



Jesuit Refugee Service UK

Annual Review 2016–2017



Letter from the Director

If I were to name two highlights of the year it would be seeing the impact of our hosting scheme, At Home, and introducing a video of our refugee friends to 10,000 young people at Wembley Arena.

Our At Home scheme has grown substantially this year, enabling us to provide 13 placements to destitute refugees at risk of street homelessness. The impact of a good night's sleep, somewhere safe and welcoming is life changing for refugees who were previously spending the night on night buses, or trying to keep warm in all-night fast food restaurants. Sometimes the change is so significant for those who are guests in the scheme that their whole physical demeanour seems to change. I am hugely grateful to the religious congregations who have taken the brave step of hosting a refugee.

In this financial year we took on our first full-time member of staff responsible for communications and fundraising.

With extra capacity we were able to film and edit a video of refugees attending our Day Centre, which I then introduced as part of a presentation to the CYMFED Flame Congress, in front of 10,000 young Catholics. The young people listened in attentive silence as our refugee friends spoke movingly about the painful process of seeking asylum. I was hugely proud that we were able to bring the voices of refugees to this gathering.

I am grateful to the staff and volunteers at JRS who have worked so hard this year, to donors and supporters who make our work possible, and to the refugees we accompany, whose friendship and inspiration makes this work a blessing.



Sarah Teather



Michael shares his experiences of seeking asylum at the JRS Parliamentary exhibition on seeking asylum. He shared the stage with Catherine McKinnell MP and Sean Ryan, Caritas Salford.

Message from a refugee friend

Michael is one of our refugee friends supported through the Day Centre. Michael was part of a filming project JRS produced this year for the Catholic youth event FLAME. He shared his journey with 10,000 young people. He also shared his experiences at a public event in Parliament and here he shares part of his journey with you.

"When I first came to the UK after fleeing my country around 15 years ago, what I found was confusion: there wasn't the internet, sign postings to services were not there. I didn't know the words 'asylum' or 'asylum seeker' – I was fleeing political persecution, and hoping to find sanctuary.

"I didn't know my rights; I didn't see myself as an 'asylum seeker', but simply a human being in need of support. I found myself being branded as an 'immigrant', an 'illegal'. I felt like I lost my identity, my dignity.

"I've spent the last 15 years fighting to be recognised as a refugee and I regularly found myself thinking about home.

"So often we think of home as four walls, as a physical place, as a country even. But to me, it is more than this: home is a place where you feel safe, where you feel loved, where you feel understood, and where you can feel you can exercise your freedoms.

"I began coming to JRS about three or four years ago, and it's honestly become my home."

Michael spent over 14 years fighting for his right as a refugee to be recognised. Thankfully, in April 2017 he was given leave to remain.

Our Founding Ethos

Our Vision

To accompany refugees is to affirm that God is present, even in the most difficult and tragic moments of human history.

In companionship with Jesus Christ and serving his mission in the midst of refugees, JRS can be an effective sign of God's love and reconciliation.

[“It is important to view migrants not only on the basis of their status as regular or irregular, but above all as people whose dignity is to be protected and who are capable of contributing to progress and the general welfare.”]

Pope Francis, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016

Our Mission

To accompany, to serve, to advocate

JRS has a mission to accompany, serve as companions, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. We give priority to situations of great need, where a more universal good may be achieved, and to needs others are not attending to. We work where we have expertise, can join with partners or enable others to become involved.

JRS UK has a special ministry to work with refugees who have been detained or made destitute by the asylum process in the UK, who are among the most excluded groups in society today. The work of JRS is rooted in a belief in the dignity of the person and justice in the world.

Our Values

JRS is grounded in Catholic social teaching: our work is based on the principles of hospitality and carried out in a spirit of compassion and solidarity, encouraging participation and community, aiming to give hope, justice and dignity to refugees, people seeking asylum and forced migrants.

As a work of the Society of Jesus, we are called to work with the most marginalised, drawing on the charism and principles of Ignatian spirituality and are inspired by the love and compassion of Jesus for the poor and excluded.

