23rd Report
2017/2018

POSITIVE ACTION IN HOUSING LTD
Charity Registration Number: SCO27577
Company No: SC158867
Registered Office
98 West George Street,
Glasgow G2 1PJ
Chair
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Linda Brown
Treasurer
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Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in North Glasgow and across Scotland

MOHAMMAD ASIF AND HIS SON SUDAIS

© ROBERT PERRY

MOHAMMAD ASIF AND HIS SON SUDAIS
Introduction

On behalf of my fellow trustees, I am very pleased to present our 23rd Annual Report. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Dr. Chris Robinson, for her time and dedication.

This report illustrates the positive differences the charity has made to the lives of our beneficiaries and, in doing so, the benefits of our profoundly human-centred ethos. It’s a pleasure to report the amount of advice, information and emergency support we provide to our service users and the impact of our information sessions, training and campaigns. See our infographic “Our Year in Numbers” on pages 8 and 9. The external context for our work remains extremely challenging, with profound implications for those whose status is yet to be resolved.

We all know the appalling scale of the global refugee crisis, and the corresponding rise in xenophobia and racism. It is therefore critical that we all step up our efforts to support those who have lost everything, or newly arrived, by welcoming refugees and migrants and standing up for each other. I hope that this report also demonstrates that we are working hard to ensure the charity is financially sustainable through an uncertain period ahead.

To those who already support our work, it is your kind donations that have allowed us to carry out life-changing work. Because of you, we have substantially increased the numbers of people we can support, including refugee children left in residential care units, immigrant families with no recourse to funds, people who have fallen into destitution and those who have experienced unimaginable trauma.

Sincere thanks must go to our members - Scottish housing associations, local authorities, non-profits, faith groups and trade unions - as well as our individual donors and supporters - who have helped us go that extra mile. I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their support, resilience and wisdom, our Chief Executive and her team of staff and volunteers for working so energetically.

Finally, with the world changing rapidly in front of our eyes, 2019 is set to be a year of ever greater challenges. We are ready!

Rani Dhanda
Rani Dhanda
CHAIR
35 year old Lydia was happy and smiling when she came into our offices in September 2018 to let us know that she and her three children: son Mika (15) and two daughters, Queen (6) and Faly (3) had just been granted leave to remain.

A very different picture to when she first came to see us. Lydia’s caseworker remembers her as being frightened, exhausted and desperate for assistance.

Lydia arrived in Scotland earlier this year with her three children. The family had to leave South Africa after receiving serious threats from family and community in South Africa after Lydia had married outside her ethnic group.

The family appeared in our offices in Glasgow with just one suitcase, £20 cash and nowhere to go. Our caseworkers liaised with the Social Work department, arranged temporary homeless accommodation, and made a referral to an asylum solicitor. With some persistence, the family received Home Office accommodation.

The children are now settled in their new home and schools and Lydia is looking forward to the future for her children and herself. “The situation had got so bad, I thought there was no way forward for us anywhere. But now we are settled, we have our papers, we can look forward to the future with hope and happiness”.

“We are settled in our new home”
OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS
2017 - 2018

MONEY SKILLS PROJECT
HELPED IMPROVE THE LONG-TERM STABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF
503 families by giving financially-excluded service users the information, resources, and financial literacy skills to escape the poverty cycle and achieve long-term stability. THIS EQUATES TO
1,229 BENEFICIARIES
752 ADULTS and 477 CHILDREN
136 SERVICE USERS
169 MEMBERS
20 VOLUNTEERS
12 STAFF MEMBERS

SERVICE USERS
2,281
Positive Action in Housing provided advice, skills and humanitarian support to 2,281 households from 94 different countries of origin, equating to 2,903 adults and 1,719 children. Last year we assisted 1,940 households.

INCOME
£541,184
EXPENDITURE
£534,919

FRONTLINE HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE
520 HOUSEHOLDS ADVISED
485 ADULTS
556 CHILDREN
120 FAMILIES
271 CHILDREN
118 ADULTS

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND
£61,189 in crisis payments
567 emergency crisis grants

EMERGENCY CRISIS SUPPORT
1,400 HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED

LIFELINE SERVICE
7,097 people registered to host refugees with Room for Refugees
16% increase

THE NEW MIGRANT ACTION PROJECT
Provided information, advice and advocacy on welfare rights, housing, homelessness and work to
485 ADULTS
556 CHILDREN

HELPING BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THEIR NEW LIVES IN SCOTLAND
120 FAMILIES
271 CHILDREN

THE FRESH TALENTS PROJECT
supported 40 young Roma people (aged 18-24) and helped 14 people get into training, employment, further education or to develop self-employment.

EUROPEAN UNION NATIONALITIES...
and focused on the Romanian Roma community in Govanhill, amongst Scotland’s most financially and socially excluded people.

THE TEAM WORKED WITH PEOPLE OF
17

Use the hashtags: #rebuildinglives
#withrefugees #wehaveroom

106,507 website visits
591,331 page views
4,579 Facebook fans
2,097 Twitter followers
@PositiveActionH
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258
refugees and asylum seekers facing destitution in Glasgow given proactive advice.

£2M*
The estimated savings in the cost of shelter as a result of charities like the British Red Cross using the Room for Refugees Programme for destitute refugees, asylum seekers or vulnerable migrants.

*Estimated at £50 per night.

1,891 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
136 ADULTS and 373 CHILDREN/UNBORN CHILDREN

1,400 HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED

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Bridget (39) came to the UK in 2015 with her then partner and three children. As an Italian national, she began working and was eventually taken on permanently by online retailer Amazon. After her relationship broke down, Bridget was forced to leave work to take care of the children. At this point she had no income and nowhere to live.

