Supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in North Glasgow and across Scotland

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Proud to work in partnership
On behalf of my fellow trustees, I am very pleased to present our 24th Annual Report.

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 “The 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 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. This includes 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, trade unions, local authorities and nonprofits), the Scottish Government, the many charitable trusts and foundations – as well as our individual donors, volunteers and supporters – each of whom 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 hard in what is becoming an increasingly difficult climate.

Finally, as we near towards 2020 – our 25th year – we look forward to ever greater challenges. We are ready!

Rani Dhanda
CHAIR

It’s a pleasure to be able to report on our 24th year and take time to reflect on our achievements, none of which was possible without the passion and commitment (and great humour) of so many individuals and organisations and funders.

In 2018-19, Positive Action in Housing carried out a formidable workload, and enabled 4,671 direct beneficiaries (2,895 men and women, 1,776 children) to overcome crises and build new lives in Scotland.

Our Homelessness Advice Service helped new refugees and migrant families to access social housing and homelessness support. We also advised BME private tenants affected by poor housing conditions and landlord conflict.

The Money Skills and New Migrants Action Projects raised over £1.2M in state entitlements for their service users – money that went back into the Scottish economy. Our Lifeline Service provided proactive casework or emergency support to 1,501 destitute refugees or asylum seeker households.

Our Room for Refugees Network is running Scotland and UK wide, and to some extent the US, thanks to online technology. In 2018/19, the Network arranged 48,022 nights of continuous shelter, thanks to our volunteer hosts and spare rooms, and enabled 230 families and individuals to progress their cases and find new hope. Decades of expertise mean the programme is stable and well run.

Our Emergency Relief Fund distributed £61,659, and our Winter Destitution Surgery supported 292 adults and 189 children – up from 24% since last year.

Our training, migrant rights information and membership (Registered Social Landlords, BME/voluntary organisations, Universities, law firms and trade unions etc) was delivered Scottish wide.

Through campaigning and casework, the charity continued to push back against the “hostile environment” to uphold people’s basic human rights.

The continued uncertainty of Brexit and the end of Free Movement are a constant backdrop to our work and the lives of EU migrants, increasing feelings of insecurity about their place in Scotland, even having lived and contributed here for years. This especially affects the Roma who are particularly excluded as a community.

The EU Settlement Scheme is both an opportunity and a real concern, especially having seen the devastation of Windrush. For some it’s a simple way to get indefinite leave to remain, while others may not get through the process and end up living here “illegally”.

It was a real honour to be named in the Sunday Herald newspaper as one of Scotland’s “Brave Hearts”, after leading a successful campaign to stop Serco’s lock change evictions. The Home Office routinely cuts asylum seeker’s support only to reinstate it. Forbidden to work, people fall in and out of destitution for months or years before winning the right to remain. Rarely has enforced destitution led to people “going home”, the suffering caused is immeasurable. Hostile environment policies hurt the rest of society too. By delaying resettlement, how many tax millions has this country lost? Will Mears’ new 10-year asylum contract use a more humane approach than Serco’s deeply unpopular mass lock change attempts?

Looking ahead, we anticipate increased demand. We remain concerned that the “hostile environment” will herald much worse treatment of people of colour and a heritage other than “British”. The far right is emboldened by the anti-immigrant rhetoric of some politicians. With the continuing rise in poverty, a lack of decent housing and the fallout of Brexit yet to be known, our role has never been more important. We remain committed to enabling our fellow human beings to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

We are grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the charity and look forward to contributing to the 2020 Ending Homelessness Strategy. While it has been a strong financial year, there are challenging times ahead. We greatly appreciate the regular donations from our supporters.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to our advertisers who sponsored this report, our members and funders (see acknowledgements on page 50) whose generosity and encouragement helped us deliver our strongest humanitarian response yet.

Robina Qureshi
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
October 2019

Robina Qureshi
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Rani Dhanda
CHAIR
Raj and his family got leave to remain in November 2018 after making an application on Human Rights grounds in 2015. They were living in a flat provided by the Home Office and didn’t know what their next steps should be. “We were clueless! We have no family or community connections in Glasgow so it’s difficult to find out. At Positive Action in Housing we had someone to hear us and tell us what our options were.”

“As new refugees, you helped us to decide our best housing options”

The Housing Team made a referral to the homeless casework service to get them started on the homeless route and support them through the process with advice and information. They also made a referral to Money Skills Project to get their benefits sorted out. “We feel confident now to make decisions and ask for your support when we need it - we feel settled. I’m starting my Access to Law course at University in September.”

Paul was in his sixties when he found himself with nowhere to call home. After his relationship broke down, he had moved from the home he shared with his partner into a flat provided by his employer. When his job finished and he found himself homeless, a friend put him up while he found a new place.

Paul came to the Housing team for help. We helped him gather the paperwork he needed to apply through the Glasgow Housing Register for a number of Housing Associations in the north west of Glasgow. We also talked to him about homelessness services and what to do if he had to leave his friend’s place. In February 2019 Paul got a letter from Maryhill Housing Association to say he’d been shortlisted for a flat. We helped him make an appointment to see the flat and Paul was chosen to sign a tenancy.

“… I did not know how long I can stay with my friend because it was supposed to be only for a short time. She told me to find somewhere else to stay as soon as possible. I was worried because I didn’t have anyone else I could ask for help and faced the prospect of having nowhere to go”.