Aims for the year

Providing a warm, calm and welcoming environment to destitute refugees through our weekly Day Centre, proving a mixture of practical and pastoral support for approximately 200 destitute refugees.

Facilitating activities and groups for refugees focussed on building resilience, creative self-expression, peer support, and spiritual accompaniment.

Offering pastoral and practical support to those held in detention centres at Heathrow.

Expanding the At Home hosting project to provide temporary accommodation for destitute refugees.

Increase our capacity to raise awareness of the situation refugees' face, and advocating for positive change through a programme of talks in parishes, schools and other public platforms.

Governance and Management Committee

JRS UK is a work of Jesuits in Britain, who are governed by a Board of Trustees, chaired by the Provincial, Fr Dermot Preston SJ. We have a close working relationship with the global work of JRS through the International office in Rome and the European office in Brussels.

We endeavour to be openly accountable for our work. We have an independent bank account, budget, and payroll. We work in partnership with other religious congregations,

humanitarian organisations and with refugees themselves, encouraging co-responsibility, communal discernment and participative decision-making.

The Jesuits in Britain delegate oversight of JRS UK to a Management Committee chaired by Fr. Paul Nicholson SJ, who is also a trustee of TRCP. Our Management Committee comprises of Jesuits, other charity practitioners, and refugees we accompany. The Management Committee report to the British Jesuit Provincial.

Supporting destitute refugees and asylum seekers

Our weekly Day Centre provided a safe and welcoming environment to 215 destitute refugees from across London, offering momentary respite from the hostility and stress they encounter on a daily basis.

Our mission to accompany refugees is deeply relational and creates a genuine sense of community, where refugees become friends rather than being seen purely as beneficiaries.

Those we serve at our Day Centre have **no recourse to public funds** and **no ability to access the job market**, and hence are left with no financial ability to support themselves.

We provided 215 refugee friends each month with a weekly travel grant of £10 which equates to two full days of bus travel in London; a hot meal each week and regular food parcels, in partnership with Tower Hamlets Food Bank.

During the winter months we distributed over 200 winter coats and cold weather 'Vinnie' packs to our refugee friends, in partnership with Wrap-Up London and the SVP respectively.

Alongside the Day Centre we have run a number of activities and programmes which seek to build confidence and resilience, and sometimes simply to offer some recreation! This year we ran 7 different activities including prayer groups for both men and women, osteopathy sessions and bike training for women, in collaboration with the Bike Project.

“Despite having a stressful life and being fearful of an uncertain future, ... I start to feel happy and extremely relaxed whenever I walk into the Day Centre on Thursdays.”

A refugee friend



The impact of travel grants

The weekly travel grants are truly a “lifeline” for those we serve, enabling individuals to receive support from JRS and other charities, and crucially to access health services and visit their Solicitors.

This year we were additionally able to support many of our refugee friends with **special travel grants** when they submitted fresh asylum claims in person in Liverpool or attended appeal hearings outside of London.

This has resulted in **16** of our refugee friends being **recognised as refugees** in the last 12 months.

More than a hot meal

As well as the obvious nutritional value, offering a hot meal each week helps our refugee friends to make and sustain social connections, with others facing a similar situation and with JRS staff and volunteers.

This year saw the introduction of Special Meals for celebrations such as Eid and Christmas at the Day Centre.

Our Christmas special meal saw a record **183 refugee friends** attend the Day Centre and share together in the festivities.



Voice from a Volunteer

We are grateful to all our volunteers who help make the work of JRS possible. Sr Mary Toner shares with us her experiences of accompanying refugee women through the regular Prayer Circle.

"I've been volunteering with JRS for 8 years co-ordinating the Women's Prayer Circle. For the refugee women who attend, their faith is very important to them and having a regular time to pray together, to have some stillness, peace and to share, is life-giving for them. After 8 years, I'm still in awe at the depth of this faith that sustains them each day. We often have 7 or 8 women and at least 5 nationalities, and the Psalm is in 3 languages, although it's one shared language. This continues to give me hope and a glimpse of what can be.

"Two things have stuck with me this year. Firstly, the death of one of the women from cancer, she was part of the group from near the beginning and we had our own small memorial service.