Our caseworkers assisted Bridget to apply for permanent accommodation with registered social landlords. Bridget’s Caseworker also assisted her to apply for income support and housing/child benefits.

At first, Bridget was refused income support on the grounds that she had no right to reside as she was not working. Our casework team reminded DWP of her payslip evidence and used Immigration (EEA) Regulation 2006, 5 (7C) to argue that Bridget was still in the labour market and therefore eligible for Income Support.

Based on the UKUT 347 an EU citizen who is the primary carer of a child has a right to reside if the child was in education while she was a worker. Eventually the decision was overturned and the benefit was awarded.

Eventually, the family were able to move into their new home and applied for furniture and other essentials via the Scottish Welfare Fund. Bridget said: “I don’t know where I would have turned without you. I look forward to bringing up my children and building a future”.

“We can start to build a future now”
**TACKLING THE ROOT CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS**

The Money Skills Project offers a free, independent advice and information service to people from BME, refugee and migrant communities.

The service is delivered through drop-ins and outreach, financial literacy workshops and a volunteer development programme targeting different communities. Referrals from external organisations are accepted and service users may also be signposted to relevant support.

Sraboni Bhattacharya manages the project, and leads 2 Money Advisers, Mary Yeawan Chau and Marina Belokurov. There is also a high level of volunteer engagement. The team is multilingual, speaking no less than 10 languages including: English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Cantonese Hakka, Mandarin, Russian, Hebrew and German. Freelance interpreters are also hired occasionally.

Under its Volunteer Development Programme, 10 volunteers were recruited from a range of community groups speaking different languages such as French, Latvian, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Kurdish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Urdu, Cantonese and Mandarin. Volunteers were provided training on financial capability skills by Money Advice Scotland, e.g. budgeting, savings, borrowing, understanding insurance and taxes. They were also provided shadowing opportunities with our Money Skills staff and hands on experience of running Financial Capability workshops within their communities.

In 2017-18, the Project assisted 503 families and assisted a total of 1,229 direct beneficiaries comprising 752 adults and 477 children.

- 244 BME households improved their financial literacy skills and confidence in money management by attending 9 Financial Skills workshops and 11 financial capability information groups run by the charity.
- 192 service users experienced a decrease in poverty as a result of debt and welfare rights advice.
- 136 service users reported that they were able to develop money management skills e.g. utility savings, maximise income, how to budget, manage debt and access low cost loans.
- See the infographic on pages 8 and 9 for more info.

• 244 BME households improved their financial literacy skills and confidence in money management by attending 9 Financial Skills workshops and 11 financial capability information groups run by the charity.

Hong lives in Glasgow with her partner Chuan and three young children, two girls and a boy, all under the age of six.

She first arrived as a pregnant asylum seeker and our destitution team assisted her with shelter and crisis grants and connecting with a solicitor.

Several years on, Hong got Indefinite Leave to Remain. Chuan was still waiting for his decision on his status. Although anxious about this, Hong no longer felt in fear of destitution or removal. She quickly found part-time work. In time, the family moved to a private tenancy. Our Money Skills team helped Hong with household budgeting and managing the family’s finances.

Hong developed diabetes and found it hard to cope with work and the children. Her daughters were presenting with extreme behavioural disorders which was later diagnosed as severe autism.

When Chuan was granted refugee status, Hong was able to stay at home to bring up the children. Our Money Skills team helped Hong apply for Carer’s Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (Child) for her daughters. Earlier this year, our caseworkers helped Hong and her partner to get rehoused with NG Homes, a social housing landlord.

Hong and Chuan said: “You helped us through the most difficult and lonely times”.
Mahdi and his family fled Iran in 2012 after an arrest warrant was issued in his name, for supporting and distributing leaflets of support for the Kurdistan Freedom Party. The Party was formed because of decades of suffering discrimination against Kurdish minorities living in Iran. Mahdi and his wife and daughter were initially provided with support by the Home Office when they first claimed asylum in the UK. However, in 2017, their asylum claim was turned down and support was withdrawn.

Mahdi was worried about his family and did not know what to do. A friend advised him to contact Positive Action in Housing. Our caseworkers succeeding in halting the eviction process by challenging the legality of Serco evicting the family without a court order. In March 2018 Mahdi and family’s Section 4 Support was reinstated.

Mahdi says: “Thanks to the Lifeline Service, we were able to continue to stay in our Home Office accommodation, and work towards a resolution of our case. When we had nothing, we received crisis grants to help us survive our destitution. Without their assistance, my family and I would have been left homeless, I am ever so grateful for the support and advice they provided us when we were most in need.”

“Without your intervention, my family and I would have been left homeless.”
“Since I was with Positive Action in housing, my life has changed a lot”

Madalin came to Glasgow with his family and went to school here. His English is fluent and he’s been developing his career in freelance interpreting and some casework for the last few years.

He started to do sessional work with us for five hours a week in October 2017 at our drop-ins, interested in developing his casework skills, particularly in welfare rights. He also took part in our Fresh Talents project, to develop his interview skills and improve his CV. In January 2018 Madalin started working for Glasgow City Council in primary and secondary schools, helping Roma children and their families when they are struggling with school and making ends meet at home.

Madalin, age 24, Roma: “I’m always busy with work, it’s difficult to say no when I can see people need help but I have a lot on outside work as well, working in the community and busy with my ministry too. Since I was with Positive Action in housing, my life has changed a lot. I learnt how to deal with my problems and people too and it really helped me get my job with the schools – the first time I’ve had a good, reliable income, as well as interesting and satisfying work. I’ve been able to get my own place too.”

