

Slough Refugee Support

Celebrating Community

**Annual Review
2022-23**



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Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name: Slough Refugee Support

Charity Registration Number 1079776

Principal Office: 28 Bath Rd, Slough, SL1 3SR

Bankers: Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HB
CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

The 2022-23 Accounts feature in the Trustees' Annual Report at
www.sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk



SRS

28 Bath Road

Chair's report 2022/23



Slough Refugee Support's work this year has been carried out in an increasingly hostile environment which some in the government and the media have created for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as the tragic news of the loss of asylum seekers drowning in the English Channel and further afield. Demands on our services have never been greater and our reach has widened with clients based not only in Slough, but also in Windsor and Maidenhead.

We have continued to support Afghans who were ex-MOD workers in Afghanistan and who have struggled to settle here due to their continued concern about the family members they had to leave behind. Asylum seekers, mainly single men, living in Slough, Maidenhead and Datchet hotels, have sought our help and we have welcomed them in our English classes. We are keenly aware of how difficult it has been for them living in hotels and we have joined working parties to help resolve issues such as discontent with the meals provided. Some hotel residents are small families and single mums, so we have encouraged them to attend our sewing classes whilst their pre-school children attend our crèche.

Disappointingly, we have not managed to resume our Drop-in service and have continued with telephone advice sessions, plus booked appointments for clients with complex issues and language difficulties. Our statistics show that our volunteer advisers and caseworkers have dealt with clients from 30 different countries, together speaking 20 languages. This year we joined the Thames Valley Immigration Alliance which has ensured we can offer additional support to asylum seekers on their long legal journey to be able to remain in this country.

In this review, we are celebrating the help and support of our local community. We have been heartened by the interest taken in our services by churches in Slough, Cookham and Maidenhead. In addition to very welcome donations and gifts, we have been invited to give talks to their congregations in an attempt to raise awareness of what we do and how they can be involved in our work. This has resulted in us receiving offers from new volunteers and being adopted by one church as their Charity of the Year.

During Ramadam we received generous support from the Muslim community to ensure we provided food for our clients. We held two successful Iftar dinners for our clients and we were able to invite asylum seekers based in the local hotels to join us. This helped them feel welcome in their new community and to benefit from socialising and eating delicious food.

We are grateful for the donations we have received which have enabled us to provide gifts of toys at Christmas and to pay for activities for our children. We realise how important it is to ensure children have opportunities to develop confidence and social skills by mixing with their peers and having fun experiences. We should never take for granted how important play activities are for children's development and, in these cash strapped times, we try to ensure our children do not miss out on these experiences. "I've never been on a picnic before," said one young child and another was really excited on being taken on his first train ride.

I am sad to say that Keriann, our Family Support Worker, will be retiring at our forthcoming AGM at the end of August. She has worked tirelessly for our families over the last ten years and I know she will be greatly missed by them and her colleagues at SRS. She has often gone way beyond her job description and details of one way in which she has done this feature in the We Are Family article in the centre of this review. I wish her much happiness in her retirement and offer her my thanks for all her hard work and commitment.

In addition, at this year's AGM, I will be stepping down as Chair. I have had the honour of carrying out this role for the last seven or so years which have involved both challenging and rewarding times. I send my very best wishes to my successor and look forward to witnessing the continued success of Slough Refugee Support.

Warmest wishes

Jean Kelly



28th February 2023

Dear Friends,

I am writing with the sad news that Graham Dyer has died. He had been suffering from Alzheimer's for some time which made life difficult for both Graham and Catherine.

Graham was the first person I met from Slough Refugee Support and he welcomed me with open arms to join the Committee. He led the organisation by his brilliant example - kind, caring, a great sense of justice and humour.

He was extremely committed and conscientious in everything he did for the refugees, the volunteers, the staff and the organisation. What a cruel illness.

On the positive side, they had moved into a retirement setting which Catherine says is a very supportive environment. And they spent Christmas with their son's family over from Australia.

Sorry to bring you sad news.

Linda Chanana

Objectives and Activities

Mission statement

Slough Refugee Support is a friendly organisation committed to impartially helping all asylum seekers and refugees in Slough and surrounding areas to achieve their rights and settle with dignity in a new community.