“Until I came to you I didn’t have anyone else to ask for help”
**TOP 3 NATIONALITIES WORKED WITH:**

- **ROMANIAN ROMA:** The project focused on the Romanian Roma community in Govanhill, which has the highest concentration of Romanian Roma anywhere in the country. This community are amongst Scotland’s most financially and socially excluded people.
- **LITHUANIA:**
- **ESTONIA:**

**NEW MIGRANTS ACTION PROJECT**

Provided information, advice and advocacy on welfare rights, housing, homelessness and work to 304 families benefitting 541 adults and 528 children (including 4 unborn)

**THE TEAM WORKED WITH PEOPLE FROM:**

- **EUROPEAN UNION NATIONALITIES:**
- **23**

**MONEY SKILLS PROJECT**

Helped improve the long-term stability and quality of life of 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 EQUALS TO:**

- **1,042 BENEFICIARIES:** 609 ADULTS & 430 CHILDREN
- **422 SERVICE USERS:**
- **193 BME HOUSEHOLDS:** improved financial literacy skills and confidence in money management by attending Financial Skills Workshops and 11 Financial capability information groups run by the charity
- **115 SERVICE USERS:** experienced a decrease in poverty as a result of debt and welfare rights advice.

**375**

**304**

**4,671**

**49 VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED**

**50 HOURS PER WEEK**

**2,600 HOURS PER YEAR**

**33% INCREASE**

**TRAINING**

People received equality and diversity training across Scotland, a 120% increase on the previous year.

**LIFELINE SERVICE**

Proactive casework, community hosting and crisis support for destitute refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.

**1,501 FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED**

**1,516 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES:** 1,540 ADULTS & 604 CHILDREN

**2,164 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES:** 1,540 ADULTS & 604 CHILDREN

**FRONTLINE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SERVICE**

Advice and information to 520 households, plus casework and representation to 110 households (93 last year) concerning homelessness rights, reviews, overcrowding, hate crime, displacement and social isolation. Increased assistance to newly granted refugees needing to rapidly move from asylum housing into temporary accommodation or social housing.

**520 HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED**

**169 MEMBERS**

- **49 VOLUNTEERS**
- **12 STAFF MEMBERS**

**2018-2019 OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS**

**INCOME:** £604,448

**EXPENDITURE:** £571,667

**6,488 Facebook fans**

**2,426 Twitter followers**

Use the hashtags: #rebuildinglives #withrefugees #wehaveroom
FRONTLINE HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

The Homelessness Advice Service offers advice, information and casework support to those facing homelessness, racism or housing problems to access safe, secure and affordable social housing. The service also assists people from BME communities who find themselves homeless as a result of racist hate crime, and newly granted refugees having to rapidly move from Home Office funded housing to social or private rented housing. Casework Co-ordinators, Sunny Singh and Christopher Ho provide comprehensive homelessness advice to our service users and make representations on behalf of their clients.

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 2018-19, the service provided housing and homelessness advice and information via telephone or email to 520 households (10 enquiries per week roughly). The project took up detailed homelessness casework for 110 households (93 last year) concerning homelessness rights, overcrowding, racist hate crime, disrepair and social isolation. 161 adults and 181 children benefited from the project. Of these, 83 were informed of their housing options. 37 households were assisted to apply for social housing. 7 were successfully rehoused. 3 received a successful homeless review. The main problems concerned homelessness (58%), hate crime (11%) and overcrowding (7%). Through casework, the project challenged hate crime and wrong decisions by the local authority to deem victims of hate crime as intentionally homeless. These decisions were successfully overturned.

80% of households who approached us for assistance were living in poverty or destitution. 56% consisted of single person households, and 43% of households with children. Nearly three quarters of service users were newly granted refugees, and 11% were from established minority ethnic communities. Syria (22), China (19) and Nigeria (8) 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 19%. Access social housing waiting lists 9%. Local authority homeless presentations 14%. Disrepair and poor housing conditions 5%. Racial harassment and Anti-social behaviour issues 9%.

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. We are grateful to the Scottish Government for helping to fund our housing advice service.

THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

As well as social housing, our staff worked to raise awareness of opportunities available in the private rented sector. The proportion of private tenants among Ethnic minority communities soared from 15% in 2001 to nearly 30% in 2011.1 While the private sector now accounts for 15% of all tenures in Scotland, compared with 5% in 1999, social housing stock has declined compared to demographic growth. A lingering economic crisis has put pressure on incomes, alongside successive austerity policies, more specifically cuts in benefits. Consequently, poverty among private tenants has become a more pressing issue.

In 2019, with funding from the Safe Deposits Scotland Trust, we launched a new service, aiming to inform private tenants of their rights, and to provide advice on disputes with landlords. These include issues related to disrepair, proper information of tenants through tenancy documents, or evictions. We will also aim at informing tenants about housing options, in order to increase tenants’ options to secure a home and appropriate conditions.

Tim Lehuraux has led this new project, working with other staff members to engage with landlords and letting agents, and comprehensively advising private sector BME, refugee and migrant tenants with housing problems.

1 2016, Glasgow City Council, Housing Change in Glasgow, An Analysis of 2001 and 2011 Census Results, Figures 3.13 & 3.14

Vilema, 41, has been in the UK for almost 20 years, originally in London.

She claimed asylum in 2015. After six months in immigration detention, she was dispersed to Glasgow. Her claim was refused, and her Home Office support was stopped in November 2017. With nowhere else to go, Vilema stayed in her flat, trying to father evidence for a new asylum claim. Serco, the Home Office landlord, then started sending her letters every couple of weeks telling her to leave her home and threatening to change her locks. Having tried but failed to get Section 4 support twice through other agencies, Vilema’s caseworker Sunny managed to get her support reinstated. She said: “Sunny gave me courage to stay in my home and keep going. If it wasn’t for Positive Action, I would be on the street. I have a claim in again and hope to stay on in Glasgow. It’s quiet and the people are good.”
Earlier this year, members of the Arab community asked Positive Action in Housing to intervene because Rupert Soames’ Serco corporation was planning to change the locks of an elderly gentleman from Syria with a serious heart condition and make him street destitute.