The New Migrants Action Project works to promote the successful settlement of European Economic Area migrant workers living in Scotland through the provision of up-to-date, specialist, multilingual advice, information and advocacy.

The project advises individuals on employment, self-employment, homelessness and housing rights and responsibilities, welfare benefits eligibility; and provides practical advice, support and training to service providers, including Registered Social Landlords, Local Authorities, Voluntary Organisations and Statutory Agencies, helping them to build links with migrant communities and the groups that represent them.

This work was funded by Scottish Government’s Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund and the South East Integration Network and delivered by Iain Chisholm, Lia Demecheva, Ioana Di Mambro, Valerian Chirigiu, Madalin Calderas and Ionut Cioarata.

It has been another very busy and challenging year for our project, as the uncertainty of the continuing Brexit negotiations have combined with effects of the Home Office’s hostile environment policy to heighten feelings of precariousness and exclusion of the already much marginalised communities we work with.

We provided twice-weekly housing and welfare rights advice and information drop-ins in Govanhill and weekly drop-ins in our Glasgow city centre office. We saw 1084 presentations at our drop-ins from 271 individual clients this year, supporting 1041 beneficiaries, including 556 children. Our work has been more and more focused on the Romanian Roma community in Govanhill - 79% of our clients were Romanian nationals, but we worked with people from 17 nationalities in all, speaking 20 languages.

The welfare rights work we did - almost 80% of our work - raised at least £480,000 for our service users, over 70% of whom were living in relative poverty when they first contacted us.

Our great challenge this year has been a large scale targeting of tax credit claimants in Govanhill by HMRC, the DWP and the Home Office, working together. Almost all of our clients have had the claims reviewed, requiring very high levels of assistance in gathering and preparing evidence of their work and right to live in the UK. It has been especially difficult for people who are being exploited at work by bosses who don’t run their businesses properly, neglecting PAYE and National Insurance contributions, refusing to or demanding money to give proper payslips. Many of our clients, often working unsocial hours for minimum wage, have had the tax credits and housing benefit they depend on stopped because HMRC can’t find evidence that their employers are doing their paperwork properly.

With Brexit rapidly approaching, we also set up information sessions for the Romanian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Lithuanian communities we work in to help challenge a lot of the misinformation going around about Brexit and what it will mean. So many of our clients feel excluded anyway and Brexit has magnified that. Supporting people to strengthen their position in Scotland we provided 4 information workshops for 37 participants (target 6 and 40-60 participants) to EEA.

The feedback from service users suggests that many Roma young people feel they are not job ready due to language and cultural barriers, lack of qualifications. Lack of confidence or family support were also named among the most common challenges. Many often need a lot of encouragement and preparation to secure paid work.

The project delivered a weekly Employability Outreach session in Govanhill, 1-2-1 skills assessments, CV and job application writing sessions and workshops and mock interview sessions to improve confidence and interview skills.

NEW MIGRANTS ACTION PROJECT

In 2017-18, the Fresh Talents Project supported 40 young Roma people (aged 18-24) and helped 14 people get into training, employment, further education or to develop self-employment.

The Project developed in order to boost the confidence of young Roma individuals to enter the job market, based on feedback from current service users, our own experience, and members of the Roma community in Glasgow’s Govanhill.

Many of the young people in touch with our organization were unemployed or worked in low-paid zero-hour and unreliable contracts, simply to keep their families from going hungry or living on the streets. Many had either skills or aspirations of entering further training or finding employment that would help them achieve financial stability and provide a better future for their families, but had no support to do so or didn’t know where to begin in the Scottish employment market.

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Justina came to the UK from Kenya over 16 years ago.

Despite having a genuine claim for asylum the Home Office have refused to grant leave to remain, even though it is indisputable that the medication she requires to attend to her changing medical needs is not available in her country of origin. Quite simply, she cannot be sent home. The fight continues to secure her safety. Justina is past working age, but has got involved deeply in Glasgow life over the years. She has attended classes, joined in community groups, and is active in her local church. She also offers support and encouragement to others caught in the asylum system and visits people in hospital. She remains outgoing and busy despite her health worries and enjoys music and drama as well as football – especially Celtic!

Church of Scotland Minister, Rev. David McLachlan said “My wife, Susan is a nurse who works with asylum seekers in Gorbals Health Centre. After she became destitute because of her insecure status, Justina came to stay with us in our home in the South Side of the City. She has been a guest in our home through Positive Action in Housing’s Room for Refugees Network for several years now. We know that she longs to have her status resolved so that she can start to rebuild her life in her own home. For us, Justina’s friendship has been a very positive thing. But her situation has also opened our eyes to the real difficulties faced by so many asylum seekers in a system that is irrational and unfair”

Justina said “I’m grateful for the support I got from Positive Action in Housing. I have made many friends through the charity. They are always ready to support asylum seekers no matter their background. I am now part of the Unity Sisters Group who meet in the church that I attend in Langside. I enjoy living with David and Susan and have even come to be fond of their cat!”

“I was destitute and alone but I have made many friends”
Karzan and his wife Shewa claimed asylum in 2010 after fleeing Iraq.

In the last 8 years, they have been threatened with eviction without a court order by 3 different asylum landlords - YMCA, Orchard Shipman and now Serco.

