process. Clients still encounter difficulties relating to documentation such as proof of address or eligibility, along with further barriers due to an increasing number of them being unable to communicate in English. The language issue has proved particularly problematical as GP surgeries do not offer interpreting services at the registration stage. This can often lead to some clients being turned away despite their having all the necessary paperwork. In such cases, there is a need for further support, including accompanying clients to GP practices at times. Rigid appointment systems and, apparently, increasing pressure on GP services are also adding to the difficulties facing our clients. In addition to dealing with primary healthcare providers, we continue to support clients to understand and navigate complex hospital referrals and appointments, as well as assisting them to prove their eligibility for NHS care.

1. Other challenges around client care: One of the key concerns that was brought to our attention this year was in regard to young children being excluded from GP registration on the basis that they either did not have their 'Red Books' or that their UK vaccinations were not up to date. This caused some alarm among professionals working with these families. As a result, we raised the issue with NHS England and with the Local Area Teams that commission GP services; and we have since been reassured that the issue was raised with the practices involved as a matter of concern, and that guidance would be issued to all practices highlighting the importance of meeting children's care in their respective localities.

2. Training for NHS

The project delivered 4 training sessions for healthcare professionals (mental healthcare staff GPs/primary care staff) since last report with a total of 62 attendees. In general, these sessions examined the rights and entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers to accessing healthcare under UK law, including eligibility for NHS care at primary and secondary level. We also look at confidentiality issues since the Home Office and the DoH agreed to share certain NHS information, as well as considering practical aspects around registration to avoid complications, especially for undocumented patients. In addition, we cover the asylum process, definitions of asylum seekers and refugees and governing laws; together with the health care needs and experiences of this patient group, and barriers to accessing healthcare. The sessions are made as interactive as possible with case studies taken from real clients' experiences; and at end, each participant receives a training pack with a range of useful material and key links.

3. Key developments

Since February this year, the ItM has been working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Nottingham City Council Public Health and a lead GP on the implementation of a locally enhanced service for asylum seekers which was re-commissioned from April 2014 to April 2017. Although this will involve extra work on our part, it is anticipated that eligible clients (those registering in Nottingham for the first time who did not have a new patient health check elsewhere in the UK), will face fewer difficulties in the process. On a different positive note, we have also now established an annual training day for newly qualified GPs who are in their final year of supervised practice. Working with GPs at the start of their careers and increasing their knowledge and understanding of the nature, needs and realities of refugees

and asylum seekers is a welcome development. In addition, we worked with the CCG to issue a simple and easy to-follow NHS complaints leaflet which is now in circulation and is being translated into other languages.

4. Work around NHS debt

We continue to spend a significant amount of time assisting clients who have been issued with NHS debt notices for, in some cases, many thousands of pounds. Clients in such situations are usually very distressed and worried about the consequences of these debts, which are often accompanied by either threats of court actions or their details being passed to debt collectors. Earlier this year, we supported a particular family who received an invoice for just under £12,000 for treatments provided within the previous three weeks and who were told that charges would amount to over £50,000 in a matter of a few weeks. This family was incredibly distressed about the situation and about the possibility of life-saving treatment being withdrawn. However, with much effort and research, the Trust concerned agreed with us in the end that the family was, after all, eligible for free healthcare.

5. Challenges ahead

As is now known, a new Immigration Act came into force earlier this summer, under which access to healthcare for certain groups of migrants will be restricted. One of the groups that will be impacted by this new Act is refused asylum seekers who, as a result of destitution, generally tend to have poor mental and physical health. While the official line is that no one will be denied urgent and immediately necessary treatment, in reality, this will have serious consequences for both the individuals concerned, including pregnant women, and for our work. Further concerns about the new regulations will be the effects that these will have on eligible asylum seekers due to the inevitable confusion and misunderstanding about what the changes actually mean in practice. Secondary legislation operationalising these changes is to come before Parliament in the next few weeks, and the first implementation phase is expected to start early next year.

6. Volunteers

The ItM project benefits hugely from the skills and dedication of our two committed volunteers: Jill Rapoport and Caroline Apergis; and Dan and I would like to thank them once again for their valued time and contributions over the past 12 months.

Kinsi Clarke and Daniel Robertson – ITM Advisers

ANTI-DESTITUTION SUPPORT

The destitution team is run by a strong team of volunteers who come in every week to provide support and friendship to our clients who have had their cases refused and are in a state of destitution. One in five Home Office decisions are overturned on appeal which indicates that there are a significant amount of people whose applications are ultimately granted and nonetheless have suffered periods of destitution while they go about proving this. We believe that no one should have their support taken from them while they pursue their right to challenge a Home Office decision on their case and will continue to work hard in solidarity with them.



Saturday Group

We have spent another year at the Saturday Group giving a hot meal and two bags of shopping to those whose support has been discontinued and who find themselves destitute. The Saturday Group has provided 1013 meals in this period to an average of 21 people every week. This is similar to last year. People from all over the world have attended the Saturday Group and we have also had the pleasure of sampling delicious and diverse food from Africa, Asia and Europe in particular.

IRAN	GHANA	PALESTINE	TOGO	KENYA	AFGHANISTAN
15	4	2	1	1	1
ZIMBABWE	ALGERIA	MACEDONIA	ANGOLA	SOMALIA	
12	4	2	1	1	
GAMBIA	PAKISTAN	BURUNDI	ETHIOPIA	CAMEROON	
7	4	2	1	1	
IRAQ	NIGERIA	MONGOLIA	INDIA	EGYPT	
6	4	2	1	1	
SUDAN	SIERRA LEONE	KUWAIT	SYRIA	GUINEA	
4	3	1	1	1	
ERITREA	LIBYA	IVORY COAST	UGANDA	CHINA	
4	2	1	1	1	

TOTAL : 92 CLIENTS (72 MALE / 20 FEMALE)

In March Ivan Mvuyekure won the High Sheriff of Nottingham's Unsung Hero Award. This was in recognition of his work at the Saturday Group in particular where he cooks, welcomes people to reception and helps out in all ways to make the group run well. He has done this for over two years and this nomination was well deserved. This was a great achievement and won the Anti-destitution fund £500.