72-year-old Mohammed is a renowned writer and historian with expertise in Middle Eastern and British history. He travelled the world giving lectures. At the height of the Syrian war, it was unsafe for him to remain any longer. Mohammed decides to travel to the UK on an unexpired visa in the hope of claiming asylum. Seven years on, “Home” is a tiny bedsit in Glasgow’s Southside, a far cry from his comfortable, middle class life in Syria. Mohammed’s asylum case has not been resolved. His Home Office support was cut some time ago and he relies on the charity of others. Mohammed has lost touch with his wife who remains somewhere in Syria, he shows us her picture, which he uses as a screensaver on his mobile phone. Mohammed says: “The past seems like a dream. Some days, I can smell her perfume in my room. I could never imagine that one day Churchill's grandson would be putting me onto the streets with 300 others. I just pray each night that I don’t wake up to this existence”.

Casework Co-ordinator Sunny stopped Serco from evicting Mohammed, secured a crisis grant and arranged a new, proactive lawyer who suggested a plan to resolve his status. We hope that with a new support structure in place, Mohammed gains his asylum status and he can begin to rebuild his life.


Shabaz was trying to protect his cousin Malak when he was stabbed in the chest and stomach. Both were staying in a council run hostel. His father, Sivan, states that his sons’ attackers shouted, “Why are you still here, why are you not back in your own country?”.

As well as organising an appeal, Positive Action also arranged for Malak to stay in the home of a well-known theatre director and his family who had signed up to “host” refugees through our Room for Refugees Network.

The campaign resulted in a lot of media attention about the fear many Syrian refugees face living in Scotland. In an unprecedented move, the UNHCR publicly supported our appeal and hundreds of people all over Scotland sent their good wishes to Shabaz and his father, Sivan. His case was also raised and discussed in the Scottish Parliament.
In 2018-19, the Money Skills Project provided free advice and information to BME, refugee and migrant communities to help maximise income and reduce outgoings.

Benefits cuts decided by the UK Government as well as the roll out of Universal Credit are threatening to increase poverty levels across the UK and Scotland, especially in out-of-work families2. Not only is support limited, access has become harder, for instance with the coexistence of legacy benefits and Universal Credit. Higher cost of living has further put pressure on restricted budgets2.

Ethnic minority groups are particularly economically vulnerable with 36% of individuals in already relative poverty, compared to 17% within the White British Community1. Perspectives are even more alarming when looking at racial inequality in employment levels8, or the predominance of low paid work, and barriers to finding suitable jobs5.

In 2018-19, the Project assisted 375 families and 1,042 direct beneficiaries comprising 609 adults and 430 children from 45 different countries of origin.

• The project delivered 8 Financial Skills workshops and 15 financial capability information groups. As a result, 193 BME households improved their financial literacy skills and confidence in money management.

• 90 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.

• We raised £539,690 from child tax credits, working tax credits, benefit entitlements and savings.

The service is delivered through drop-ins and outreach, community-based multilingual help desks run by volunteers, financial literacy workshops and a volunteer development programme targeting different communities. Referrals from and to external organisations guarantee that service users receive comprehensive support.

When you can’t work because of illness or disability, it’s possible to end up penniless because of complicated or poorly run DWP health assessments. Without the Money Skills Project, Oksana would have been left in poverty, debt and probably homeless.

Oksana, 42, came from Lithuania 7 years ago. She worked in hard manual jobs, mainly factories and fish production. Over time she developed back pain and could barely walk. She also developed severe carpal tunnel syndrome. Forced to give up work, her mental health began to suffer due to the pain, poverty and isolation.

When Oksana came to us, she had no money. Her Adviser, Marina, helped her get Employment & Support Allowance (ESA), Personal Independence Payments and Housing Benefit. 7 months later, Oksana failed a DWP medical examination and her ESA was stopped. Marina got her a crisis grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund, gathered medical evidence for a Mandatory Reconsideration, applied for Jobseekers Allowance and kept her Housing Benefit going. When the Mandatory Reconsideration was refused, we helped her appeal to the Tribunal. Six months later, Oksana won the appeal and her ESA and disability premium were reinstated and backdated.

“All the help and advice I got, so quickly and efficiently, meant I didn’t get into rent arrears. But it’s not just a great service. You made me feel comfortable and listened to!”

“You listened to me and I no longer felt alone in my predicament”
“Without Positive Action’s help, we would have lost our home”

For EU nationals, making claims to Universal Credit can be complicated and it’s clear that sometimes DWP decision makers can’t or won’t apply the rules properly. Without the support of NMAP, this can leave families without money, falling into rent arrears.

Jekatarina came to Scotland to work and study seven years ago. In October 2018, when her younger son started at school her Income Support stopped and she tried to claim Universal Credit (UC). She came to us for help when her claim was refused and she couldn’t get an explanation from her UC Journal or the Jobcentre.

We called the Universal Credit helpline and spoke to an adviser who insisted Jekatarina couldn’t get UC because she had never had three months of Jobseekers Allowance but wouldn’t explain any further. We asked him to post the decision on her journal instead.

The decision maker had correctly identified that Jekatarina had the Right to Residence as the carer of a child of an EEA worker in education. Unfortunately they had then decided to invent an additional rule that she needed to have claimed 3 months of jobseekers allowance before she could have this right to reside. We made a Mandatory Reconsideration of this decision, getting her Universal Credit backdated to her date of claim. Unfortunately, it took until after Christmas for the money to arrive.