They have been intermittently destitute while the Home Office stops and starts their support. Karzan reflects on the situation he finds himself in. “I envy those who can go to work and pay their rent and live normal lives. This destitution has become normal for us but I want to work. In the streets people sometimes shout “go back to where you came from”. “We have learnt to be patient while our years are wasted. There is no other choice. Positive Action in Housing stood by us through all those years. I wish the home office would give us our papers so that we can give back to Glasgow by paying taxes into the community.”

In 2012, the young couple were amongst 156 asylum seekers threatened with eviction by Y People/YMCA when the red road flats existed. Positive Action in Housing provided weekly crisis grants, and helped them find good legal support and their support was reinstated. Four years later, Orchard Shipman, tried to evict them. “We were afraid to leave home for college or the doctors or for even food in case we returned to find they’d changed the locks”. When Serco took over the asylum contract, the couple stayed on in their flat while their solicitor pushed their case. In March 2018, the couple’s section 4 support was reinstated.

“We were afraid to leave home for college or the doctors or even food in case we returned to find they’d changed the locks”
Our Homelessness Advice Service aims to offer advice and casework support to deal with the challenges for newly granted refugees having to rapidly move from one system of housing support to another.

The Service also assists people from BME Communities who find themselves homeless or suffering racist hate crime.

Analysis of homelessness monitoring data by Scottish local authorities in 2017-2018 found that the incidence of recorded homelessness affecting households from BME communities was 75% higher than across the population as a whole.

In 2017-18, the Service assisted 246 people (from 93 cases) which include 128 adults and 118 children. Beneficiaries were from 22 countries (including China, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, and Eritrea) with 90% of households living in poverty, 68% consisted of single person households, and 32% of households with children. Approaching two thirds of service users were newly granted refugees, and a third were from established minority ethnic communities. China, Syria and Iraq were the top 3 countries, service users were from. The services assisted households seeking advice and assistance regarding a range of issues including Transition to mainstream housing after obtaining refugee status 14%, Access social housing waiting lists 55%, Local authority homeless presentations 12%, Disrepair and poor housing conditions 6%, Racial harassment and Anti-social behavior issues 11%.

On 1 December 2017 a new type of tenancy - the private residential tenancy - came into force, replacing the assured and short assured tenancy agreements for all new tenancies. With the aim of improving the standards across the private rented sector, the new legislation brings in greater security for tenants, balanced with appropriate safeguards for landlords. To enable better housing options for minority ethnic and refugee communities, we continue to work with housing providers and local authority towards offering better standards and more choice in housing for our service users. In 2019 we plan to enhance our housing advice services by raising awareness about private rented sector as a viable housing option along with support for dispute resolution.

Refugee Resettlement and Ethnic Minority Housing Rehousing

Now happily rehoused in their permanent home in Glasgow

Kawa, his wife and their 2 children fled from Syria and arrived in the UK in February 2018 as part of the Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme for Syrian refugees.

The family was dispersed to Glasgow and placed in temporary accommodation in the Maryhill area of Glasgow City Council. Soon after moving into their temporary accommodation, their children were subjected to racially motivated bullying in the neighbourhood, particularly at the communal children’s play areas. We supported the family and advised them about hate crime reporting which the family were reluctant to do for fear of escalation and/or reprisal.

In the meantime we advised the family of their housing options and the related processes and procedures. After discussing their housing options, we assisted the family to access social housing waiting lists in and around the city centre area, where we deemed safe and suitable for them. We liaised with Glasgow West Housing association for a suitable offer and thereafter with Kawa to ensure that the date and time for the necessary house visit and property viewing were suitable for both parties. Mr Kawa and his family are now happily rehoused in their permanent home in Glasgow.

Kawa stated “It has been difficult to leave behind our home in Syria. Being accepted in UK as a refugee has given us hope. However settling down in Glasgow has been challenging. Before I came to Positive Action in Housing I was suffering from racial harassment, and I was afraid for my children to go and play outside. Positive Action in Housing helped me to find alternative accommodation in an area where my family and I feel safe and secure.”
Danut and Maria live in Govanhill with their son. They have relied on the New Migrants Action Project since 2013. Danut and Maria are both Big Issue sellers, selling at the same pitches, making around £100-£150 each week. This income was supplemented with Tax Credits for several years. Out of the blue, their tax credits were stopped because HMRC decided that their work was not genuine and effective. They were left with only their wages to support the family. Our Casework team helped Danut and Maria challenge this decision, filling in a 22 page form and gathering pages of evidence of their work and family situation. It took 6 months for the decision to be changed, their payments to be restored and a large backdate made to cover the missed payments. Danut says:

"People think selling the Big Issue isn’t work, but I’ve stood at my pitch selling magazines in all weathers for years. Maria travels to the far side of Glasgow to her pitch. It’s hard work, painful at times, but we carry on doing it to try to support our family. My older son lives nearby in Glasgow too and it’s important for us to be close, especially when life is as hard as it was this year. We want our children and grandchildren to get a good start in life."

"We work hard so that our children and grandchildren get a good start in life"

224 participants attended courses, representing 45 organisations from across Scotland, Ayr to Aberdeen, including 22 voluntary organisations, 10 housing associations and 13 statutory bodies.

We ran 19 open courses and 7 in-house courses, raising over £13,000 to support our humanitarian work.

We delivered a range of half-day courses on migrants’ rights and equality and diversity:

- Rights and Entitlements of EEA Nationals
- Rights of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Immigration Act 2016
- “The Hostile Environment"
- Equality and Diversity in Service Delivery

"Really good and informative course with a very knowledgeable and engaging tutor"

"Very interesting and was a great review of the situation facing asylum seekers and refugees"

"Very interesting discussion and exchange of ideas"

"I found the course extremely interesting and thought provoking. Thank you."