Charitable Objects

The charity was established to provide for the relief of poverty, the preservation and protection of physical and mental health, and the advancement of education of asylum seekers and refugees in Slough and neighbouring Local Authority areas, at the discretion of the Trustees.



Key Objectives and Main Activities

SRS has identified five key objectives and operates programmes designed to deliver outcomes against each objective, as follows.

- To welcome asylum seekers and refugees in Slough and surrounding areas, and to help them to become integrated into the local community and life in the UK.
- To assist out clients to stay safe, avoid destitution and to maintain their physical and mental health.
- To support our clients to achieve their rights and entitlements and to access life sustaining services provided by government and other authorities and agencies.
- To support our clients' own desires to be independent and self-reliant, including, where appropriate, to pursue opportunities for employment.
- To celebrate and enhance the cultural richness and diversity that refugees contribute to British society, locally and nationally.

Public Benefit

In setting our aims and objectives and planning our activities, the Trustees have given careful consideration on the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Quality assurance

SRS is registered with the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to deliver immigration advice up to level 3.

Thanks to our Funders and Supporters



Grants

AB Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Grant
Bigger Better Opportunities
NHS Slough
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Slough Borough Council
Slough Council for Voluntary Service
Jamia Masjid and Islamic Centre
Zainab Foundation
Asylum Welcome

Donations

We are very grateful for all the kind donations we have received during 2022/23. As well as money donation, we have received clothing, baby goods, toys and regular supplies of food for our clients. Funds were raised through social media activities and the local community.

Board of Trustees

Jean Kelly (Chair), Nigel Woof (Secretary), Denise Scotland (Treasurer), Cliff Shanganya, Louise Sprackling, Mohamed Al-Mansouri, Ray Barkley, Rupert Young, Zakarya Saeed, Helen Buckland

SRS Staff

Taz Mohammed (Chief Executive), Abobaker Mohammed (Finance Officer), Anissa Benaziza (Building Better Opportunities Officer), Diane Khechab (Building Better Opportunities Officer), Kate Pattinson (Casework Administrator and Adviser), Jawaria Yousaf (Skills and Training Programme), Mahmuna Hasnath (Solicitor), Rebecca Quinn (Housekeeper), Rose Njoroge (Senior Case Worker), Zabihullah Liwal-Saam (Disclosure and Barring Service/General Assistant), Kerian Belcher (Family Support Worker)

Volunteer Advisers

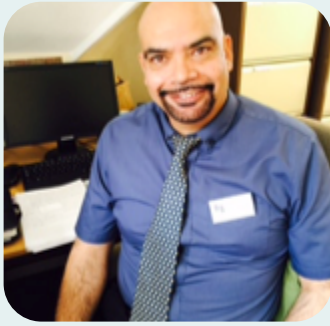
Jenny Griffin, John Kennedy, Luciane Delaney, Shabila Bashier, Helen Niven

General Volunteers

Ali Maye, Bakr Ahmad, Caroline Post, Kamila Imtias, Salma Abbas, Styphanie Menier, Stephen Taylor

Interpreters

Abubaker Ahmad (Bakr), Anissa Benaziza, Hamdi Rhouma, Jawaria Yousaf, Mohamed Al-Mansouri, Zabihullah Liwal-Saam



Chief Executive's Report

The past year has been another busy and challenging time for Slough Refugee Support. Alongside the complex cases and issues we normally deal with, we have had an even greater need than in other years to help our clients manage their budgets so as not to fall into debt. There has also been an increase in casework applications to the Home office due to more refugees turning up at our door, which has led to increased pressure on our voluntary advisers and staff.

Our mission statement is to help our clients settle with dignity in the local community and I am grateful to our community for their help and support this year.

During the year, we have been heartened by the interest taken by local community and religious groups in the work we do. As a result, we have added additional English classes, received donations from local churches and Muslim groups and help in providing Iftar dinners during Ramadan, as well as donations towards our food share programme. (photo Iftar)

Despite the pressure from the Job Centre to encourage people back to work rather than take on volunteering roles, we have had support from volunteers from companies and community groups both in helping us improve our premises and garden and in befriending and supporting vulnerable clients, including those in local hotels.