“It was difficult depending on my friends and family, especially over Christmas. Without NMAP’s help, I would have lost my flat. I didn’t know how to argue with the Jobcentre or what to do next. Thanks for all your effort.”

The New Migrants Action Project is led by Project Leader Iain Chisholm and his team, Lia Dmitrieva, Ioana Di Mambro, Ionut Ciocarla and Amalga Gomoiu. The project is funded by the Scottish Government. The Project offers accessible information, advice and support to European Union (EU) nationals as they settle in Scotland. Over the years we’ve built trust and strong links with marginalised individuals and communities. In 2018-19, the project team worked with service users who’ve been coming to us regularly since we started and over 120 new service users, mostly referred to us by their friends and family. While the main community we work with remains Romanian Roma, representing over 70% of our service users, the scale of our work and diversity of service users have grown again this year. We worked with 304 individuals, supporting 1053 beneficiaries (including 524 children), from 23 different countries, speaking 24 languages.

The main part of our work, providing information and advice on EU right to reside and habitual residence, welfare rights, housing and homelessness was funded by Scottish Government’s Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund. We provided weekly housing and welfare rights advice and information drop-ins in Govanhill and weekly drop-ins in our Glasgow city centre office, seeing 1089 presentations. The welfare rights work we did - almost 80% of our work - raised at least £670,000 for our service users, over 70% of whom were living in relative poverty when they first contacted us. We’ve continued supporting service users’ claims for Tax Credits, Child Benefits and Housing Benefit throughout the year, meanwhile the roll out of Universal Credit has posed a real challenge to our service users who don’t have access to the internet at home, have limited IT skills and English language. Claiming Universal Credit requires an online application - we’ve been supporting people to set up and operate their won email addresses and make the complex online claims. Decision makers are regularly misunderstanding or misapplying the rules and refusing valid claims. Our specialist knowledge of the rights of EU nationals has been important in ensuring mistakes are put right and people get the money they need for their families. Maintaining a Universal Credit claim is based on an online to-do-list and journal and it’s vital people respond to tasks promptly. Many of our service users need ongoing support at our weekly outreach drop-ins.

We brought our Fresh Talents employability project for young Roma people, funded by The Big Lottery, to a close in August, after two successful years. 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.

Late in the year, having secured funding from Big Lottery’s Awards for All, we began 2 weekly Homework Clubs for Roma children in Govanhill’s Cuthbertson Primary and St Bride’s Primary schools. The aim of the project is for children to have a quiet and safe space to do their weekly homework, supporting their academic confidence and progress. We also provide a healthy snack, which the children help choose and prepare.

For 2019-20 we have secured further funding to offer help to vulnerable EU nationals to make online applications and collect the evidence they need to get the right outcome from them.

We are also grateful to Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust, Big Lottery Fund - Awards for All, EC Hendry Charitable Trust and the Scottish Government for funding this work.
Diversity training for housing and voluntary organisations

Positive Action in Housing training gives housing associations, charities and other service providers the knowledge and tools to make their services more responsive and accessible to minority ethnic and migrant communities.

Law and policy around migrant issues change all the time creating uncertainty and confusion for migrants and service providers.

- 449 participants attended courses, representing 32 organisations from across Scotland, including 24 voluntary organisations, 4 housing associations and 4 statutory bodies.
- We ran 11 open courses and 31 in-house courses, raising £7,000 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
  - No Recourse to Public Funds
  - The Hostile Environment’s Impact on Integration
  - Equality and Diversity in Service Delivery
  - Equality and Diversity in the Workplace

Feedback from our courses:

“The course was very thought provoking and it has made me look at how I can change my approach to EDI.”

“I liked how the trainer encouraged discussion, involving everyone and the case studies were useful.”

“The course was excellent; there was a lot of information to take in but it was very informative and there was opportunity for questions and discussion.”

“It was informative and pitched well.”

“It was very involving and well presented. Excellent!”

Years of destitution leaves people isolated from family and community.

The Lifeline Service helps those who are forced into destitution by UK asylum policy by providing proactive advice, representation and crisis support, so that vulnerable people can finally rebuild their lives.

Ismail has lived in the UK for over 15 years, having fled Iran in 2003 accused of being a member of the banned Kurdish Peshmerga. In 2009, his appeal rights were exhausted, and he was made destitute. For almost a decade, he relied on friends living across the UK for support. By August 2018, he had exhausted all his options. A friend told him about the help Positive Action in Housing could offer to help him gather evidence for a new asylum claim and get a roof over his head. Over six weeks, our caseworkers helped Ismail put together a Section 4 application. When that was refused, we helped him appeal to the tribunal. In early December the tribunal decided to grant him Section 4 support. But his accommodation was not arranged until mid-January 2019. In the meantime, Positive Action in Housing supported Ismail with crisis grants from our Emergency Relief Fund.

“The last few years, I have had a hard time, but I am ever so thankful for the support and advice you gave me to resume my asylum claim, hopefully with better results this time.”

“I am ever so thankful for the support and advice Positive Action gave me.”
The Lifeline Service offers crisis intervention to destitute or insecurely housed refugees and asylum seekers in order to find safe shelter, legal support and the help they need to rebuild their lives. The service consists of a highly proactive crisis intervention programme, including a proactive advice service to get people legal support, a community hosting service (Room for Refugees) to provide safe shelter and crisis funds for the destitute through our Emergency Relief Fund. In Glasgow, the Lifeline Service plays a leading role in assisting those at risk of eviction by private asylum landlord SERCO.

In 2018-19, the service provided emergency crisis support to 1,501 destitute refugees or asylum seeker families and individuals (1,400 last year) – a 7% increase on the previous year.

This figure comprised 2,164 direct beneficiaries broken down as follows: 1,560 adults and 604 children.