"Really interesting content and useful case studies to apply knowledge. The trainer was great at answering all questions raised."

We work hard so that our children and grandchildren get a good start in life”

Andrew heard about Positive Action through a friend.

"The caseworker told me about social housing options and helped me make applications near to the city centre. I was so pleased to receive an offer. I now have a stable home and am moving on with my life.”

Andrew (35) was threatened with homelessness after finishing his social work degree course at Glasgow Caledonian University. He had to leave his halls of residence. Andrew heard about Positive Action in Housing through a friend. We advised Andrew on his housing options. Despite having lived in Glasgow for the past few years he wasn’t aware of all the different neighbourhoods, he felt most familiar with the areas closest to the city centre and where he was most likely to be able find work. Our focus was helping him access Glasgow’s social housing in these areas. We advised Andrew of the application process and the potential time scale involved. We helped him to complete and submit several applications to key RSLs in his preferred areas as well as the Glasgow Housing Register. Finally, an offer came through and he was able to make a permanent move into his own home.

TRAINING

Law and policy around migrant issues change all the time creating uncertainty and confusion for migrants and service providers. Positive Action in Housing training equips service providers with the knowledge and tools to improve their capacity to offer minority ethnic and migrant communities equal access to mainstream services.

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“I’ve enjoyed engaging with people and being able to work in such an international environment”

Mia, 26, Volunteer, holds an HNC in social sciences and has an undergraduate degree in French, Politics and International Relations.

"After graduating from university and moving back home to Glasgow, the opportunity came up to volunteer at Positive Action in Housing’s Annual Winter Destitution Surgery.

I was saddened about the refugee crisis and wanted to see how I could help in my own city. Helping at the surgery allowed me to see first-hand, the vital work and support offered by the charity. I started helping out twice a week at the charity’s reception. I have previously worked as a receptionist so have been able to put my skills and experience to good use. To an extent it has been different from what I expected as it has really opened my eyes to the challenges and hidden problems faced by clients and caseworkers.

The office gets very busy but the friendly and supportive team have always made me feel welcome and allowed me to contribute positively to the charity’s work. I have really enjoyed engaging with people from diverse backgrounds and being able to work in such an international environment. Although I am now moving on to a new opportunity, I will be able to continue to help the charity in a different way from afar”.

Glasgow has the largest number of asylum seekers of any major city in the UK. With insecurity of status, comes insecure housing, and the threat of destitution. There are numerous points in the asylum process that asylum seekers and refugees can find themselves becoming destitute and homeless.

The Lifeline Service aims to prevent and alleviate the destitution of refugees and people seeking asylum in order that they can begin to rebuild their lives and play an active part in society as equal counterparts.

The service has three lifesaving strands:
- Advice, information and emergency casework assistance for those at risk of destitution.
- Free shelter in the homes of ‘community hosts’.
- Crisis grants provided with the aim of assisting people to progress from “destitution towards contribution”.

We also work with social workers on behalf of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in order to find suitable families on our host register.

Key results

The Lifeline Service provided emergency crisis support to 1400 families and individuals - a 159% increase on the previous year (1055 families and individuals).

We provided direct advice and information to 258 refugees and asylum seekers facing homelessness in Glasgow.

We distributed £21,189 in crisis payments to 567 families and individuals (£42,440 in 2016-17).

Our annual winter surgery directly benefited 262 families and individuals over two days in December 2017.

We provided a total of 45,770 nights of continuous shelter for 280 refugees and asylum seekers and vulnerable migrant women/children, including 61 children, of whom 3 were unaccompanied (£2,957 in 2016-17).

On any given night, the Room for Refugees programme is actively sheltering 70-100 children, women and men.

We have 367 experienced hosts and over 475 registered caseworkers. £2.3m is the estimated savings in the cost of shelter as a result of charities like the British Red Cross and local government using the Room for Refugees Network. Estimated at £50 per night.

Community hosting - New and emerging need

The community hosting model has provided resolution.

Families - 33 families with children were sheltered - a 74% increase on the previous year when 19 families were sheltered (4 in 2015-16).

Women with No Recourse to Funds - Two Referrals from women’s organisations assisted abused women with NRPF.

Unaccompanied asylum seeker children - In three cases, we assisted unaccompanied asylum seeker children to be safely accommodated. In two cases, unaccompanied child refugees are living in a foster care arrangement. The success rate thus far is 100%.

Many refugee children come from stable loving homes despite the trauma of war, they are therefore considered easy to settle in a home environment.

Bail addresses - In two cases, the host provided bail addresses. The host family visited the person detained and the room was booked for that person to be bailed to.

Looking ahead

We are reviewing how the homelessness/destitution casework is delivered. We are keen to develop a ‘pay it forward’ scheme for service users...
Jo Haythornthwaite, hosting Nabeela, 51, from Pakistan in Glasgow, Scotland.

At 79, retired academic Jo has been sharing her home with destitute refugee women for over ten years. 51 year old Nabeela is her eleventh guest.

Nabeela first arrived in Scotland in 2010. “I had a problem and couldn’t go back to Pakistan. I went back once, but the problems were worse and my husband said I shouldn’t stay. I said ‘OK.’ So I was alone here, with no home.” Eventually she was brought to Jo. Finding reliable shelter was an immense relief. “I thanked God. I’m so comfortable here. There’s no problem sleeping, working, going out and coming home. I am happy.”