It gave us time to talk about her, what she meant to us, what they would remember her by and what values she held. They each lit a candle as they spoke of her.

"Secondly, one of the women who didn't come every week and was very shy, but this particular day she turned up, she shared she had received her papers, the joy that the others expressed to her, it was about her not themselves. She gave us a large candle as a gift and explained it was part of her cultural tradition.

"We are still burning it today, a sign of hope for those who wait!"

Sr Mary Toner

"For the refugee women who attend, faith is very important and having a regular time to pray together, to have some stillness, peace and to share, is life-giving for them."

Sr Mary Toner



Voice from a Refugee Volunteer

Marischka is one of six refugee volunteers working as part of the JRS team. Having volunteered with JRS for a number of years now, Marischka has seen many different people come to our Day Centre, all with their own stories, worries and joys. Each person who walks through our door on a Thursday is warmly welcomed like a member of our family,

"It feels like home when I meet and talk to men and women from different countries, cultures and backgrounds. They left their home countries to find refuge in UK. I learn about their everyday struggles, their culture and their day-to-day lives.

"Many of our friends are broken spiritually, and whatever support JRS brings to them, small or big, always has a positive impact.

"At the end of the day it's good to know that someone left with a positive feeling."

"It feels like home when I meet and talk to men and women from different countries, cultures and backgrounds."

Marischka

Detention Outreach

Those who seek asylum in the UK live with the constant fear they may be detained at any moment.

The UK currently has no time limit on the amount of time an individual can be detained in one of the UK's 13 Immigration Removal Centres (IRC). JRS UK accompanies refugees and other foreign nationals who are detained in the two IRCs near Heathrow airport.

Our detention staff and volunteers offered emotional support to **over 100 men** who find themselves in this isolating and very uncertain situation.

We provided **over 25 men** with one-on-one social visits, as well as practical support in liaising with solicitors and medical practitioners, and provided mobile phone top ups.

“They made me feel so happy, made me feel I wasn’t alone.”

A friend in detention

The importance of supporting detainees

Our staff and volunteers are able to easily offer a listening ear to those in detention but practical support is as important, especially when you have lost many of your liberties already. In liaising with solicitors and medical staff on behalf of the detainees that we accompany, we are not only aiding the progression of an individual's case that could lead to their release from detention, we are also reassuring that individual that they are not alone in this situation. In offering practical help we are able to show individuals that we are

there to accompany them no matter the outcome of their situation. Providing phone top-ups to our friends in detention allows them to keep in touch with their solicitors and monitor their case as it is processed. It also provides a way of maintaining contact with friends and family who they may have been taken from unexpectedly. In preserving social contact both with JRS staff and volunteers, and family and friends we are able to break down the sense of isolation that detention perpetuates.

Creating Communities of Hospitality

Our At Home hosting scheme provides short term accommodation placements for some of the refugees supported by our destitution services.

The Communities of Hospitality project has developed within a framework where those seeking asylum are prohibited from renting property under the 'Right to Rent' legislation, meaning that more of the refugees we work with are finding themselves homeless and unable to rely on networks of family and friends. The At Home scheme carefully matches destitute refugees with religious congregations, parishes and individuals according to the needs of the guest and host, taking into account factors such as temperament and interests.

The effect of stable accommodation for someone who was previously homeless is often so transformative that refugees' visible appearance changes. A roof over one's head and the offer of friendship that is provided in the hosting relationship also reaffirms their humanity and dignity. Together this has an enormous impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

“They showed me acceptance and love... unconditional love. I felt like a part of the family, I truly felt at home.”

A refugee guest of At Home

Mike Smith, SJ, on making the decision to host a refugee

"As a community of Jesuits we had been wondering about whether we could host a refugee for a while. As we went about our daily work, we'd all seen homeless people, and we knew that many of them are refugees fleeing from persecution and suffering. It was a joyful day when we first met our new friend.

"He was a lovely person, and was no trouble at all. All our initial concerns had been groundless. He was out most days, going to one of the refugee day centres in London, and had breakfast and supper with us.

"We really felt for him during Ramadan, when he had to get up for a really early breakfast before dawn and have supper late at night, and fast for the rest of the day.