The Lifeline Service provides proactive advice, information and support to 332 refugee and asylum-seeking families and individuals facing destitution in Glasgow only, benefitting 562 individuals. This represents a 29% increase in demand for casework support. The purpose of this advice was to assist people to avoid or survive destitution and seek legal resolution. Caseworkers assisted beneficiaries with reinstatement of support, e.g. Section 4, or to prevent lock change evictions or to gain resolution with their legal case or deal with Home Office correspondence.

During the year, our casework team helped 31 families secure Section 4/95 support and 11 families to secure Leave to Remain.

In addition to providing daily appointments at the Glasgow base Tuesday to Friday, with approx. 30-40 people supported each day, we also launched a new Destitution Helpline during the year to provide clients with an alternative method of accessing advice, information, and updates on their cases.

“Serco’s planned eviction of 300 vulnerable people from countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea, is not the civilised answer.”

Barbara heard about Room for Refugees after her daughter sent her an email about Serco’s plan to carry out lock change evictions.

Shortly after, Freya, our accommodation officer, received a referral from the British Red Cross in Glasgow and introduced Mohammed to Barbara and her husband, Richard. They are a couple in their 70s, retired from their teaching jobs, and live in a large townhouse in Glasgow. Barbara said: “We speak several languages, English, French, German and some Italian. We live in a large house, with spare rooms on the top floor. We like a reasonable standard of cleanliness, but we are not perfectionists. From time to time our children and grandchildren visit. But otherwise, our rooms lie mostly empty. It seems better to let destitute refugees live here... We read the news about Serco evicting 300 refugees and asylum seekers from their homes onto the streets. The mass eviction of vulnerable people from countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea, is not the civilised answer.”

To sign up to host refugees in your home, go to www.roomforrefugees.com
ROOM FOR REFUGEES

The Room for Refugees Programme has been running since 2002, when we were first approached for help by asylum seekers facing destitution. The Service went “viral” in 2015 at the height of the Syrian refugee crisis. Thanks to the Nationwide Foundation, we recruited an accommodation officer, Freya Dargavel, who has quickly learnt the ropes, training in risk assessment, screening of hosts and guests, and encouraging referral partners to proactively help their clients gain legal resolution.

The Service currently accommodates 65-70 destitute families and individuals on any given night. Since 2015, we have successfully arranged 552 “stays” in the homes or properties of our volunteer hosts.

Our guests might be individuals, families, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, trafficking victims, those affected by Windrush or other categories of need.

The majority of hostings last anywhere up to six months, often longer. This gives people time to resolve their crisis, make progress with their legal or housing case, and rebuild their lives. We are seeing successful resolution of cases each week.

In 2018-19, Room for Refugees provided 48,022 nights of continuous shelter for 230 destitute refugee individuals/families (45,770 in 2017-18).

Today, we have 7,761 volunteer ‘hosts’ offering spare rooms, friendship, and pastoral support – a 10% increase on last year’s figure of 7,097.

Shelter was provided mainly in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, London, Manchester, Brighton and elsewhere across Scotland/UK with scope to help wherever there are destitute refugees and migrants. For the first time, we also arranged our first hosting in Chicago, Illinois, working with RefugeeOne, the largest refugee resettlement agency in the state.

653 caseworkers (or referral partners) currently use Room for Refugees to arrange spare rooms or crisis grants for their clients. As well as our own caseworkers, the Service is frequently accessed by the British Red Cross Refugee Services (Glasgow), Glasgow Night shelter, Simon Community, Room 2 Heal, South London Refugee Association, The Passage, Migrants Organise, Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers, Brighton Migrant Solidarity, Praxis Community Projects and The Connection at St Martin’s.

In addition, we’ve also worked with social workers in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth and North Ayrshire to identify potential foster carers/hosts for unaccompanied asylum seeker children from our network of volunteers. This resulted in unaccompanied children being cared for in loving, stable homes.

The Network has saved £2.5M+ in the cost of shelter during the year. “Estimated at £50 per night.

By offering shelter at a time when there is no other options or last resort, the Service enables people to resolve their legal situation and achieve long-term stability.

In so many cases, “community hosting” is the key to helping someone build a stable and independent life in the context of today’s hostile environment. The offer of shelter gives vulnerable individuals, trafficking victims, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, families safe and their caseworkers precious time to resolve their legal or housing situation.

“Room for Refugees provides a valuable source of support for our service users … to have a safe, welcoming place to stay makes a huge difference and can help people to engage with their solicitors from a more stable position. Equally we have made several applications to Positive Action in Housing’s Emergency Relief Fund for help with essential living costs like food and clothing, costs incurred in gathering evidence for asylum claims, and to cover other essential expenses in circumstances where people have no alternative provisions. Without these resources there are very few options for destitute people to meet their essential living needs in Glasgow.”

Calum Lindsay - Service Manager, Screening, Triage & Reception Service, British Red Cross, Glasgow

“Room for Refugees are amazing, they try their absolute best to try and find a placement for my clients and are flexible in their approach. I’m forever in admiration that someone is able and happy to provide a space in their home for an individual going through the difficult stages needed to regularise their UK status. It gives a person space to concentrate on themselves and a sense of normality. Room for Refugees need to exist…”

Helen Bourne - Destitution Co-ordinator, The Passage, London

For eight years, Sally opened her small home in Glasgow’s west end to 25 asylum seekers, in part because of her own life experiences: “I was evacuated as a child in 1939, during the Second World War”, said Sally who lives in Glasgow. She was widowed and living alone when she learned about the destitution many asylum seekers face. The grandmother of eight then signed up to Room for Refugees, organised by Positive Action in Housing, and within a matter of days had been recruited as a host. Sally keeps in touch with many of her guests and their families, including Kzak, 54, originally from Somalia, who Sally says is now like “a grand-daughter to her.” Kzak witnessed her entire family massacred by rebels. “She would weep and weep,” continued Sally. “I taught her how to tell the time, which I remember her finding quite funny. So eventually, we began to smile together, and then, one day, to laugh.”
Applying for Universal Credit can be complicated even in relatively straightforward cases and simple admin errors can cause long delays in cases even where Right to Reside isn’t a problem.