“Nabeela is a sensitive guest,” Jo explains. “She’s very thoughtful and helpful so that makes it easy. Before I hosted I thought about it long and hard. I wanted to retain my privacy. I didn’t want to share my life with somebody. Nabeela and I have separate lives and that suits us both.”

Nabeela’s days are largely taken up with English classes - a study she takes seriously because she didn’t speak a word before she arrived in the country. In one place a class would finish and I’d go off to another place and then another one, because I needed further lessons. It’s getting better now. Despite this busy schedule, she also finds time for singing in a choir and her passion - charity shopping. Whenever she has a tiny bit of money, Nabeela is very good at finding bargains,” Jo divulges. Nabeela’s eye for shopping has fuelled another passion - helping others.

“Yesterday I helped a Syrian woman. She doesn’t understand English, she’s pregnant and she’s alone here. She needed clothes, so I said, ‘OK,’ and when I came home I put a jacket, scarf, socks and everything in a bag and gave them to her. I help as many people as I can.”

Eight years on from her first arrival in the UK, Nabeela’s favourite thing about Scotland is somewhat surprising. “Snow!” she exclaims, her eyes lighting up at the thought. “I love the snow, I love the winter here.” “And I hate it,” chirps Jo, laughing. “She’s out there dancing in the snow and I’m inside turning up the heat!”

“Offering a room is my small contribution to try and make things a bit better”
Daina (39), a single mother to two children, is originally from Latvia.

Daina was working full-time in a care home. However, due to the heavy lifting involved, she developed chronic back problems. Her son’s condition made it harder to cope. Our Money Skills advisers helped Daina apply for Disability Living Allowance after her son’s autism was diagnosed. This meant she could reduce her working hours.

To enable her to be more confident in dealing with her own financial matters, Daina was persuaded to attend two financial skills/literacy workshops run by our volunteers. Daina realised she could be eligible for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Daina started the claim process herself by phoning Department of Work and Pensions. Our Money Skills team then assisted her to progress her claim. Although initially refused, Daina was awarded PIP at Tribunal level with our assistance. Carers allowance was also awarded.

Daina was forced to give up her job when her back condition deteriorated and she was forced to use crutches. Her back pain had aggravated due to having to use physical restraint to prevent her son from getting into danger. After Statutory Sick Pay ended, our caseworkers helped Daina to apply for Employment and Support Allowance. Daina had to pass habitual residence test as required by social security law for EU benefit claimants. The test is best described as complex and confusing. At the time of writing, Daina is still waiting to hear back about this application. Daina says: “A huge thank you for helping me overcome my financial worries - without you I would have got nowhere”.

“A huge thank you for helping me overcome my money worries - without you I would have got nowhere”
Income & Expenditure

Here is the summarised Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 March 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018 Total</th>
<th>2017 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>191,317</td>
<td>162,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>313,682</td>
<td>377,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other trading activities</td>
<td>35,229</td>
<td>24,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>237</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>541,184</strong></td>
<td><strong>565,133</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising funds</td>
<td>(18,826)</td>
<td>(17,739)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>(516,093)</td>
<td>(490,061)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total resources expended</strong></td>
<td>(534,919)</td>
<td>(507,800)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net movements in funds</td>
<td>6,265</td>
<td>57,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>8,027</td>
<td>7,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>36,384</td>
<td>21,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>349,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank and in hand</td>
<td>376,620</td>
<td>371,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creditors</strong></td>
<td>(42,659)</td>
<td>(43,331)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net current assets</strong></td>
<td>333,961</td>
<td>328,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets</strong></td>
<td>341,988</td>
<td>335,723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meet the trustees of Positive Action in Housing’s Emergency Relief Fund

Tom Harrigan, a trustee, is a very much admired retired police inspector of the then Strathclyde Police. His last day in office was July 7, 2005. He was packing his possessions when the London Underground bombs went off and was immediately back on the community beat, talking to Muslim leaders, calming anxieties and demonstrating that he knew the Quran did not sanction the taking of life.

Jelina Berlow-Rahman is a human rights solicitor and a long standing supporter. “I was 19 years old when I first became involved with Positive Action in Housing through the Chhokhar Family Justice Campaign, they gave us the much needed office space to run the high profile campaign and I have fond memories of that time. The charity has been at the forefront of the refugee crisis, as asylum seekers were being dispersed to Scotland at that time.

Eddy Isaacs also is a solicitor based in Glasgow and a past President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. He said: “I got involved with Positive Action in Housing because of my grandparents. They came to this country in the early part of the 20th century to escape pogroms in Eastern Europe. They survived because of the support of local Jewish community groups and charities. The situation is not much different today. It is distressing that, more than 100 years after my grandparents came here, not much has changed. Yet the evidence shows that, if we give people support they can rebuild their lives and begin giving back to society”.

Tom Harrigan, Jelina Berlow-Rahman and Edward Isaacs, past President of the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council.
A London Host’s Experience

“Last summer I read an article about a couple who’d hosted a Syrian refugee through Room2Heal and I was impressed by their experience. They’d supported and befriended the young man, who had in turn cooked his native dishes for them, and told them about his life. Inspired I made our spare room available. The young woman who came to us from Room for Refugees was from Sri Lanka. She had been in Yarl’s Wood Detention Centre, and had lived in several family houses since.

That first night I invited her to eat with us, but she was helping to care for an elderly man and was on her way out. And she was often out, keeping herself busy, so that good night and good morning, were sometimes the only words we exchanged. But as the year progressed she was at home more. I encouraged her to eat in the kitchen when she cooked, or at least sit in the garden in the sun, but maybe she had become used to living invisibly in people’s homes, for she preferred to stay in her room. All the same she was a warm and appreciative presence and I was glad to have been able to do something that made a direct difference to someone’s life.