Our friends at Himmah provide food sourced from an outside caterer once a month which gives the



volunteer cooks a bit of a break. We are very grateful to Himmah for their ongoing support which they have made for many years.

We had a great Christmas party this year! Angela McCormack created a feast of epic proportions for everyone, cooked with great love and to an amazing standard. We all had a fabulous time and thank all the people who volunteered on the day to help make the party so much fun.

Cash Group

The Tuesday morning Cash Group gives our clients a small allowance (£10-£20) per 4 week period which is designed to provide something in the way of personal funds which could go on travel expenses or phone credit for example. Whilst the amounts we can give clients are limited to our financial resources we find that our clients do find it useful. We hold a drop-in advice session for destitute clients at the same time as the Tuesday group in order to catch up with clients and assist with any case issues that may have arisen since their last visit.

IRAN 39	NIGERIA 5	SIERRA LEONE 3	MACEDONIA 2	KUWAIT 1	TANZANIA 1
ZIMBABWE 16	GHANA 5	LIBYA 2	CHINA 1	PALESTINE 1	TOGO 1
IRAQ 13	PAKISTAN 3	MONGOLIA 2	CONGO 1	ANGOLA 1	UGANDA 1
ALGERIA 6	SUDAN 4	INDIA 2	GUINEA 1	SOMALIA 1	CAMEROON 1
ERITREA 7	GAMBIA 4	BURUNDI 2	IVORY COAST 1	SRI LANKA 1	AFGHANISTAN 1

TOTAL: 127 CLIENTS (108 MALE/ 19 FEMALE)
£11,250 GIVEN OUT SEPTEMBER 2013 –AUGUST 2014

Accommodation

One of the major issues facing destitute asylum seekers is where they are to live. With no recourse to public funds many people face homelessness and a life of sofa surfing and in some cases rough sleeping. The projects listed below provide accommodation for people in these situations. Naturally these resources are scarce and there is much demand on individual places. The provision made by these projects is vital and provide a lifeline to people who are facing homelessness as well as extenuating health issues.

Organisation	Number of placements
NOTTINGHAM ARIMATHEA TRUST	8
HOST NOTTINGHAM (Local volunteers)	5

Moving on

30 people have left the service, moving on to either long term support such as Section 4 via the Home Office or through making their own arrangements outside of Nottingham. Unfortunately we have had two clients removed and sent to their country.

Leave to remain : 3	Assisted Voluntary Return: 2	Children's Services: 1
Left Nottingham : 7	Section 4 : 15	Removed: 2



Gemma Pillay - Anti-Destitution Co-ordinator

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

The children's project started in September 2009 with the post of a part time children's worker being funded by Children in Need. We were successful in securing further funding to take the project up to September 2015. The project aims to improve outcomes for refugee and asylum seeking children and young people through the provision of activities that reduce social isolation as well as catering for children and young people's emotional and developmental needs. It also provides family support, advocacy and awareness raising and has developed good working relationships and partnerships with outside agencies.



Issues children face:

The experience of being a child within the asylum process has far reaching consequences. For these children and families their lives are characterised by uncertainty about the future. Some of the many ways in which the experience impacts on family life includes financial deprivation, poor quality, temporary housing, social isolation and exclusion and the breakdown of wider family relationships or support networks. The financial restrictions and deprivation only add to the social isolation that this group of

young people experience. Access to wider services is limited for many reasons, for example, lack of awareness, confidence and language.

Project aims and attendances:

The project widens the horizons of children by providing activities that reduce social isolation, enabling them to access to leisure opportunities that families could not otherwise afford as well as catering for children and young people's emotional and developmental needs. The project takes a holistic approach, emphasising parental involvement and the establishment of community links to promote integration and access to wider service provision. From September 2013 to August 2014 we worked with two hundred and thirty three individual children under 16 and had over six hundred attendances by children at the project's sessions. Countries of origin of the children included Nigerian, Eritrean, Chinese, Algerian, Libyan, Indian, Egyptian, Afghan, Ghanaian, Kurdish, Mongolian and Russian.

Activities and events:

During the school term we have provided a weekly Stay and Play for under fives as part of the Women's Group and worked with children's centres to deliver a stay and play for families at our local centre.

During school holidays our activity provision extends to include older children and their families. Over the last year we have taken families to the cinema twice, held art and craft sessions at Nottingham Contemporary and at Playworks, visited Stonebridge city farm, attended the International Children's Festival at Nottingham University, organised a Christmas event, held play sessions in parks including a play day at Wollaton Park, and have taken two coaches to the seaside during the summer. We have also delivered therapeutic yoga and art sessions in collaboration with Yoganova and Playworks to give children who have faced particularly difficult issues the space to relax and express themselves creatively.

Observations at sessions testify to the establishment of strong friendship groups and networks that extend beyond our centre. Through attending, support networks are formed and community relations are established. Children tell us that "I like to come here because we meet new friends", "Coming to activities makes me feel a part of things" and "It makes me feel... not left out. We always have fun".

Parents have commented not only on the impact on their children but also on their own emotional wellbeing and their feedback includes the following quotes: "The project has increased my social life, helped me to integrate with people from different cultures...I have explored many areas through the project" and "it has helped us to gain a sense of community and family".