The interest from different faiths, cultures and traditions has been very heartening and we know this will help our vulnerable families thrive in their local community.

We are aware there will be future challenges in the cost of living crisis as increases in the costs of utilities, rent and activities impact upon us and our clients. However, with the steady support we receive from our donors and the local community, we are determined that we will continue to provide much needed support to asylum seekers and refugees in Slough and the surrounding area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our funders, donors and friends in the community for their continued friendship and interest in our work. I would also like to thank our volunteers, staff and trustees without whose commitment and enthusiasm SRS could not continue.

Thank you.

Taz Mohammed.

CEO



Celebrating Community



We are family!

One of our mothers asked me to be her birthing partner – this being the second time I've been asked to fulfil this role during my 10 years as Family Support Worker at SRS. For me, this was a privilege and an honour, especially when I was told that the mum made this a pre-requisite before agreeing to her husband's request that they have another baby.

Although originally anticipated that the birth would be a natural delivery, due to complications the birthing plan was changed to a C-section. A key element of my role was not just to hold mum's hand through the birth but to ensure her wishes were respected throughout the process. The parents included me in decisions prior to the birth, invited me to hospital appointments and I helped prepare mum for the hospital admission.

At 5.00 am, I collected mum to take her to the hospital where we had to wait around until our scheduled birth time. The midwives tried to encourage the father to attend the birth, but mum quietly whispered that it was not that she did not want him present – she wanted me!

At 11.30 a nurse gave me the birthing partner outfit, which included hairnet and crocs, to wear in the labour room. Dad said that, after seeing this, he had decided it suited me more than him! The atmosphere was quiet and calm in the theatre with lots of humour. Baby girl B came into the world shouting at 13.29, weighing approximately three kilograms. When she was delivered, the midwife asked who would like to hold her first and mum said give her to me which was such a generous gesture. I was officially a 'teta' (Arabic for grandmother). The midwife was referring to me as grandma to do tasks, but I didn't immediately respond to the new title, but I do now.

Once back on the ward I washed and changed baby B to meet her Dad, siblings and grandmother. It was such a special memory and one that will stay with me all my life. Since being present at two births, I have an extra special relationship with both the babies and the families. We have a very intimate relationship because together we have witnessed a new life coming into the world that others have not.

The following morning when I went to visit both mum and dad, we phoned all their immediate family, who sadly are not able to live in this country. I spoke to them, and, although I don't speak Arabic nor do they speak English, it was very clear how grateful they were for the support I had given to their daughter/sister/sister-in-law etc and they said there is (translated) "not enough thank yous" they could give me.

Kerriann Belcher

Family Support Worker



Community support from local churches

We are delighted that our work with refugees has been supported by local church communities, who have generously given cash donations, fund-raised, nominated us as Charity of the Year and offered volunteering.

As a result, we are able to continue our essential family support work and community integration activities.

Special thanks go to:-

The Rev Joan Hicks - The Church of The Good Shepherd, Maidenhead

The Rev Cliff Shanganya - St Andrews Methodist Church, Slough

The Rev Vicci Davidson - Cookham Rise Methodist Church

Louise Sprackling, one of our trustees, has given a series of talks and presentations at local churches and would be happy to visit your church or community group.



It was lovely to watch the video and see all the smiling faces and comments! I have to commend Slough Refugee Support for the wonderful contact and follow-up you do with your supporters.

I think it is partly because of this, as well as the great work the charity does, that our Parochial Church Council recently agreed to make Slough Refugee Support one of our two main charities to support in 2023.

This means any fundraising we do for our charities in 2023 will be split between your charity and CMS Guatemala, with smaller donations to a few other charities if we raise enough to be able to do that.

Rev J. Hicks,
Vicar of The Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green



Challenges facing our clients when settling into the local community

SRS works with the local community to help ensure that our clients are able to settle in Slough and live their lives with dignity and peace. We help clients throughout their very long journey from arrival in the UK to the point at which they obtain their citizenship and then their British passports.