Samuil and Tabita came to the UK in 2018 to live and work. Samuil found a part-time job and, not long after they arrived, Tabita had a baby son. In October they came for help applying for Child Benefit and we also helped them make the online claim for Universal Credit. We created email addresses, helped them with the online applications, linked their separate claims together and made appointments at the Jobcentre. Samuil came back to us regularly to get more help checking his journal and completing tasks on his to-do list.

In January Samuil came to our drop-in. Two weeks before, Universal Credit claim had been closed without any explanation. “I had no idea why it stopped and didn’t know how to find out! All I knew was we didn’t have the money we depend on for our baby.” We made a new claim and asked four times for a statement of reasons for the refusal before one was given. The Jobcentre had simply forgotten to add the baby onto the claim and the amount of money the family needed to live on.

“If you hadn’t pushed DWP, we would have struggled”

Fuel poverty can often mean choosing between feeding yourself and your family or heating your home.

Selina lives with her husband, Stephen - who works part-time - and three young sons. Their flat was damp ridden and their storage heaters were difficult to use cheaply. Consequently, Selina and her husband had difficulty paying their high gas and energy bills. She had cut their energy use, but the family were going to bed cold before the economy night rate started. On top of this, she discovered the electricity meter was faulty, so decided to change to a credit meter to control spending. But it did not help, and her debt kept increasing.

Selina approached Positive Action in Housing’s Money Advisers. Selina’s adviser Mary contacted the energy provider. It accepted the family’s impoverished situation and paid half of their debt, £319.38. A realistic payment plan meant the couple could manage future energy bills and pay off their remaining debt.

Selina said: “The right advice, practical help and a friendly, welcoming place to come – all this meant a lot to me when I was struggling. Not having that debt on my mind made a real difference for us.”

“The right advice, practical help and a friendly, welcoming place to come”

Applying for Universal Credit can be complicated even in relatively straightforward cases and simple admin errors can cause long delays in cases even where Right to Reside isn’t a problem.

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Early last year, we took up Bamidele’s case: a 36-year-old blind academic whose studies were terminated by Dundee University, despite evidence of a lack of academic supervision and a failure to make the ‘adjustments’ required by law.

In 2016, Bamidele came, with his wife and children, to study for a PhD. His aim: to return with improved prospects to mentor blind Nigerian students. Dundee offered him an unconditional place and promised “state of the art facilities”; supervision and support. He secured sponsorship from TETFund, which sponsors top academics to study overseas.

The family are devout Christians and regulars at their local Church. Bamidele retains the strong support of Rev Caroline Taylor and Rev Dr Robert Calvert of The Steeple Church, Dundee. The children are enrolled at St Paul’s RC Academy and St Joseph’s RC Primary School.

Bamidele’s experience fell far short of what he expected. Shortly after arriving, he experienced software failures, and inadequate supervision. Hundreds of emails to/from the IT department show that failures were never properly addressed. Bamidele claims he never saw a supervisor for months at a time. At the time of his Upgrade Review in August 2018, he claims he had no supervisors in place for over a year. This failure to supervise is contrary to the University’s own Quality Code:

“Main supervisors are responsible... for... meeting with full-time students at least fortnightly during the first three months of the research degree programme or project. Thereafter meetings must take place at least monthly.”

Regardless, the University terminated Bamidele’s studies, citing the Quality Code. The Home Office was told he was no longer a student, and he was ordered to leave the country with his wife and children.

In March 2019, Bamidele and the President elect of the UCU, Carlo Morelli, approached us. Citing GDPR, we obtained Bamidele’s emails, within 48 hours of the request, which he had been prevented from accessing for six months. Three attempts to resolve the matter on behalf of Bamidele with the University were rebuffed each time.

At the end of May, we wrote to the Principal, Andrew Atherton, providing 74 pages of evidence. Principal Atherton replied: “I have faith, based on extensive information I have seen, that the University has acted properly throughout this case.” No evidence of ‘extensive information’ has been forthcoming. Bamidele has meanwhile shown what the University did wrong, with ample proof. Bamidele is hopeful of a place at another University and is seeking leave to remain for himself and his family.

Working with solicitors Latta & Co, the children were granted a fee waiver. Bamidele succeeded as a blind academic in Nigeria because others supported him with empathy, meantime a complaint has been lodged with the SPSO and Information Commissioner.
The Emergency Relief Fund exists to help those suffering severe hardship as a result of destitution or disaster. The fund is paid for by donations from members of the public. Referral partners who register with Positive Action in Housing can also make referrals.

In 2018-19, Positive Action in Housing distributed 959 emergency crisis payments totalling £61,659 to 1,137 direct beneficiaries. These life-saving grants were primarily used to prevent hunger and destitution but also enabled clients to access childcare products like milk and nappies. The grants also helped pay for essential travel to solicitor and Home Office appointments in Liverpool or Croydon to progress legal cases forward.

In December 2018, our Winter Destitution Surgery assisted 481 direct beneficiaries, consisting of 292 adults and 189 children, with the number of destitute children increasing by 24% since last year.