She was a Buddhist and believed in karma and so, although my experience wasn’t exactly what I’d been expecting, I like to think there was a benefit felt by all”.

Esther Freud, Writer, London

Herbert is 71 years old from Zimbabwe

Actually, he was born in 1947 in what was then Southern Rhodesia - under British rule. Herbert came to the UK in 1977 as a British Subject.

After a series of misfortunes in which family members died, he ended up street homeless for eight years. His caseworker referred him to Room for Refugees and within a few days a lovely couple from East London offered to take him in to their home.

Six months on, we were delighted when Herbert’s caseworker told us that Herbert had just been granted leave to remain under the Windrush scheme and he could now move on!

What a waste of years of human potential!

Home office finally grants leave to remain to stateless Palestinian man

After years of rough sleeping as a stateless Palestinian and then being sheltered for a further three years through Room for Refugees in the home of the actress and human rights campaigner Joanne Macinnes, Mohammed Al-Mustafa was finally granted leave to remain as a stateless person.

Mohammed has been stateless for 31 years. He was denied protection in the UK after the Home Office refused to accept he was originally from Palestine, despite advising him to return there on two occasions. Mohammed was even accused of lying. Finally in October 2018, Mohammed was granted status after being put through the asylum torture test.

We are so very pleased for Mohammed but the question remains why he was put through years of hell by the asylum torture and lost his best years trying to prove his case. What a waste of years of human potential! It was not the Home Office who sheltered this stateless Palestinian. It was one woman, Joanne Macinnes, who took him into her home for free for several years, otherwise he would have remained rough sleeping on the streets of London, looked upon as being a “failed” asylum seeker.

“I’m a translator and Vicky’s a librarian. We have the resources and want to use them to do something good. As privileged members of a wealthy western society we feel we have a responsibility to help those in need where we can”

Jonathan and Vicky, both 38 with their guest Assad (43)

Read more about Mohammed here
VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

In 2017-18, Positive Action in Housing increased its volunteering capacity with the recruitment of a new Volunteering Co-ordinator, Tim Lehuraux.

This allowed us to develop a formal volunteering programme, run open days and to increase the number of volunteering hours in the charity. By the close of the year, the charity relied on 11 volunteers accounting for an average of 37.5 weekly hours:

• 6 receptionists
• 3 Lifeline assistants
• 2 New Migrant Action assistants

Due to the update of management documents, the development of IT management tools and guidance, the capacity of Positive Action in Housing to execute a structured and efficient procedure in relation to volunteering has increased (e.g. standardized monitoring form).

We established standardised procedures and management tools, which secured the permanent involvement of new volunteers across all projects whenever needed, provided a stable framework, and allowed more responsiveness to volunteering needs.

Volunteers receptionists ensured quality support at the reception at all times during the week and particularly during drop-in hours (from Tuesdays to Thursdays), by providing constant human contact and interaction, answering essential questions of clients, and signposting appropriately. Their involvement spearheaded the development of a refreshed guidance and a new procedure offering better support to new teammates and visitors.

Volunteer casework assistants also joined the Lifeline project and the New Migrant Action project, helping our caseworkers with form fillings such as Section 4 and housing applications, regular phone calls to clients and partner agencies, as well as interviews and translation. Due to their support, we were able to spend more time with each client, and ease communication due to the language skills they provided. This proved particularly useful with Arabic and Romanian speaking clients.

The charity benefitted from the tremendous contribution of four Money Skills volunteers, who invested around 12 hours per week in acquiring knowledge on money advice, and reached out to ethnic minority communities to deliver Financial Capability workshops in several languages.

Diversity among volunteers is key to our work. The variety of experiences and languages spoken is indeed instrumental to our capacity to understand our clients’ life paths and challenges. Moreover, it is our responsibility, and our ambition, as a charity working towards a fairer society for all, to provide tailored opportunities to a large range of profiles: students willing to help on their spare time, people looking to build skills, self-confidence and self-belief, isolated persons in search of social bounds, citizens committed to solidarity.

Looking ahead, we aim to further develop volunteering opportunities to new areas such as support to our Volunteer Hosts on Room for Refugees, fundraising and advocacy, while looking to deliver on three key aspects:

• Our capacity to open access to enriching opportunities for marginalised publics
• Our capacity to reflect the social and cultural diversity of society within our team
• Our capacity to deliver certificated training for volunteers

“Volunteers, aside from contributing to our effort, are the minds that connect us to civil society and the voices that will spread the word about the necessity to engage in the cause Positive Action in Housing seeks to support: social justice”

TIM LEHURAUX
VOLUNTEERING CO-ORDINATOR
OUR TRUSTEES AND SUPPORTERS

TOM HARRIGAN
TRUSTEE
LINDA BROWN
COMPANY SECRETARY

ALASSAIR MCKEE
CEO, GLEN OAKS HASTON

TONY SWEENEY
MEMBER OF PERSONNEL SUB WITH RANI AND ARNOLD TRUSTEES

TOM HARRIGAN
TRUSTEE
LINDA BROWN
COMPANY SECRETARY

ALASSAIR MCKEE
CEO, GLEN OAKS HASTON

TONY SWEENEY
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A PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL MEETING WITH COMMUNITIES MINISTER ALIEN CAMPBELL AND HEAD OF EQUALITIES AT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, LESLEY IRVING - OCTOBER 2018

ALASSAIR MCKEE
CEO, GLEN OAKS HASTON

PHILIP TOMPKINS
TRUSTEE

ASIF MOHAMMAD
NAVEEN TRUSTEE

NAJIME PARVEEN
CEO PATH SCOTLAND, TRUSTEE

ROBERT SWINFEN WITH HIS WIFE ALISON
TRUSTEE

TONY SWEENEY MEMBER OF PERSONNEL SUB WITH RANI AND ARNOLD TRUSTEES
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83/85 Dougrie Road, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45 9NS
Building sustainable Highland communities now and for the future

Albyn Housing Society has served the Highland’s for 45 years, building quality homes and supporting sustainable communities across the region.

