



Restore

a project of Birmingham Churches Together
supporting refugees and
people seeking sanctuary from persecution



Annual Report 2018

Restore, c/o Jericho Foundation, 196-198 Edward Road, Birmingham, B12 9LX
Phone: 0121 661 4275 E-mail: befriend@restore-uk.org Website: www.restore-uk.org
Charity Number 243931

Restore

Restore, a project of Birmingham Churches Together, seeks to welcome, include and assist the integration of refugees and those seeking sanctuary from persecution. Restore works to achieve these aims through befriending, social activities, advocacy and awareness-raising.

What is the impact? One refugee who had been supported by Restore through a protracted asylum application process said: ***“Restore is my family, you pick me up. When I first met Restore, I didn’t know who I was, I didn’t have confidence in myself, to go out, to get on the bus. Restore are such good people, very caring.”***

Befriending

Since Restore was created in 1999, building supportive and mutually enriching relationships through befriending has been at the heart of Restore’s work. Befriending links people from the host community in Birmingham with refugees and asylum seekers who are relatively new to the city, struggling with loss and isolation, and facing uncertainty and transition. Restore’s befriending scheme involves the matching of trained volunteers with asylum seekers and refugees to provide one-to-one support, help with conversational English, friendship and signposting to other services.

77 people participated in the three training courses we facilitated in 2018. Other awareness-raising took place through speaking engagements with church and community groups. 43 new befriending matches were made in 2018. That was a lower number compared to recent years but still higher than pre-2015 figures. The change perhaps resulted from the 'refugee crisis' being less prominent in the media. At the end of 2018 there were 115 on-going befriending relationships which included those started before 2018 that still continue.

Restore received a total of 182 new referrals of refugees and asylum seekers in 2018 (up from 156 in 2017). These referrals originated from other refugee support agencies, health professionals and asylum seekers themselves recommending Restore as a project offering support. Restore also provided befriending to Syrians through its partnership with Refugee Action, which is commissioned by the Birmingham City Council to settle Syrians through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

One refugee who has been befriended stated: ***“In the country I fled, so many people were trying to break me down. Through Restore and befriending I have learnt the beauty of being built up. This was new to me.”***



Befriending not only helps the refugee or asylum seeker, there is often enrichment for the volunteer too. Some of Restore's volunteers describe the impact befriending has had on their befriendees and on themselves:

"Befriending isn't just about *servicing* someone else. Meeting my befriendees has been fun, awkward, interesting, challenging, and always, always rewarding. Give a little of your time, make the effort to find a common interest, and surprise yourself with how much fun you have! Sometimes the most meaningful conversations happen across a language barrier; not because you are talking about deep or personal things, but because you are truly present, really hearing."

"It was a slow start to learning English for my befriendees as she had no confidence. It's now such a joy when she tries to form English sentences, we laugh and encourage each other to strive for better things."

"The last few years have been unsettling and hard for my befriendees, so I am very pleased she has been given some stability, at least for the next few years. Despite the stress she has remained positive throughout the process, I think the befriending has helped her to offload her emotions and at times look towards the future."

"The realisation that every little support I was giving to my befriendees and his family, was appreciated and was helping to make their integration into this new life a little easier was very humbling and encouraging. I probably got more from it than them in that it opened my eyes even more to the reality and personalisation of the hardships that refugees suffer."

"Volunteering gives me a glimpse of hope in a troubled world and makes me profoundly grateful for my freedom to live as and where I choose and determined to play my part in making Birmingham a welcoming, diverse and inclusive city."

A final quote that gives an overview of the journey that a volunteer and befriendees travelled on together:

"One of the ways I have been able to support my befriendees is by helping her understand official letters e.g. from her solicitor or from the court. I would never give advice but I can help her understand official/legal language which is well beyond her level of English. I think that understanding what the letters say has helped to take away some of the fear of the unknown for her."

Going to court was extremely stressful for my befriendees. The hearing was to be held in Coventry so I was happy to go with her a few days before her hearing to see how long the journey would take and actually find the court building – this helped reduce the stress on the actual day. We took the opportunity to visit Coventry Cathedral and talked about the history of the city as she is always interested in learning more about this country. I can't imagine how an asylum seeker without support such as Restore offers could cope with the stress, understand what is happening to them or even find out how to get to appointments in strange cities."

When she heard that she would get her (refugee) leave to remain she blossomed from morose, anxious and fearful into the vibrant, joyful person I know she can be – it was like watching Winter change to Spring in a matter of seconds, something I shall never forget!"

Words are inadequate when attempting to express our **huge thanks** to our amazing team of over 100 volunteer befrienders for all the consistent care and compassionate support they offer and for the significant difference they make in the lives of refugees and those seeking asylum.

Social Activities

Restore's social activities include events for refugee families in school holidays or weekends, a toddler group for parents and young children, and events for lone asylum seeker men and women. These activities seek to foster wellbeing, recreation and social interaction. They also provide opportunities to practise conversational English

93 men attended at least one of the 26 Men's Activities and 67 women attended at least one of the 14 Women's Activities in 2018. Events included music concerts, walks in the countryside, drum and pottery workshops, swimming and a joint Christmas Party.





Restore organised 7 events for families: 87 adults and 126 children of 17 nationalities participated in these events.



Family trips to Sutton Park including nature trail and Donkey Sanctuary visit, Beaudesert Park including BBQ, boats, go-karts and climbing, the Family Party and the Fun Day at the Columban House in Knowle, were organised in partnership with church groups who both raised funds for and hosted the activities.