In addition to providing emergency crisis payments, the charity also raised funds for two unique appeals on behalf of individuals affected by vicious hate crimes. These include Shabaz Ali, a Syrian refugee brutally stabbed in Edinburgh, and the widow and four children of Mohammad Abu Sammour, a murdered Palestinian man.
VOLUNTEERING

A year after the volunteering programme was launched and several instruments and procedures were developed, we reached a satisfying level in terms of size and diversity. Between April 2018 and March 2019, 43 volunteers supported the work of our charity, across 6 roles, over more than 2000 hours (about 40 hours weekly – vs 20 hours per week between January and April 2018).

16 volunteers covered the reception throughout the year, ensuring that visitors receive positive and appropriate attention, during around 16 hours per week. 8 people assisted our Lifeline team in providing information and support to destitute asylum seekers, making referrals to other agencies, preparing applications for hosting through Room for Refugees or for Home Office support. 3 volunteers helped the New Migrants Action project team, essentially by interpreting between Romanian and English. The growth of the volunteering programme allowed the expansion to new roles, for instance in relation to Money Skills, or on a media project. Among the 15 volunteers engaged in money advice through Money Skills, five then helped launch the volunteer-led help desk, increasing the capacity to deliver basic and early advice. 3 volunteers also engaged with the creation of a media project aiming at challenging narratives associated with ethnic minority communities and individuals. Work in progress.

This year was an opportunity to benefit from a more diverse crew of volunteers, from 21 countries of origin, and a higher number of languages available in house. Native speakers in Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, Mandarin and Slovakian joined our team and helped translate material and provide advice in service users’ most comfortable language.

Further, volunteers brought their diverse personal history with immigration rules, housing rights, and welfare rights. While 15 out of 43 were British citizens at the start of their volunteering, 19 people either were seeking asylum or had sought asylum in the past and had Leave to Remain, or acquired British citizenship. 13 volunteers were EU nationals. Students volunteered alongside professionals, job seekers, and retirees, tenants alongside homeowners.

Such diversity is both a need and a statement.

First, as they come with varying levels of familiarity with our work, volunteers constitute an opportunity for staff to reflect on their work and learn how to make it more accessible to the public. Volunteers are an incredible source of support for colleagues, but also an opportunity to learn as an organisation.

Second, it is decisive that we embody diversity in our team, and show that diversity on aspects can work. Actually, that it does work. There is something pleasantly ironic and uplifting when volunteers seeking asylum themselves, and therefore having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), assist in delivering welfare advice. A symbolic statement against the “eroding trust” narrative that the Hostile Environment policy and benefits cuts thrive on. Help and solidarity do defy statuses.

In addition, we approach volunteering as a springboard to stronger connections with communities and to professional opportunities. This should be a constant concern of any Volunteer Coordinator. It was thrilling that four volunteers successfully applied for jobs and university programmes in the wake of their volunteering with Positive Action in Housing, after requesting reference letters from us. This reminds us that developing our volunteer culture, we aim to serve the cause of social justice in an additional way.

Thank you very much to all of you for your help throughout the year, Annie, Heather, Anna, Minnie, Paula, Rajinder, Wendy, Ema, Mihai, Brooke, Elaine, Helène, Kanishka, Mia, Nahla, Narina Cryton, Nerica, Ross, Sameeha, Adnan, Freya, Jye, Sue, Yen, Gitte, Grace, Vivienne, Paula, Nancy, Barbora, Radostina, Christopher, Emma, Harriet, Louise, Emad, Murtath, Ju, Zara and Rosita.
Zay is currently seeking asylum.

Since her start at Positive Action in Housing, first at the reception and then with our Money Skills Project, she has been setting high standards in her relationship with service users, and is a precious source of expertise in so many ways, both to the staff and other volunteers, from administration, to translating and basic homelessness advice.

“A friend suggested I volunteer. I picked Positive Action because I believe equally in empowering people with information and helping people towards a brighter future. This charity does this. By currently working in Money Skills, I help people fill in benefit application forms and inform older people about pensions. Working here has opened my eyes to the challenges and problems that are faced by both caseworkers and our clients. The office can get very busy at times, but the entire staff team are friendly and supportive. I feel my contribution is appreciated and needed. I also get a chance to socialise with people from all backgrounds, bring me joy, while I undergo my asylum journey.”

Cryton, 47 years old joined Positive Action in Housing while seeking asylum and has now got Leave to Remain with his wife and three sons. His background is as a lawyer and led to his volunteering with Positive Action in Housing.

“I’ve been volunteering with Positive Action in Housing since April 2018 as a Casework Assistant with the Lifeline project, which helps destitute migrants’ access key services: legal representation, financial support, and other essentials needs. I have been advising and drafting appeals to the First-tier Tribunal for Section 4 Support with individuals who are often stressed about their situation.

“I successful challenged a Home Office decision to refuse support to a homeless Iranian gentleman. He had been without any support for over 10 years. The Home Office regularly misunderstands such situations and assumes a proof of means of upkeep. It was a huge delight to see the tribunal overturn the Home Office decision. It brings me great joy to bring about these small and great victories for the people the charity supports!”
Income & Expenditure

Summarised Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019 Total</th>
<th>2018 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations and legacies</td>
<td>193,613</td>
<td>191,317</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable activities</td>
<td>377,679</td>
<td>313,682</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other trading activities</td>
<td>30,325</td>
<td>35,229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>604,448</strong></td>
<td><strong>541,184</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Expenditure           |           |           |
| Raising funds         | (19,001)  | (18,826)  |
| Charitable activities | (553,837) | (516,093) |
| **Total resources expended** | **(572,838)** | **(534,919)** |

| Net movements in funds | 31,610 | 6,256 |

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2019

| Fixed assets        |           |           |
| Tangible assets     | 6,917     | 8,027     |

| Current assets      |           |           |
| Debitors            | 19,825    | 36,384    |
| Investments         | 171,342   | 170,000   |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 226,302 | 170,236 |
| **Total current assets** | **417,469** | **376,620** |
| Creditors (amounts falling due within one year) | (50,788) | (42,659) |
| **Net current assets** | **366,681** | **333,961** |

| Net assets          |           |           |
| **Net assets**      | **373,598** | **341,988** |

The funds of the charity

Unrestricted general funds | 65,643 | 44,657 |
Unrestricted designated funds | 182,084 | 201,273 |
Restricted funds | 247,727 | 245,930 |

MEMBERS OF THE PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE, JENNIFER SIMON (MARYHILL HA), TONY SWEENEY (NG HOMES), WITH OUR CHAIR, RANI DHANDA.