In the year under review, we have had considerable contact with clients who are at the stage of applying for asylum. A few of these, mainly families, are living in accommodation in the private sector arranged by the Home Office. An increasing number of mainly single people are housed in a range of local hotels in Slough, Datchet and Maidenhead. In whatever way they are accommodated, they have particular difficulties which we try to alleviate.

The challenges they face are as follows:

1. Financial problems and finding it impossible to manage on the allowance families get from the Home Office. SRS helps by sourcing food vouchers, food donations and clothes, including school uniform. We have been able to help with food vouchers or food deliveries, and clothes, including school uniform, to supplement what they can afford.
2. Several single men based in hotels have come to SRS with complaints about lack of health care, very poor quality of food and not having access to a solicitor. We have encouraged them to pressurise Migrant Help, who are the Home Office contractors with responsibility for the care of asylum seekers, and the local hotel manager who is appointed to help them.
3. Mental wellbeing is another issue. Many clients need help and services are so few or only provided remotely which is not helpful if English is not the first language. We have encouraged clients to sign up for the football evenings run by Zabi, joining our English classes and for mums to bring their children to the crèche while they go to our sewing classes. All ways for them to meet other people and develop confidence in themselves.
4. Sourcing medical help is a challenge and SRS assist with GP registration and trying to find dental care.

5. For all our clients at every stage of their journey access to good legal advice is vital and the Thames Valley Immigration Alliance, of which SRS is a part, has been crucial in helping those who would otherwise struggle to find representation. However, there have been times when our advisers have contacted as many as nine legal aid immigration solicitors to no avail to try to source the correct legal advice for our clients.
6. Family reunion is of course fundamental to community life but it is not always easy for those who do not have this right as refugees. A client asked for our advice about his new wife joining him and we explained that, although he has a good job, it is his wife who would have to make the application. And, as well as his income requirement, she will need to pass an English test and be interviewed. This entails for her a long and difficult trip to nearest British office in a neighbouring country where she can make an application.
7. Being part of the community means managing difficult interfaces with various official bodies. At present many of our clients have poor English and a high proportion have Arabic as their main language. Several staff members are Arabic speaking, so we can provide expert translation. And clients and the non-Arabic speaking staff and volunteers have found Google translate very helpful!
8. The price of energy and the rise in the cost of living over the period of this review has hit our clients very hard. We negotiated with an energy company for one client who calculated that it would take him two years to pay off his arrears and then he still must pay his ongoing bills. As part of the governments scheme to help with the cost-of-living, SRS has helped two clients to successfully access the help that is on offer from Slough and other local councils. But this help is not given lightly. Much proof is needed, such as a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions outlining benefit calculations, letters about council tax, doctors' letters about health, bank statements, child benefit details, and detail of income and expenditure. It is time consuming work.
9. One of the main indicators of community wellbeing must be secure housing. Many of our clients face housing difficulties and it is a matter on which we can give advice, but a good outcome is rare. For example, a client was housed in Slough by the Home Office as an asylum seeker. As he was living in the borough when he was given his leave to remain Slough honoured their duty to help with his housing by placing him in a room in a guest house. He was told this would be temporary but a year and a half later he is still there.

Settling in our community is key to our clients feeling safe and secure and SRS will continue to help our clients deal with the many challenges they face.

Jenny Griffin,

Senior Volunteer





www.slough.gov.uk
Slough Borough Council
Slough Refugee Support
Slough Holiday Activities and Food Programme
Department for Education

Community partnership

SRS has been a beacon of hope for asylum and refugee families living in and around Slough, many of whom undergo hardships and anxiety through being in a foreign country with no one to help them or to whom they can reach out.

SRS has organised courses in English Speaking and Listening skills to ensure our clients can carry out daily tasks such as shopping, visiting the doctor, filling out forms without assistance, using transport, etc.

In partnership with the local Muslim community, during the holy month of Ramadan, the centre helped organise with two Iftar evenings comprising of entertainment, delicious food and good company for support. The wholesome and nourishing meals included both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes.

These meals were particularly appreciated by clients living in hotels and hostels as they stated that food they received there was different from their own native food and they struggle to afford a substitute. The Ramadan Iftar evenings were a great success with families smiling and enjoying themselves and feeling welcome as a part of the community. This was in contrast to the negative media reporting and hostile immigration policies sometimes reported in the media.