"It was a sad moment for us all when he had to go at the end of his time with us. We all saw him off, and bought him a present. We'd already decided that we would have someone for a second three months."



Fr Bob shares a joke with Henry, as he welcomes him to his next hosting placement.

Henry invites his hosts to join him for tea and cake.



Over the year we created **13 Communities of Hospitality** supported by **59 individual volunteers** who act as hosts. These communities have accommodated **13 of our refugee friends** for a total of **26 placements** throughout the year for a total of **2203 bed nights**.

Raising awareness and advocating for change

As part of the mission of JRS UK we advocate on behalf of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. Through our principle of accompaniment and our values of solidarity and participation, our advocacy aims to not only be about the refugees we serve but informed and directed by them.

Speaking Out

As part of our continued commitment to walk alongside our refugee friends, we continued to raise the issue of their mistreatment as a result of the government's Hostile Environment Agenda. Through a number of articles in the Catholic press we highlighted the cruel realities of dealing with this matrix of policies experienced by those we serve, as well as promoting our ongoing work to end indefinite detention.

10,000 young people gathered at Wembley Arena for CYMFED's Flame Congress.



Sarah Teather introduces our refugee friends to 10,000 young people at Wembley Arena.

Influencing Change

Our advocacy ultimately aims to change the hearts and minds of policy and decision makers, both outside and within the church.

- We joined with other refugee and migrant charities, opposing the new NHS charges for migrants and the requirements for healthcare providers to check immigration status
- We briefed others on the impact the new charges will have on destitute refugees, including the Cardinal, Catholic Bishops and clergy

Accompanying Advocacy

An absolute highlight of the year was **CYMFED's Flame Congress**: a gathering of 10,000 young Catholics from across England and Wales listened attentively as **5 of our refugee friends** shared their painful experiences of seeking asylum and their messages of hope to all the young people present.

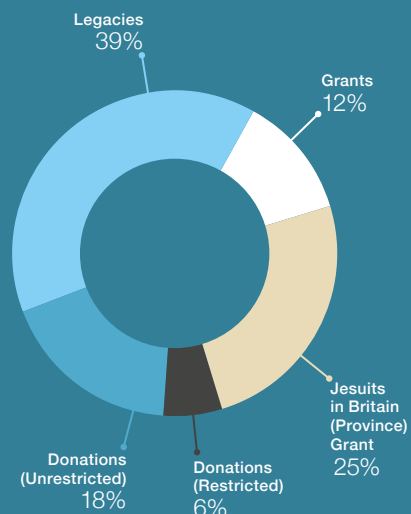
“Refugees are people, who should be welcomed, assisted, even loved. Anybody who is doing that, you are doing God’s work.”

A refugee friend, speaking to 10,000 young people at Flame.

Income & Expenditure 2016/17

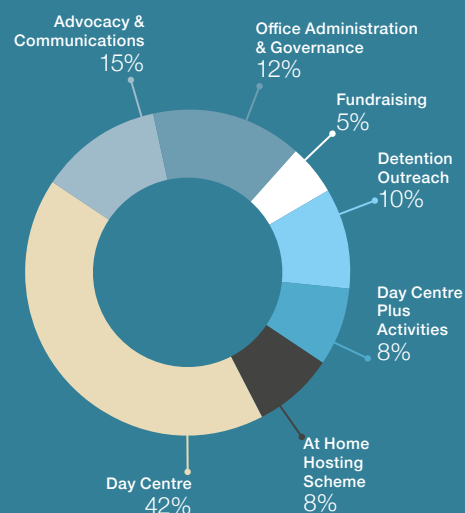
Income

Jesuits in Britain (Province) Grant	£284,444
Donations (Restricted)	£72,739
Donations (Unrestricted)	£204,167
Legacies	£442,933
Grants	£143,351
Trading income & interest	£380
Total income	£1,148,013



Expenditure

Day Centre	£214,337
Day Centre Plus Activities	£40,052
At Home Hosting Scheme	£38,954
Detention Outreach	£51,119
Fundraising	£25,276
Advocacy & Communications	£76,428
Office Administration & Governance	£62,174
Total Expenditure	£508,340



Thank you!