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Trinity College London
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Care and Repair services offer personal, financial and technical support to people facing the difficult task of repairing, improving or adapting a home which is no longer suitable to the person's needs.

The provision of advice and information is a central part of Care and Repair's role, as well as providing practical assistance with grant applications and co-ordinating repairs. Care and Repair is a home-based and personalised service, which puts the client in control of decisions. Staff visit people at home and assist them through the process of deciding what work is to be done, arranging finance and organising the building works.

Each case involves a different approach and often staff must cross disciplinary and departmental boundaries, working closely with health, housing and social work staff to achieve the overall aim of improving the quality of older and disabled people's lives through improving their housing conditions.

Care and Repair is a cost-effective solution. We know that Care and Repair services are valued, but we also know that there are many more people who could be helped. The population is growing older, with some rural areas seeing a rapidly shifting balance. More people, including younger people, have disabilities that affect their daily lives, and require adaptations to their homes. There are also many houses in the private sector in poor condition. In short, more people need the help of Care and Repair teams than ever before.

For further information about our services and joint working opportunities, contact:
Care and Repair Scotland
135 Buchanan Street
Glasgow G1 2JA
Tel: 0141 221 9879
E: enquiries@careandrepairscotland.co.uk
Web: www.careandrepairscotland.co.uk

‘Working in partnership with Positive Action in Housing since 2006’

We are pleased to support PAiH in their work and look forward to a continued successful partnership in the provision of quality housing to our customers.

Cadder Housing Association
20 Fara Street, Cadder, Glasgow, G23 5AE
Tel: 0141 945 3282
E-mail: enquiry@cadderhousing.co.uk
Website: www.cadderha.co.uk

Cadder Housing Association is a 3rd Party Reporting Centre
Dunbritton Housing Association is supportive of the vital work carried out by Positive Action in Housing.

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Fax: 01389 730067
Email: admin@dunbritton.org.uk
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We are pleased to support Positive Action in Housing

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

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

Stephen Smellie
Secretary
Margaret Gallacher
Chairperson

Southside Housing Association
We are pleased to support Positive Action in Housing

0141 422 1112
enquiries@southside-ha.co.uk
135 Fifty Pitches Road, Glasgow, G51 4EB

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

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The Regional Networks wish PAiH every success

The Regional Networks are working with the Scottish Government to influence National Policy.
Do you want to be involved in influencing Scottish Government National policy?
Are you interested in finding out more?
If so, please contact: toddminsupport@ovv.scot

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We are greatly humbled by the help given by our members, supporters and volunteers to make this year’s work possible. Your support has made a real difference to 4,671 children, women and men from BME, refugee and migrant communities who sought sanctuary, protection, a fair casework and crisis intervention. At a time when racism of every 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. Thank you so much to each of our advertisers who made this report possible, thanks also to our long standing members from the Scottish Housing Association movement, voluntary organisations, trade unions, faith groups, volunteers, refugee hosts, individuals donors, trusts and foundations and the Scottish Government. Thank you also to the thousands of volunteers who have signed up to Room for Refugees from Scotland, the rest of the UK – and globally too. Thank you also our thousands of followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our work simply could not work on this scale, without your financial and moral support. 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 things better. The numbers of individuals who donated to us, are too many to list here, also some wish their support to remain anonymous, but we know your names and appreciate your support, whether silent or vocal. Thank you all for your ongoing support. Below is a list of over 500 organisations whom we worked with in 2018-19, or whom supported our work.

We believe in fairness and equality, respect and acceptance, dignity and pride – without exception.
Positive Action in Housing is an independent, multilingual homelessness and human rights charity dedicated to supporting people from refugee and migrant communities. We believe in a society where everyone has the right to live safe and dignified lives, free from poverty, homelessness or discrimination.

We work with individuals and families to build new lives.

We assist those seeking sanctuary from war and persecution to overcome crisis situations, for example, the removal of basic human rights such as refuge, shelter, the right to work or even to hold a bank account. We enable new migrants to know their rights and access work. We aid new refugees to resettle successfully. We assist established ethnic minority communities to overcome poverty and bad housing. By empowering people with information, we enable people to make the right decisions about their future. Through proactive casework, we challenge unfair decisions and uphold basic human rights. We offer welfare advice and money skills. We offer crisis grants and shelter to those at risk of destitution. We use our expertise and knowledge of refugee and migrant communities to effect policy change. We provide volunteering and training. We lead human rights campaigns to challenge the indefinite detention of innocent families and individuals. We persistently challenge anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment.

We will help in all these ways until we have a society that treats everyone equally and respects people’s human rights.

**SUPPORT OUR HUMANITARIAN WORK**

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Or set up a regular payment via internet banking payable to Positive Action in Housing, Sort Code 822000 Account 00447398. For other ways to give, including by post, please go to www.positiveactionh.org/donate

To find out more sign up to our newsletter by visiting our website at www.positiveactionh.org