Thank you to all the efforts made by the supportive Muslim community who have gone above and beyond to help support the clients at SRS.

Diane Khechab

Senior Employment Officer



SRS's Football Focus

Slough, a vibrant and diverse society, embodies the unity of various communities coming together to live and work harmoniously. However, for newly arrived immigrants, especially women, settling in hasn't always been an easy journey, as they strive to fulfil their dreams.

In recent times, Britain has witnessed waves of refugees seeking a fresh start, highlighting the immense challenges of rebuilding one's life from scratch.

Nevertheless, the resilience of the community shines through, thanks to organisations like Slough Refugee Support (SRS) who dedicate themselves to fostering positive change and extending warm welcomes to newcomers, enabling them to pursue a brighter future.

The heart-warming tale of two migrant girls joining a community football team through the support of SRS and a generous donation from a kind supporter exemplifies the unwavering commitment of the community to embrace and empower individuals, assisting them in taking significant steps towards the realization of the dreams that led them to seek a new beginning in Great Britain.

Zabi Liwal-Saam

Senior Employment Officer

“

The child we met together goes to your Friday football sessions and I thought you'd like to know that I have seen a huge improvement in his wellbeing as a result, thank you for everything you do.

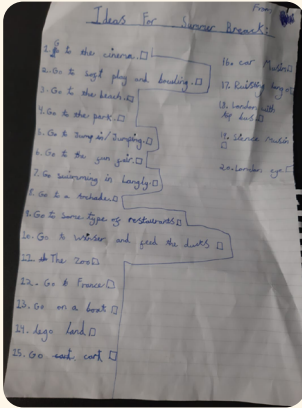
**Welfare Officer,
Refugee Youth Service**



The importance of trips and activities

The cost of living crisis is impacting on families and their ability to take their children on trips and activities during the school holidays.

Here at SRS we strive to provide trips and treats for our clients' children during the school holidays. We believe that these activities increase the children's sense of worth, confidence and ability to fit into their community.



Our children are unlikely to be taken on holiday due to the cost involved, but, if they have enjoyed some interesting, sociable and exciting trips during the holidays, they can talk about their experiences when they return to school and not feel left out or marginalised.

During the year in question, we took the children on trips to Windsor, the Chocolate Factory, picnics, activity centre and swimming.

We asked an 8 year old girl to list where she suggested we took the children to during the summer holidays and this was her (very ambitious) list!



Thanks for converting my donation into something special. I'm in admiration of what you and your colleagues do for the refugees.

Quote from a kind donor who gave us money for Christmas gifts for the families.

Slough Refugee Support: Statistical Data for April 2022– March 2023

Users (Casework Services)	Households	Family Members	Total
New User	40	N/A	N/A
New and returning Clients	167	152	319
SRS Casework Country of Origin	Households	%	
Afghanistan	26	15.66%	
Albania	2	1.20%	
Algeria	3	1.81%	
Bangladesh	3	1.81%	
China	1	0.60%	
Congo	1	0.60%	
Eritrea	6	3.61%	
Ethiopia	1	0.60%	
Ghana	1	0.60%	
Guinea	1	0.60%	
India	2	1.20%	
Iran	6	3.61%	
Iraq	8	4.82%	
Kenya	2	1.20%	
Nigeria	2	1.20%	
Pakistan	11	6.63%	
Palestine	1	0.60%	
Russia	1	0.60%	
Saudi Arabia	3	1.81%	
Sierra Leone	1	0.60%	
Somalia	26	15.66%	
Sri Lanka	11	6.63%	
Sudan	11	6.63%	
Syria	11	6.63%	
Tanzania	2	1.20%	
Trinidad & Tobago	2	1.20%	
Vietnam	1	0.60%	
Yemen	4	2.41%	
Zimbabwe	5	3.01%	
Unknown	12	6.63%	
Grand Total	167	100.00%	

NB: Casework Clients are from 30 different countries. Clients under the unknown group include clients whom the Home Office considers stateless.