Referrals:

A substantial part of the project's work is direct family support through one to one case holding. This enables the project to work closely with individual children or families who need to address specific issues. The project takes a holistic approach; often approaching children's needs through the parents conditions. In 2014, up to the end of the summer, we received thirty-nine referrals (sixty-three children) and carried out sustained work with twelve of these families (twenty-four children). Issues are varied and include additional needs (autism, cerebral palsy), long term illness, post-traumatic stress, domestic abuse, parental mental health and destitution. We have worked with other agencies such as the Autism team, children's centres, schools, Women's Aid and social care to ensure that an appropriate support plan is in place. We participated in social care and CAF multi agency meetings to provide support for the family and report on emotional and behavioural changes. There has been a marked increase in working with destitute/no recourse to public funds families this year, with nine of our families facing destitution. Much of the work with these families has focussed on supporting them through the process of being assessed by social care and pushing for them to be financially supported and housed appropriately.

Development and other work:

The project also undertakes development and outreach with partner agencies, and also provides training and advice. To increase awareness of the needs of our client group we have worked in partnership with local children's centres, play and youth workers, schools, and the voluntary sector locally. Previously we have worked with Nottingham University's Children and Childhood Network and we collaborated with them again this summer to carry out preliminary research into children and young people's resilience with plans to develop this further next year. The aim of this initial project was to explore the experiences, resilience and identities of our children with a focus on family and friendship dynamics, negotiations of different identities in alternative contexts and emotional connections with different places.

This has been implemented through the use of child-centred participatory techniques including interviews,



drawings and photography in order to help children to express themselves both orally and visually.

Finally, I would like say thank you to those who have been involved in helping to plan and deliver this year's programme of activities. It has been a busy year filled with lots of memorable moments. Having returned from maternity leave in February, I want to say how great it is to be back and that I am looking forward to developing the project further this coming year.

Liz Burrell – Children and Families

YOUNG PEOPLE

Thanks to an additional small grant from Children in Need, more focused work with young people has been carried out in the last year, with a particular focus on young asylum seekers and refugees aged 16-18. This work with young people includes those living with families seeking asylum, separated young people in the care of the local authority (UASCs), young people in private fostering arrangements, and

refugee young people.

Navigating a complex asylum system and adapting to life in the UK create specific challenges for young people seeking refuge. These include language barriers, lack of social support, and a long period of uncertainty while they are waiting for their immigration status to be decided. Much research has documented the anxiety felt by children and young people during the asylum process, and in particular the feelings of being in limbo and unable to plan for their future. In one report, the children and young people interviewed felt that whilst waiting for a decision "it was not worth pursuing education" and they "did not feel able to engage with life in the United Kingdom" (UNICEF UK 2010-levelling the playing field). While children and young people are often remarkably courageous and resilient in the face of adversity, the treatment they receive once in the UK can have both a positive and negative effect on their emotional well-being. In a recent survey carried out by Refugee Action, A group of young asylum seekers (aged 16 to 25) were asked how seeking asylum made them feel. 76% said they "rarely" felt optimistic about their future; 76% felt unable to make their own decisions; and 100% felt useful "none of the time" or "rarely". For children and young people, knowledge of their rights, and access to advice and representation, is just as important as it is for adults. Research has highlighted how receiving appropriate advice and guidance leads to improvements in the physical, mental, social and emotional well being of young people. Our work with young people aims to empower them to understand and realise their rights within the immigration and welfare system, reduce social isolation through a programme of events and activities, and increase their awareness and orientation to the local area and access to youth specific services.

We have been able to run weekly youth sessions which provide a safe space for young people to meet each other and participate in a range of activities such as English lessons, games, table tennis, basketball and crafts. We have included relevant interactive workshops and information sessions, such as first aid, access to education/university, dance and drama, and health promotion advice. We have also organised trips to local places of interest. Recent trips have included taking young people cycling, campus trips to Nottingham Trent and Nottingham University, bowling, ice skating, visiting Nottingham castle and caves, Nottingham Contemporary, and the Fire Station.

Work has also included individual case-work, advocacy, mentoring, guidance and signposting to other relevant services and organisations in the City.

A total number of 46 different young people from 13 different countries have accessed the additional youth provision in the past 10 months.

Young people said:

"I've enjoyed everything, working as a group, making new friends and doing different activities. It has been totally amazing for me."

"We are meeting each other and are friendly together...we're from different countries- we come together as one here...no one is discriminated."

"I have enjoyed everything really, especially making more friends and we got to meet people from the NHS which was something very helpful."

"This is the only group I'm involved in at the moment."

"It showed me the way I get help here with school etc."

"We did a university trip, fire service workshop and learnt about healthy relationships."

"It's really important, it's fun and I find something to do. I don't get bored."

Partnership working:

We have worked in partnership with many organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sector in the city and are building good links with a number of organisations who support young people e.g. NGY MyPlace/Base 51, Nottingham Futures, Nottingham City and County Children's services, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Trent University Outreach Team, NHS health promotion team, Refugee Council Children's Panel, local solicitors, the Fire Station, NCVS, Travelright.

Future work

We have applied for further funding to continue to develop the youth work. We have started an orientation group for newly arrived young people alongside the weekly NCOURAGE youth group. We would like to be able to extend the work for young people beyond the age of 18 up to age 21. Young asylum seekers (particularly unaccompanied young people) who are about to turn 18 are often dealing with a great degree of uncertainty and undergoing a variety of unsettling transitions. They may be moving on from foster care and receiving a reduction in support from social services, and also many have unresolved asylum claims. Mental health problems that may have been under control while there was some security in the young person's life may re-emerge at this time. It is extremely important that this group of young people receive the right support and information to support them during this time of transition.