Our Toddler Group, meeting alternate Wednesdays in term-time, served 17 families over the course of the year.



Employability training

In the autumn we ran 4 day-time sessions on interview skills followed by practice interviews in partnership with Refugee Action's employability project funded from the Resettlement budget. We also partnered with Refugee Action in a session they organised on setting up your own business. 53 refugees and asylum seekers attended at least one session. Our volunteer team was boosted numerically so that each volunteer was working with either one or two participants in the interactive elements of the course. Due to staff capacity and then changes in staffing we didn't run as many sessions as originally planned.

Working for Change for refugees and asylum seekers

Restore engaged in advocacy and networking with other voluntary and statutory organisations to work for change to improve services and strengthen the participation of refugees and asylum seekers in our society. Restore was a partner in Birmingham's response to destitution through the Destitution Steering Group, Hope Projects and Fatima House and was involved in Celebrating Sanctuary promoting refugee arts. Restore also liaised closely with local support groups, e.g. Handsworth 'Welcome', the Solihull Churches Asylum Seekers' Support Group, St Chad's Sanctuary and Narthex. Restore participated in meetings of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, Birmingham Council's Migration Forum, Birmingham City Council's New Arrivals Partnership Board and the Birmingham City of Sanctuary Committee. Until September 2018 Restore was represented on the national committees of NACCOM (No Accommodation network) and the Churches' Refugee Network. Restore was also involved in advocacy and signposting work for individual service-users on a range of issues including the move-on process from asylum seeker to refugee and problems in Asylum Support accommodation.

Changes at Restore

Shari Brown, Restore's Project Co-ordinator since 2002, took up the post of Executive Secretary with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels at the beginning of October 2018. We are indebted to Shari for her commitment and drive in leading and developing the work of Restore for 16 years and for her networking, awareness raising and advocacy work across the city, the West Midlands and nationally. A 'Thank You Shari' event at the end of September was attended by over 170 people. Shari has subsequently received the Langton Award for Community Service from the Archbishop of Canterbury for her outstanding contribution to the reception and integration of refugees.

Jeremy Thompson was appointed Acting Project Co-ordinator for 6 months from 1st October 2018. The Restore Management Committee commissioned a strategic review of the project and its work at this point of transition and change. The strategic review report was submitted in January 2019 and its findings will steer future vision and strategy.

welcome - include – integrate

BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER

RESTORE

DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	General Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2018 Total £	2017 Total £
INCOME				
Grants other	11,700	7,500	19,200	25,022
Grants - Barrow Cadbury	-	19,000	19,000	21,500
Donations - Individuals	34,716	-	34,716	33,110
Donations - Churches	7,255	4,792	12,047	13,790
Gift aid on donations	13,666	-	13,666	3,404
Befreinding services	3,600	-	3,600	-
Fundraising	4,884	-	4,884	8,728
Bank Interest	81	-	81	35
Other	361	-	361	679
	<u>76,263</u>	<u>31,292</u>	<u>107,555</u>	<u>106,268</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries & wages				
Befrienders	71,548	5,610	77,158	62,181
Co-ordinator	2,880	23,792	26,672	34,105
Administration	6,235	-	6,235	5,795
Office Expenses	12,674	-	12,674	9,575
Information and Publicity	180	-	180	135
Accountancy Charges	520	-	520	637
Programme Activities	8,424	-	8,424	8,335
Training - Staff and Volunteer	387	-	387	338
	<u>102,848</u>	<u>29,402</u>	<u>132,250</u>	<u>121,101</u>
Net (expenditure)/income	(26,585)	1,890	(24,695)	(14,833)
Transfer between funds	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance at 1 January 2018	125,222	6,666	131,888	146,721
Fund Balance at 31 December 2018	<u>98,637</u>	<u>8,556</u>	<u>107,193</u>	<u>131,888</u>

Funding

We are extremely grateful for the generous contributions of individual donors, the support of groups in hosting activities, donations from churches and community fundraising events including Run4Refugees and musical concerts.

We also give thanks to charitable trusts which supported the work of Restore including: The Barrow Cadbury Trust, South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust, Richard Kilcuppe's Charity and Roughley Trust.

Management Committee, Staff and Trustees

Chair of Management Committee	Mauricio Silva
Treasurer	Natalie Chong
Other Management Committee Members	Andy Jolly, Sue Morgan, Sarah Dixon, Josephine Houghton, Frank Cole and Jessica Foster
Project Coordinator (to Sept 2018)	Shari Brown
Acting Project Co-ordinator (from Oct 2018)	Jeremy Thompson
Befriending Coordinator (to Sept 2018)	Jeremy Thompson
Befriending Women's Worker	Rachel Dale
Befriending Men's Worker (from June 2018)	Andy Ferrari
Administrative Assistant	Geraldine Hunt
BCT Ecumenical Development Officer	Colin Marsh
Trustees of Birmingham Churches Together	
Roman Catholic Archbishop	Most Revd Bernard Longley
Anglican Bishop	Rt Revd David Urquhart
Free Churches Moderator and Chair of BCT	Rev Ian Howarth
Coordinating Group	
Trustee/Chair of Restore	Mauricio Silva
Trustee/BCT Training	Mrs Sheila Huckfield-Powell
Trustee	Sister Margaret Walsh
Treasurer	Matthew Birchall

welcome - include – integrate