SRS Casework		
Gender	Households	%
Female	54	32.33%
Male	113	67.66%
Grand Total	167	100.00%

SRS Casework		
Language	Households	%
Albanian	2	1.20%
Amharic	2	1.20%
Arabic	36	21.56%
Bengali	1	0.60%
Dari	2	1.20%
English	5	2.99%
Farsi	13	7.78%
French	2	1.20%
Hindi	2	1.20%
Kikuyu	1	0.60%
Kurdish	1	0.60%
Kurdish Sorani	2	1.20%
Mandarin	1	0.60%
Ndebele	2	1.20%
Punjabi	5	2.99%
Pushto	14	8.38%
Russian	1	0.60%
Shona	2	1.20%
Somali	17	10.18%
Swahili	8	4.79%
Tamil	8	4.79%
Tibetan	1	0.60%
Tigrinya	4	2.40%
Urdu	9	5.39%
Vietnamese	1	0.60%
Unknown	25	14.97%
Grand Total	167	100.00%

NB: SRS Clients speak 20 different languages

SRS Casework		
Current Immigration Status	Primary Client	%
Asylum Seeker	46	27.54%
British Citizen**	13	7.78%
Discretionary Leave to Remain	2	1.20%
European Union Citizen	1	0.60%
Humanitarian Protection (5yrs)	1	0.60%
Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)	21	12.57%
Limited Leave to Remain	11	6.59%
None	1	0.60%
Refugee (5 Years)	42	25.15%
Refugee (ILR)	9	5.39%
Refused	2	1.20%
Refused Appealing	7	4.19%
Unknown	11	6.59%
Grand Total	167	100.00%

**Please note 'British Citizens' includes: Refugee clients who have acquired British citizenship, but they are vulnerable and still need extra support due to long term illness or disability. Some clients are now British but some of their family members are not British yet.

SRS Casework		
Age range	Client	%
Unknown	1	0.60%
6-16	1	0.60%
17-20	1	0.60%
21-60	153	91.61%
Over 60	11	6.59%
Grand Total	167	100.00%

SRS Casework		
Frequency of Household Visits	Totals	%
Once	85	45.21%
Twice	33	17.55%
3 times	21	11.17%
4 times	12	6.38%
5 times	6	3.19%
6 times	3	1.60%
7 times	5	2.66%
8 times	4	2.13%
9 times	1	0.53%
10 times	4	2.13%
11 times	0	0.00%
12 times	1	0.53%
12 times and more	13	6.91%

N.B. Some clients have sought help for 12 times or more and this could be because of English Language barrier and/or they have a lot of issues they have needed help with.

SRS Casework		
Support Given by SRS (Visits, case follow up calls and work)	Totals	%
As Sup S4 (Section 4 Asylum Support)	11	1.37%
As Sup S95 (Section 95 Asylum Support)	21	2.62%
BANK - Bank	2	0.25%
Bfts (DWP) (Benefits dealt with by Dept of Work and Pensions)	19	2.37%
Bfts (HMRC) (Benefits dealt with by HM Revenue and Customs)	9	1.12%
Bfts (SBC) (Benefits dealt with by Slough Borough Council)	37	4.62%
Bfts (UC) (Benefits dealt with by Universal Credit Office)	55	6.87%
DRVG - Driving	9	1.12%
Education	35	4.37%
EMP (employment)	17	2.12%
Health	25	3.12%
Housing	98	12.23%
IMM (BRP) (Immigration - Biometric Residence Permit card application)	72	8.99%
IMM (Misc) (Immigration - Miscellaneous e.g fresh asylum application)	67	8.36%
IMM (N) - (Immigration - Naturalisation/ Citizenship application)	58	7.24%
IMM (P) -(Immigration - Passport application)	10	1.25%
IMM - (Immigration issue - Referral to other Immigration lawyers)	1	0.12%
IMM (SPR)- (Immigration - Set Protection Route application)	68	8.49%
IMM (TD) - (Immigration -Travel Documents application)	52	6.49%
Total	801	100.00%

N.B. Immigration (40.94%), Benefits (14.98%), Housing (12.23%), Utilities (5.74%), Welfare (4.74%) and Asylum support (4.04%) constitute the largest proportion of the Advice and Support work.