Naomi Jemmett – Young People

VOLUNTEERING at NNRF

Volunteers are at the heart of the Refugee Forum – supporting staff members with casework and activities, providing advice, welcoming visitors, fundraising and representing our organisation in the community. 2014 has been an extremely busy year also because of the historic move, which could have not gone as smoothly as it did had we not have a team of over 20 dedicated volunteers who cleaned, tidied and packed up a decade's worth of "stuff" from the Square Centre, and re-assembled bits and pieces of our busy work lives at the Sycamore Centre.

In 2014 we have been supported by **163 volunteers**, and almost half of them just joined Refugee Forum this year. Our volunteers come from all kinds of backgrounds, and there is more than a five decade's age gap between our youngest and oldest volunteers. What remains a key priority is offering volunteering opportunities to refugees and asylum seekers. The latter are especially keen on volunteering, since they

are interested in learning new or maintaining existing skills, giving back to the community and wanting to feel useful whilst they wait for a decision from the Home Office. **About one third of all NNRF volunteers come from refugee & asylum seeking background**, and the Forum wouldn't have been the same without their energy and enthusiasm.

General advice is one of the main NNRF services and is run entirely by volunteers. In 2014, we have inducted and trained 34 new volunteers. Altogether there have been 60 general advisers volunteering this year, giving over 580 hours of advice to increasing numbers of service users. Most of our advisers come from the host community, including students, jobseekers, employed and retired.

Reception is the first point of contact for all visitors to NNRF. We've had 20 volunteer receptionists this year, including eight brand new volunteers joining us in 2014. They are the face of the organisation, and can welcome NNRF visitors in 15 languages!

The **Youth Project**, hosted by NGY - My Space in town, has enabled young asylum seekers to feel at home in Nottingham, and with help of seven volunteers assisting with the project in the past year, the young people have learnt new skills, explored their creativity and got a voice of their own.

We are grateful for the long-standing volunteers providing advice and dealing with complex casework with **OISC, One stop shop & housing support**, and **Into the Mainstream** health project. Having been with us for years, these volunteers have accumulated knowledge and experience to help our busy staff members go an extra mile and save lives.

Our work with destitute asylum seekers also enjoys great support from volunteers: 26 volunteers (more than half of them asylum seekers) are split between the **Cash Group**, providing monthly small cash grants, and **Food Group** which provides a hot meal every Saturday as well as food and personal items to those left without anything.

In relation to their work, we have extended our cooperation with ASDA this year in the form of monthly **fundraising** at their supermarket in Hyson Green. Every last Wednesday of each month, a group of volunteers equipped with NNRF T-shirts and buckets assists the customers with packing their shopping bags. At the same time they provide valuable information on NNRF services as well as offer correct and up to date information on the situation asylum seekers find themselves in upon arriving to this country. We are pleased that the fundraising project has been developed through training and supervision, with assistance from ASDA staff. We are just hoping to continue our efforts in 2015, and see more volunteers joining the cause each month. Between January and October, more than 40 volunteers participated in bag packing and raised over £1,900. We hope to reach £2,500 by this Christmas.

We are also thankful to some individual volunteers taking a stance and raising funds for our anti-destitution work through completing personal challenges. We are living in difficult times so every act of kindness is very much appreciated. It has been a challenge to try to raise money to support a group of people the British public opinion is trying to "send home" but our volunteers and supporters are a proof that there are still plenty of people with their hearts in the right places.

Volunteering with NNRF can get stressful, overwhelming, tiring, and it comes with a lot of responsibility. I am glad to say that most volunteers prefer to focus on the positive side of it, take it as a learning opportunity, expand their horizons, and simply enjoy making a difference in other people's lives. I can

never thank our volunteers enough for their invaluable contribution to our work and to the lives they change through their involvement with NNRF, whether by providing advice or simply offering a warm empathetic smile to a desperate person. I am inspired by you. Your determination to make Nottingham a more welcoming and safe place for the world's refugees and asylum seekers makes me love my job and helps me through challenging times.

I intentionally didn't name any of the volunteers, because I respect and appreciate you all equally. You know who you are, anyway.

THANK YOU.

Barbara Spreiz

Volunteer Co-ordinator

P.S.: In case you have missed the "Thank you, Volunteers" wall set up at the Square Centre during 2014 Volunteering week in June, here are some samples of NNRF staff's appreciation of our volunteers. As it stated, *there would be no NNRF without you!*

"We don't always show our appreciation but thank you guys! You actually give your time to ensure the day to day running of the Forum goes smoothly, that in itself says a lot about the kind of people you are!"

"It's too easy to take you for granted and forget that you're here because you want to make a difference in the world, but whatever you do, you are appreciated."

"I've only worked here a short time but have already been so impressed with the motivation, professionalism and friendliness of Refugee Forum volunteers. It's such a pleasure to work with you and I'd like to thank you for helping me ease into my new role."

"All of the volunteers have made me feel completely welcome and have been so supportive since I have started at the Forum. It has been a pleasure to work with them all."

"You are the oil which smooths The Forum's journey

You are the glue which binds The Forum together

You are the tracks which guides The Forum forward

You are the lifeblood at the heart of The Forum

I'm no poet but thank-you, thank-you, thank-you to all the volunteers who I have worked with over the years past and present. Your dedication is astounding. Without you I could not do what I do."

Barbara Spreiz - Volunteer Co-ordinator

NOTTINGHAM REFUGEE WEEK - 2014



This year's Refugee Week was another resounding success with 13 events taking place throughout the week. Over 1,000 people attended, over 40 volunteers contributed their time and 14 local organisations were involved in the planning and programming. Without their support it simply would not have happened. We thank them all.

Highlights included:

'Celebrating Refugee Week' launch event at the Nottingham Contemporary, which comprised an afternoon of family friendly arts, a musical performance from Zimbabwean-born *Blessing Magore*, international food cooked by our very own Women's Culture Exchange, games and information stalls. Almost 300 people attended throughout the afternoon.