Our work would not be possible without the generosity and kindness of individuals, religious congregations, communities, and foundations. You enable JRS to continue to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Special thanks for their support of our work this year go to:

Louise Zanré da Silva
Jesuits in Britain
Marist Sisters
Little Company of Mary
Rev and Mrs Clark
JRS Europe
Congregation of Jesus
Daughters of Jesus
Carmelite Sisters
Wimbledon College
The Davis Family
St Wilfrid's Parish, Preston
School Sisters of Notre Dame
The Kowitz Family
The Murphy Family
The Holden Family
Columban Missionaries

St Ignatius Parish
Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
Eva Boenders
James Potter
Corpus Christi Church
FCJ Sisters UK
Michael Frain
Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux
The Bike Project
In-kind Direct
Pret A Manger
St Vincent de Paul Society
Wrap-up London
Catholic Womens League
National Justice and Peace Network
Farm Street Parish

Staff & Volunteers

Our work is made possible thanks to over 60 dedicated and passionate individuals, who voluntarily give their love, talents and attention to each of our refugee friends.

Between October 2016 and September 2017, the paid JRS UK staff team were:

Sr Margaret Baxter SSMN

Detention Outreach

Nicolette Busuttil

Communities of Hospitality Coordinator

Sophie Cartwright

Policy Officer

Liliane Djoukouo

Day Centre & Administrative Assistant

Beatrice Grasso

Detention Outreach Manager

Sou Huoy Lam

Office Administrator

Megan Knowles

Communications and Development Manager

Jonathan Parr

Assistant Director

Rene De los Reyes SJ

Detention Outreach

Sarah Teather

Director

A Special Tribute Sr Margaret Baxter, 10 years of service



After more than a decade of service at JRS UK, Sr Margaret Baxter left in February 2017. Margaret was the Detention Outreach Coordinator at JRS UK, managing a team of volunteers to provide emotional and pastoral support to those held in Colnbrook and Harmondsworth detention centres at Heathrow.

Margaret is a passionate and feisty advocate on behalf of refugees and those held in immigration detention.

She brought a warm heart and much humour to her role. She first joined JRS to work as part of the detention outreach team alongside Sr Anne Elisabeth de Vuyst, who she had served with in JRS in Africa, and later coordinated the detention outreach service alone. We wish Margaret well for her future mission.



“JRS provides me food and clothing ... I thank God for people who help these organisations to help other people.”

A refugee friend



Accompany

Be part of our community

JRS wouldn't be who we are without the special people who dedicate their time, energy and passion through volunteering. Volunteers support a range of our work – from fundraising and supporting the Day Centre, to packing toiletry packs and visiting people in detention.

Interested in volunteering?
Contact **uk@jrs.net** or call
020 7488 7310 to find out more.

Help us to support refugees

Donate:

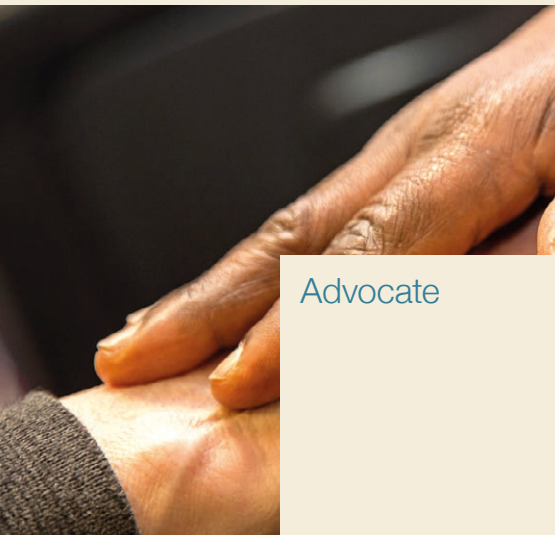
On our website: **www.jrsuk.net/donate**
Call us: **020 7488 7310**

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Serve



Advocate

Jesuit Refugee Service UK
Hurtado Jesuit Centre
2 Chandler Street
London E1W 2QT

020 7488 7310
uk@jrs.net
www.jrsuk.net