SRS Casework

Recorded Outcomes for Support Given by SRS (Visits, case follow up calls and work)	Totals	%
AA QUERY OUTSTANDING – Unresolved Query	456	64.86%
As Sup a) S95 – Section 95 secured	4	0.57%
As Sup b) S4 – Section 4 secured	1	0.14%
As Sup d) Other	1	0.14%
Bank – Other	3	0.43%
Benefits – Obtained benefit	6	0.85%
Benefits – Form completed and submitted to DWP	7	0.96%
Benefits – Other	24	3.41%
Driving – Licence application submitted to DVLA	2	0.28%
Driving – Other	3	0.43%
Education – College enrolment	3	0.43%
Education – Free meals application submitted	1	0.14%
Education – School application submitted	5	0.71%
Education – School place secured	1	0.14%
Education – Training course place	1	0.14%
Education – Other	4	0.57%
Employment – Job secured	5	0.71%
Employment – Other	4	0.57%
Health – Found GP	1	0.14%
Health – Referred to specialist	1	0.14%
Health - Other	7	0.96%
Housing – Found accommodation	3	0.43%
Housing – Other	13	1.85%
Immigration – BRP application submitted	4	0.57%
Immigration – Extension to LR submitted	3	0.43%
Immigration – Gained BRP card	20	2.84%
Immigration – Gained Citizenship	1	0.14%
Immigration – Gained ELR/DL	1	0.14%
Immigration – Gained Passport	1	0.14%
Immigration – Gained HP	1	0.14%

Continues on page 23

SRS Casework		
Recorded Outcomes for Support Given by SRS (Visits, case follow up calls and work	Totals	%
Immigration – Gained ILR	4	0.57%
Immigration – Gained Settlement Protection	11	1.56%
Immigration – Gained travel documents	4	0.57%
Immigration – ILR application submitted	12	1.70%
Immigration – TD application submitted	4	0.57%
Immigration – Other	6	0.85%
Legal – Solicitor referral	5	0.71%
Legal – Solicitor takes case	2	0.28%
Legal – Other	6	0.85%
Migrant Help – S4 or S95 or S96 application submitted	2	0.28%
Query Closed – no outcome	9	1.28%
Utilities – Bill problem resolved	1	0.14%
Utilities – Other problem resolved	4	0.57%
Utilities – Other	4	0.57%
Welfare – Foodbank voucher issued	12	1.70%
Welfare – Money/clothes given	4	0.57%
Welfare – Welfare support/food offered	9	1.28%
Welfare – Other	9	1.28%
Other	1	0.14%
Unknown	1	0.14%
Total	703	100.00%

NB: Clients do not always report outcomes until they contact SRS with the next problem. This explains the high number of outstanding queries.

SRS takes its roles and responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously.

We regularly review our safeguarding policy and ensure staff receive updated training.

All staff and volunteers are DBS checked.

An Illustrative Case Study:

Mr. JA (Jul -Sep 22)

Mr JA and his wife and 3 children have been clients of Slough Refugee Support (SRS) since December 2020, and they have been supported in various ways with housing, asylum support and welfare issues. Before the last quarter, SRS advisers helped JA to apply for permission to work and National Insurance number (NINO).

In the last quarter, his application for NINO was accepted. Their asylum claim was also successful, and they were granted Refugee status. However, this meant they had 28 days to move out of Home Office accommodation and their asylum support would also end at the same time. This is a period that causes Refugees a great of stress especially for the ones who have English language barrier.

SRS helped JA in the following ways:

- **Providing an Arabic interpreter**
JA speaks a little English, but he could not complete any forms on his own or contact the statutory bodies for their services without an interpreter. SRS provided him with an interpreter.
- **Universal Credit (UC) Application and Providing access to internet and computer**
SRS Adviser and interpreter helped him to complete the online UC form. The application has to be made online and JA does not have a computer or laptop, and it would have been very difficult to complete the form on his smart phone.
SRS Adviser booked an appointment in the office and completed the application with JA, explaining the requirements for each and every section. The application was submitted as soon as possible to ensure they could access benefits soon after their asylum support stopped. The UC application was successful.
- **Homeless Application**
JA and his family would be homeless 28 days after grant of their Refugee status, SRS helped them to make a homeless application and helped to follow up the application with Slough Borough council (SBC) at the same time keeping the Home Office Accommodation Provider updated. This was very stressful time JA as he feared his family would become street homeless. SRS adviser kept reassuring

them that SBC would provide temporary accommodation if more permanent accommodation was not available on the day Home Office expected them to leave their accommodation, especially because they have little children.