"Came today for the kid's art class, pleasantly surprised to also have been able to take part in this event. Thank you!"

"Amazing is an understatement. Well planned and food was excellent!!! Keep it up!!!"

"I'm far from family for long time cos there is a war in Syria. Thanks guys."

"More of these events please! Had good time and met new, interesting people! Thanks."

In the run up to the event Nottingham Contemporary organised a workshop facilitated by Associate Artist, Sian Watson-Taylor for the Refugee Forum's Youth group. The young people developed their own interactive activity which encouraged visitors to create postcards from parts of the world. They then ran the activity during the Launch.

Throughout June the Central Library showed an exhibition by local artist *Jasim Ghafur*. Entitled **'Continuum'**, it featured a selection of his work produced during the 12 years he has been in the UK. Also at the Central Library was **'Read Hear/Live music and literature event'**, which was an opportunity to celebrate Refugee Week with music and readings.

The New Art Exchange had two exhibitions; one by *Babak Bordbar*, an Iranian photojournalist, called **'Jigsaw; the Eastern Piece'**, and **'When the war was over: European refugees after 1945'**. The former showing images of trust and friendship, the latter based on a research project looking at population displacement and resettlement following WW2.

Over 200 people attended a **'World Music Night'** benefit in the Contemporary Café Bar featuring local

bands *Ngoma*, *MuHa* and Ethiopian-born singer-songwriter, *Haiki*. A good time was had by all and over £300 was raised for NNRF's Anti-Destitution Fund and HOST Nottingham.

The annual **RefuTea**, organised by the Women's Culture Exchange, was held at Nottingham City Council's Loxley House and was once again well attended, despite clashing with other fundraising events taking place in the same space.

For the second year running a **Film Festival** was organised, which screened three films at various venues around the city: *'Hotel Sahara'* at Five Leaves Bookshop on Long Row; *'The Visitor'* at the Central Library; and *'Leave to Remain'* at the Broadway; A fourth event, *'Vocal'* at the New Art Exchange, showed clips of films that shed light on the arduous journeys that asylum seekers undertake in the hope of a better future, followed by a panel discussion. Just under £200 was raised in donations across all four venues.

The Refugee Forum's event for the week was **'Refugees got Talent'**, held at The Square Centre. It featured an evening of entertainment and celebration of talent from around the world, along with food and prizes.

NCBI Notts hosted a public event at the All Souls Community Centre entitled **'Words Apart: Can we build bridges across language?'** The event gave an opportunity to learn more about the issues affecting refugees and included upbeat activities and discussions.

Funding for the week came from NNRF, New Communities Alliance, TunTum Housing, and the British Red Cross.

Once again without the hard work, dedication and commitment of everyone involved in Nottingham Beyond Borders, as well as other professionals in the sector, community groups and activists, Nottingham Refugee Week 2014 would not have been anywhere near as successful as it was.

Dave Hewitt - Nottingham Beyond Borders

NEW COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE (NCA)

NNRF is the lead organisation in NCA, a consortium that was established in April 2014 as part of Nottingham City Council 'Communities of Identity' funding.

Along with our 17 partner organisations we deliver activities and services that help people from refugee, asylum seekers and new & emerging communities to get the right support & advice, provide appropriate skills and confidence building activities, and enable them to become active citizens. The funding also supports the development of strong and vibrant community groups and organisations so that they are more able to represent and provide appropriate activities for their members. We also administer a grants scheme for small grass roots groups outside of the consortium.

In this financial year we are committed to providing advice, information and guidance to at least 3,500 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants living in the city.

For NNRF the funding provided through the consortium goes towards our One Stop Shop Advisers, the Partnership Coordinator and costs of running the Centre. The funding has also provided new 'advice' and

'development' workers for a number of partners as well as small amounts of money to others to help with their survival and to continue supporting members of their communities.

Our partner organisations are: The Signpost to Polish Success (0.8 Advice Worker / 0.5 Eastern European Outreach Worker); BELONG (0.8 Careers & Employability Adviser / 0.5 African Advice Worker hosted by AISD / 0.2 African Community Development Worker); Emmanuel House (Eastern European Sessional Worker hours); BEGIN (Basic Educational Guidance in Nottinghamshire); Nottingham Sports Group (Annual Sports Festival); Nottingham Beyond Borders (Refugee Week); Inspiring Greatness (delivering workshops in social enterprise and income generation to small community organisations both inside and outside NCA); East African Education Centre; Eritrean Community Nottingham: African Institute for Social Development (AISD); Rainbow Project; Gambian Welfare Association; Nottingham Zimbabwean Community Network; Cameroon Support Group; Somali Unity and Cultural Centre; Nigerian Community Group; Nottingham Afghan Association.

Some achievements and developments to date:

- We have exceeded most of our targets for the first two quarters.
- Nottingham Sports Group organised a very successful Sports Day in August on the Forest Recreation Ground with around 400 people participating and supporting the various sports activities.
- The Signpost for Polish Success is currently undertaking research into the needs of other Eastern European communities in the city. The report will be launched in March 2015.
- BELONG have started to work with most of the African community organisations both inside and outside the consortium with the aim of forming an African Consortium.
- Both the Somali Unity & Cultural Centre and the Nottingham Zimbabwe Community Network have managed to find affordable premises from which to provide support to community members, while a significant number of other smaller community groups are sharing space with more established organisations.
- In the first funding round of the Small Grants Scheme, grants were awarded to the newly formed community groups: Blue Nile Ethiopian Association Nottingham to enable them to organise a community event that will launch the organisation, assess needs and plan projects; and the Romanian Society East Midlands to run a series of ESOL classes and encourage participants to get more involved in the new organisation.