We are ambitious for the future, and with a focus on delivering excellent customer service and providing much needed new homes throughout the north, we have embarked on an exciting new journey.

Over the next four years, we are set to grow our current portfolio of more than 3000 affordable homes by building over 750 much needed new properties for social and mid-market rent and low-cost home ownership.

Between 2018 and 2021 we will invest over £111m in major repairs and improvements, whilst allocating over £60m (including around £30 million in Scottish Government grant funding) to our new build plans.

We are also developing our teams to drive quality frontline services at a time when our customers and their communities need them most. By working with partner agencies, we aim to attract resources to develop new programmes, like our Money Matters Highland services, to tackle households’ debt and financial worries head-on.

In a climate of welfare reform, increasing fuel poverty, growing household bills and funding cuts, Albyn Housing Society is committed to helping our customers, their communities and the Highlands thrive.

For more information about Albyn Housing Society visit www.albnyhousing.org.uk

Aspire Housing and Personal Development Services

As an award winning organisation Aspire Housing and Personal Development Services strives to deliver the highest quality personalised social care to vulnerable people across Central Scotland. Our committed and caring staff passionately deliver our Self-Directed Support, Care at Home and Emergency Accommodation & Housing Services in addition to Specialist Services. Every day they make a difference in people’s lives.

All our efforts are focused on ensuring each person we support has the best opportunities to develop more confidence and skills to live as fulfilling and self directed a life as possible.

By providing excellent training we ensure our front line support workers, and our team of staff, are equipped with the knowledge and skills to work with adults, older people, young people and children, any of whom may have a range of needs, and with families, carers and other professionals. By working together we encourage self respect and the ability for people to achieve the things that matter to them.

To help us continue to deliver and expand these important services we are always looking to recruit Support Workers who share our values. Job opportunities can always be viewed on our website, www.aspireinc.co.uk, and any questions can be answered by calling our Head Office on 0141 548 1552. You can also follow us on social media to keep up to date with Aspire News.
DrumCOG are pleased to support Positive Action in Housing

Glenstrives to be a forward looking, professional and approachable provider of good-quality housing, working with others to create attractive communities that people want to and can afford to, live in.

We are pleased to support the work of PAiH Ltd.

SCA recognises the vital work that PAiH carries out in communities across Scotland.

Sign up for our fortnightly briefing - Local People Leading

www.localpeopleleading.net

Glen
Housing Association

Southside Housing Association

is pleased to support
Positive Action in Housing

Southside House
135 Fifty Pitches Road
Glasgow G51 4EB
Tel: 0141 422 1112
Fax: 0141 424 3327

E-mail: enquiries@southside-ha.co.uk
Web: www.southside-ha.org

ORE VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Delivering the Best Possible Service for our Communities.

PROMOTING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IN FIFE

Ore Valley Housing Association is pleased to support Positive Action in Housing.

ORE VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD
114-116 Station Road, Cardenden, Fife
E-mail oveha@orevalleyha.org.uk
Web Site www.orevalleyha.org.uk
Telephone No. 01592 721917

South Lanarkshire Branch
21 Beckford Street, Hamilton, ML3 0BT 01698 454690

Best wishes to Positive Action in Housing for their continued support the most vulnerable.

“Through union and co-operation for the benefit of each”

Stephen Smellie
Secretary
Margaret Gallagher
Chairperson

Proud to support the work of Positive Action in Housing
We are hugely grateful for the help given by our members, supporters and volunteers to make this year's work possible. Your support has made a real difference to 4,622 children, women and men from BME, refugee and migrant communities who sought Positive Action in Housing’s support and intervention. At a time when racism of any kind is on the increase and there are more people displaced around the world than at any time since the Second World War our work has never been more relevant.

We want to say thank you to each of our advertisers who made this report possible, we also want to acknowledge the support of our long standing members from the Scottish housing association movement, voluntary organisations, trade unions, faith groups, volunteers, refugee hosts, individual donors and trusts and foundations.

We want to thank the thousands of people who offered housing to refugees; the thousands of people who offered spaces to refugees up to Room for Refugees from Scotland and the rest of the UK - and globally too. We want to thank our thousands of supporters on social media. Thank you for your support, both financial and moral, our work simply could not happen without you. Thank you also for the thousands of emails giving support, lending a hand to campaigns, responding to appeals or offering fresh ideas to help us do better.

The numbers of individuals who donated to us, are too many to list here, also some wish their support to simply could not happen without you. Thank you also for the thousands of supporters on social media. Thank you for your support, both financial and moral, our work simply could not happen without you.

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Thank you for your ongoing support. Below is a list of almost 500 organisations whom we worked with in 2017-18, or whom we supported our work.

### Acknowledgements

[All simplifying text around page layout and visual aids removed for clarity and conciseness]
We believe in fairness and equality, respect and acceptance, dignity and pride – without exception.