SRS Adviser advocated for JA's family throughout the process, SBC provided them with temporary accommodation for about a week initially and later a more permanent suitable accommodation. JA and his family were very happy and relieved. SRS Family support worker then assisted them to settle in their new home and provided them with donated home equipment.

- **Child benefit Application**

JA was assisted to complete the child benefit form soon after they got Refugee status to ensure they did not lose out on any benefits.

- **Employment**

JA was registered with the BBO (Building Better Opportunities) project at SRS, he has been registered for English classes, assisted to prepare a CV, search for jobs and upload his CV on employment Agencies websites.

JA is aiming at working in the Security Industry, he hopes to improve his English and take require Security Industry courses, apply for Security badge and find employment. SRS is continuing to help him achieve his employment goal.



CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, in April 2022, the inhumane Nationality and Borders Act 2022 became an Act of law and it made it possible for UK Government to remove asylum seekers from UK to Rwanda, and any other country that would be willing to take them. This change in UK Immigration law has caused a lot of anxiety and worry to some of our clients, especially when the Home Secretary makes announcements of her plans on when to start removing asylum seekers to Rwanda.

This, in turn, has had devastating implications for their mental health. It has been particularly difficult for those who are required to report regularly to Immigration Offices because they can be detained at any time. If they do not report as required, it is a criminal offence which would jeopardise their asylum claims. However, legal challenges by Refugee Support organisations have helped to hold off the removal of Asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Secondly, Home Office policies for accommodation and dispersal of Asylum seekers have changed, and every Local Authority is now required to take Asylum seekers into their locality. Slough has four hotels providing emergency accommodation and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) has one hotel in Datchet. This has resulted in a significant increase in enquiries relating to general welfare including lack of appropriate clothes, shoes, provision of English classes and shortage of school places for children. There has also been a lot of complaints about quality and quantity of food provided by the hotels.

For SRS, interpretation is a big challenge as some of clients' languages are not spoken by members of staff or volunteers. This is compounded by the fact that there are very limited advice and support charities that we can signpost or refer clients to. Citizens Advice East Berkshire (CAEB), for instance, can offer only initial advice and information but no follow-up appointments to Slough residents.

Thirdly, the high cost of living has affected our clients adversely as many are on benefits and/or low income. We have helped some clients to apply to Slough Borough Council for the Household Support Fund. SRS is registered with the Food Share scheme where food stuffs are collected from stores such as Lidl, Sainsburys and Marks & Spencer and distributed to clients in need. We have seen a big increase in the number of clients who come to SRS to get the donated food and also ask for Slough Foodbank vouchers.

How can you get involved



Donate at <https://localgiving.org/charity/sloughrefugeesupport/> Every donation, however small, helps us support refugees and asylum seekers to settle with dignity.

giftaid it



Gift Aid is a scheme available to all UK charities which means we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate - making them worth 25% more to us - at no extra cost to you. We can claim Gift Aid on your donations if you're a UK taxpayer and you give us permission to do so.



You can make a **BACS** payment directly to our bank account:
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account Number: 00090791



Join **Easy Fundraising** and select Slough Refugee Support. Each time you shop, we receive a small donation from the company - it doesn't cost you anything extra.



Volunteers

There are many ways you can volunteer at SRS. We train volunteer advisers to Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner Level 1. We need handy person help, admin support and help with our family activities. DBS checks undertaken for free.

Please email srsinfo@sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk

Tell Others

Share this Annual Review with friends and family and encourage others to support us in whatever way they can.

Follow us on Facebook and instagram and check out www.sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk

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The Trustee's Annual Report is available at: www.sloughrefugeesupport.org.uk