NCA is managed by a Partnership Coordinator who provides support and advice to partners (as well as to community groups outside of the consortium), organises quarterly meetings, collates and writes the monitoring reports and attends relevant city-wide meetings.

Stuart Brown- NCA Partnership Coordinator

The New Art Exchange had two exhibitions, one by Steve Pocher, an American artist, the other by a local artist, called 'The Eastern Piece', and 'When the war was won'. European Art, 1945-1960. The

Former steven images of love and friendship, the latter based on a series of poems including 'Displacement and resettlement following WW2'.

Over 200 people attended a 'World Music Night' benefit in the Contemporary Cafe Bar featuring local

MEMBERSHIP REPORT - 2014.

As of the end of September we have, (2013 numbers in brackets):--

257 individual members; (271).

163 volunteers, classed as members and therefore included in the above; (150).

44 non-members, those who do not/cannot contribute financially but want to keep in touch; (76).

7 affiliated organisations; (11).

94 Standing Orders; (100).

Amounts range from £2/month to £100/month; (£2 to £100).

Total amount £1,758.04; (£1,767.17).

As I have neither the time nor the inclination to do this job properly I would appreciate it if someone took it on who can do it justice. It needs a keen and active person to expand the membership, and donations, rather than the passive approach I have had.

If anyone is interested, please contact me.

Dave Hewitt - Membership Secretary.

NNRF Funding Group 2013 to 2014

The Funding Committee met eight times during the past year and submitted a total of 59 bids for funding. 35 of these are pending, 10 were successful and just 14 failed. This is positive in an increasingly difficult and competitive climate. The most notable successes were an annual grant of £35k for 3 years, with which we have employed an Advice Manager; and a grant of £70k over 2 years from the Paul Getty Foundation. A bid to the Big Lottery for a legal project successfully passed the first stage and at the time of writing is awaiting a 2nd stage decision. As lead partner in a consortium, NNRF also successfully bid for a Communities of Interest contract, although the £275k granted by the City Council was 20% short of the amount bid for.

The Funding Committee is working hard to secure the future of key posts that require re-funding during 2015-16, including the Destitution and Volunteer Co-ordinator posts, and the Manager and Deputy-Manager posts.

The recently-agreed remit of the Funding Committee includes responsibilities to:

- Co-ordinate the strategic funding activities of NNRF, ensuring that the funding priorities of the organisation are pursued.
- Advise and inform the NNRF Management Committee on all key aspects of the funding requirements and priorities of the organisation.
- Work with the NNRF manager, treasurer and other staff to undertake work on funding activities including identifying potential sources of funding and writing applications

NNRF subscribed to "Just Giving" and to "Local Giving" during the year, as a result of which many NNRF supporters are raising several additional thousands of pounds for the Forum's destitution and other work. The Funding Committee has drafted a Funding Strategy which, if adopted, will move NNRF towards less dependence on funding from grants and increased reliance on funding from members and income generation. This will include consideration of corporate social responsibility, community fundraising and social enterprise initiatives. An immediate consequence has been the successful proposal that, in principle, NNRF employs a Fundraiser for twelve months with the expectation that at least £30,000 above the post's costs will be raised in that time.

The Funding Committee is acutely conscious of the critical work it has to do this coming year, and would welcome any volunteers with relevant experience and interest to assist its work.

Pete Loewenstein - Funding Group Convenor

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

With further financial cutbacks affecting refugee services as well as other services this year, and with the cuts to legal aid provision we have found ourselves increasingly reliant on the partnerships that we have developed over the years with organizations both in the local area and more widely.

We continue to work very closely with several firms of Nottingham solicitors including **French and Co**, **Bhatia Best** and **Blavo**. We continue to have good working relationships with **Nottingham City Council** staff in **Housing Aid**, the **Homelink Team**, **Nottingham City Homes**, **Community & Culture Department**, **Children and Families Services**, **Welfare Rights** and **Adult Social Care**.

Although **Refugee Action** no longer provides outreach surgeries for asylum support, we still work with them on difficult cases and particularly Section 4 appeals. We have also recently started working with the **Asylum Support Appeals Project**, with some excellent results. We have also formed a good relationship with **Migrant Help** who have taken over the asylum support contract and who are holding surgeries at the Forum on Mondays.

On asylum accommodation issues we have developed a working relationship with **G4S**, the current contract holder for Asylum Accommodation. In the difficult search for accommodation for those granted Leave to Remain, we have worked with private landlords and the **YMCA**, **Salvation Army**, **Mellors Lodge** and **Highwood House** and the City Council's **Homeless Gateway**. Our partnership with **Tuntum Housing Association** for the **Refugee Futures Project** continues to offer support to individuals and families awarded a recent positive decision. Although our part in this contract has come to an end from beginning of September, we continue to work closely with **Tuntum**. Further assistance of new refugee tenants is provided by referral to the **Vineyard Arches** for support with furniture, household goods and clothes.

Our work with destitute failed asylum seekers has been greatly enhanced by partnership working, food and financial assistance from the **British Red Cross** (see their report) and **HIMMAH**. Many local churches and other faith groups, plus a number of local schools have all generously provided food and financial assistance. Our ties with Nottingham Arimethea Trust and HOST have been strengthened recently by having a worker in common, enabling all the organisations to provide more

joined up services to this increasingly group.

Playworks has been our partner in providing a crèche and rooms for The Women's Culture Exchange meetings and helped us out greatly when we were moving by giving us space to hold emergency drop-ins.

Over the past few months many very fruitful new relationships have developed to support our new work with young asylum seekers and refugees including **Nottingham Futures**, **Broadway Cinema**, **New Art Exchange**, **EcoWorks**, **Nottingham City Libraries Service**, **NGY Myplace**, **Base 51**, **YMCA Digital Media**, **Lakeside Arts Centre**, **First Floor Theatre Company**, **Nottingham Contemporary**, **Womens Centre**, **Nottingham Museums and Galleries Service**, **NCC-New arrivals community team**, **Forestry Commission**, **The Rainbow Project**, **St Ann's Children Centres**, **Nottingham Playhouse**, and **StoneyBridge Farm**.

With regard to English language training we have worked in partnership with **New College Nottingham** and hope to be providing a new set of classes at the Forum in the New Year.

Health service links have continued to be important – with **GPs**, **Health Visitors**, **Community Midwives**, **NHS Direct**, **the Positive Care Team**, **Terence Higgins Trust** and mental health teams.

Our General Advice, Debt, Welfare and Benefits advice services have continued to be supported by **links with the Advice Nottingham Consortium, including Nottingham Law Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau** and both the **St. Anns and Meadows Advice Centres**, all providing expert advice.

NNRF has continued to take part in relevant fora in the city including the **Multi Agency Asylum Seeker & Refugee Forum**, the **Asylum, Refugee and Migrant Health Forum**, the **BMER Domestic Violence & No Recourse to Public Funds Network**.

BRITISH RED CROSS

The British Red Cross refugee support team in Nottingham provides destitution and orientation support to refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants. We have delivered this project from NNRF's premises for several years and are delighted to have moved with them to their new building and to continue to work in partnership with them.

The British Red Cross offers casework appointments, emergency provisions, maternity packs, toiletries, rough sleeping kits and bus tickets for those required to report to the UK Visas and Immigration in Loughborough. We can also signpost or refer people to other British Red Cross services such as international family tracing and mobility aids.

The British Red Cross's family reunion travel assistance programme helps family members of refugees, who have been granted a visa to join their family in the UK but are unable to afford the cost of travel because they are on a low income. Advice and support with this process are also available from our outreach sessions at NNRF.

To find out more contact 0115 850 5940.

WOMEN'S CULTURE EXCHANGE

The group started off to a positive start having received funding from Y-Notts which enabled the continuation of the weekly Friday session. Having this funding gave us some breathing room while we waited for the Community of Identity application for our consortium to be approved, it was nerve racking for us as first timers but we got the good news in March. We've continued our Friday session with self-development, building up skills/skills exchange, health and well-being, training and awareness session for community development.

We've also continued sign-posting women to services back to the forum, other agencies we work with, local government and training. Through the training, networks from the forum and local events we have gained a bank of network to support us in our development. Firstly, Mandy Pride who is the Community Development worker at City council continues to give us her support in making the group work more coherent. Sarah Greaves has also continued to be part of the group as part of the management committee, Liz Burrell having returned from maternity leave has also been helpful in helping us with different issues especially those around children. Although the Forum has seen a few people leave, the new members of staff have settled in quite well. Fiona and Erica have been a tremendous help in prepping us with our accounts and are always ready to show us their support as we continue our journey.

Not to forget the Management committee for approving our application for crèche fund, the volunteer and staff are also available to give us a hand when we need it in their capacity. With the move to Sycamore our cost for room hire for sessions has dropped favourably, which will help us provide more activities for the group. This year we have increased our participation at events and catering to raise money for the group. There has also been an increase in new members at these events, which has further developed our marketing with an amazing wide range of world cuisine.

Through our networking we were able to launch to project, AfroVibes (Renewal Trust and City Arts) and Taste the World, working with three artists (Rebecca Beinart, Jo Wheeler and Saria Digregorio). Taste the world is our recipe book that we hope to finish before the Christmas sales, AfroVibes was a festival from South Africa which was held at the Lakeside in late October. Other events to note were: Women's international day with the Central Library (working with Jason McCormack and his Mother Angela), sports at the Forest field with Nottingham Sports group and another great refugee week.

We thank the Refugee forum for their continued support as we continue to grow and develop our group in becoming a more sustainable social enterprise to support women.

Victoria Mponda - Chair (Womens Culture Exchange)

EX LIBRIS – MASKED BOOKSELLERS

ExLibris are Nottingham's Masked Booksellers - we wear masks, we rescue books, we sell them at prices everyone can afford, and we raise money for good causes. The "Good Cause" which has benefited most from ExLibris over the eight years we've been running is NNRF, which has received over £4,500 for anti-destitution work in this time.

We run stalls at events, but as we can only take a small fraction of our stock out we also run a mega-sale every year, where everything is displayed. This has become very popular, and is our main event of the year. We also sell cakes at it. This year, we were lucky enough to have been donated books left by the late Ray Gosling and we had our most successful mega-sale yet. Day One of the sale was so busy that often people had difficulty in getting near the books because of the crowd. We took £1,632.30, which we shared between NNRF and Hayward House (hospice).

We also raised money in 2014 for NNRF by running stalls at States of Independence (Independent Publishers' Day in Leicester), Chesterfield May Day, and Lowdham Book Festival Last Saturday.

It's hard work to continue running ExLibris, but we get lots of help. Without the volunteers carrying books for us every year, we would not be able to continue. This year we had special difficulties, and are very grateful to the people who helped out with publicity, which always takes a great chunk of time.

We have just bought Saithwaite House (some might call it a garden shed, but we know better), and once it is properly insulated and damp-proofed we will have somewhere more convenient than a bedroom up two flights of stairs to store our stock. So we hope to be able to continue supporting NNRF's important work combating destitution while it sadly still remains necessary.

Why the masks? You can find out more about us at www.maskedbooksellers.org.uk

Chris Cann - ExLibris

TREASURER'S REPORT

The very healthy financial situation and the growth in activity revealed in the accounts appended to this report are a tribute to the stewardship of the outgoing financial administration and, in particular, to the former Treasurer, whose effectiveness we can only hope to emulate.

Our ambition for the next few years must be to consolidate and to expand the income base. Analysis of the Forum's income for 2013-14 indicates that 34% came from Local Authorities, 55% from Trusts and Foundations, and less than 10% from "own resources" – that is, from our loyal band of private benefactors. We received nothing directly from Central Government and little of significance from the commercial sector. In the current economic climate, it can only be anticipated that income from local/statutory authority sources will continue to contract and that competition for grants from trusts and foundations will, therefore, increase. In the circumstances, the management initiative to engage a fundraiser to complement the activities of our regular contractual bid-writer, by expanding our local private and commercial income-base is strongly supported.

As central and local government seek to effect savings by devolving services to the third sector, further expansion is also expected in opportunities to undertake essential social services under contract, such as those already performed by our Welfare Advisory and Into the Mainstream health project staff.

Besides the retirement of the out-going Treasurer, the year under review has also witnessed some far-reaching changes in the practices and in the staffing of the administration and finance section. The conversion of the accounts to the "cloud" version of Quick Books has made it possible for those responsible to access the accounts from anywhere with internet access, and the introduction of Financial

Procedures approved by the Management Committee will hopefully improve financial control and responsibility throughout the organisation. Sadly, we lost the services of Melissa, our senior admin/finance assistant early in the year, but we were fortunate in securing a very able replacement in Erica Stirrett, and we were also able to convert our former volunteer, Zanele, into a formally contracted employee after she gained the necessary immigration status. Teresa, as always, remains the stalwart bedrock of the section. Their services are thoroughly appreciated.

Barry Clarke - Treasurer

Public Benefit Statement

The Aims of NNRF (Registered Charity no. 1121560) are expressed in the Objects of the Memorandum of Association, stated as 'the promotion and provision of any charitable purpose directed to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers living in the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.' The activities of the Charity include the free provision of:

Advice, information and support for refugees and asylum seekers
Premises where they may meet and enjoy social contact and recreation
Opportunities to extend their education
Small grants of cash and food to people in need
Campaigning about issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers
Opportunities to interact with members of the host community.

We believe that this Annual Report, together with the annual accounts and financial statement of the Charity, will demonstrate that its income has been applied towards its objects.

**Approved by Management Committee
October 2013**

CONTACT DETAILS

Address

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum
The Sycamore Centre
31 Hungerhill Road
Nottingham
NG3 4NB

Telephone

01159 601230

Fax

01159 624330

Website

www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/nottsrefugeeforum>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/NNRF1>

A Big Thank You to our funders who in 2014 have included:



LOTTERY FUNDED



The Henry Smith Charity
founded in 1628

**JPAUL GETTY JNR
CHARITABLE TRUST**

the Tudor trust

 **Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales**



**Nottingham
City Council**

 **Supported by
BBC
Children
in Need**



**HOCKLEY
HUSTLE**

 **Yorkshire Building Society
Charitable Foundation**

A B Charitable Trust

**The Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum
The Square Centre, Alfred Street North, Nottingham, NG3 1AA**

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for your interest in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF). To continue helping us in our work, we wondered whether you might like to join NNRF. Membership gives you the benefits of: receiving occasional mailings, being able to vote at the AGM, receiving emails to keep you informed if you wish, and the chance to join yahoo or facebook groups where you can post and read messages, photos, files etc. We get the benefit that our membership base is larger so we can speak with a louder voice, and we can disseminate information further.

We currently give small cash grants of £10 per month to each person who's destitute, or £20 for those with poor health. We also give each person a bag of groceries worth around £5 each week so they don't go hungry. The grocery parcels are improving in quality, and any contributions will help towards sustaining this small humanitarian gesture. All this work is done by volunteers, so the entire donations are used directly to help people who would otherwise starve.

If you would like to become a member, please complete and return the attached forms to The Square Centre.

Again, many thanks for your generosity,

Membership Secretary

The Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum

Membership Form 2012—2013

Membership fees: Free:-- unwaged / low waged / volunteer;
£10 minimum:-organisation / waged individual.

If you can afford more please consider a large donation or why not set up a monthly standing order to help support destitute asylum seekers in our community

Please tick as appropriate:

I / we would like to join the NNRF
 I / we would like to renew my / our membership of the NNRF £
 I / we would like to make a single donation of £
 I / we would like to set up a monthly standing order of £
(please complete the direct debit mandate form)
 I / we would like more information on how we can help NNRF
 I / we would like all donations to be eligible for Gift Aid
(please complete the Gift Aid declaration form)

Name:
Address:
.....
.....
.....

Email:
Telephone:
Mobile phone:
Date:

Group memberships:

Organisation name:

Number of copies of newsletter needed:

Please make cheques payable to: The Nottingham and Notts. Refugee Forum and return forms to Dave Hewitt, Membership Secretary, NNRF, The Square Centre, Alfred Street North, Nottingham NG3 1AA. 0115 9415599 dave.hewitt@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk

Please note that your information will be stored on a computer database.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Account holder(s)	
Address	
Bank sort code	
Account number	
To the manager of: Bank name	
Bank address	
PAYMENT AUTHORITY: Please debit my/our account in accordance with the following details: Please pay The Co-Operative Bank, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP Sort code 089299 / Account 65226311	
Monthly amount	£
Day of month for payment	
Starting from	
Until further notice in writing, or	
Date of last payment	
Signed (account holder 1)	
Signed (account holder 2)	
Please complete and return to NNRF.	

Gift Aid declaration - for past, present & future donations

Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today in the past 4 years in the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Donor's details

Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____

Surname _____

Full home address _____

Postcode _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Please notify the charity or CASC if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code