

Annual Review 2022-23

October 2022 – September 2023



Launch of the Napier Report in Folkestone

Who are we?

JRS UK is a charity working to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of some of the most marginalised people in UK society – refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

- We are grounded in Catholic social teaching.
- We work with all refugees regardless of their faith.
- Our volunteers and staff come from many faiths and none.
- We are proud to call people who came to the UK in search of safety, our friends.

What do we do?

JRS UK works closely with refugee friends who become destitute during the asylum process, and those who are held in detention. We provide:

- Hardship support including financial assistance, mobile phone top ups, food, clothing and toiletries
- Advice and Casework for those experiencing destitution. Connecting refugee friends to immigration advice and other specialist services.
- Creative and therapeutic activities.
- Specialist accommodation provision for refugees who face homelessness.
- A legal advice service, specialising in cases that need longer-term support.
- An outreach service for people in detention.
- Outreach into Napier Barracks
- Research for advocacy to policy makers.
- We also raise awareness of the reality facing asylum seekers and campaign for more just treatment.

Due to ongoing COVID waves and new variants in 2021-22, at JRS UK we continued to exercise caution and delivered most of our services in a hybrid model; inviting refugee friends into the centre for important appointments, and specific group activities but also delivering advice and support remotely.

Message from the Director

Building the future with migrants and refugees was the theme for this year's World Day of Migrants & Refugees.

This theme resonates deeply with us at JRS UK, where refugee friends, supporters, volunteers, and staff are working together to build a more welcoming society.

In a year marked by division, scapegoating, and dehumanising rhetoric, our collective efforts feel even more important.

Along with our JRS colleagues worldwide, we are working to strengthen communities and counter the kind of dangerous populism that turns people against one another. This year, we were delighted to expand this work with the recruitment of our first-ever Community Projects Coordinator.

Welcoming refugees gives us the chance to better understand our world and its beautiful diversity. We can grow in our common humanity and build an ever-greater sense of togetherness.

Thanks to our amazing supporters, JRS UK has continued to expand our work welcoming refugees from across the world. In this report, you will find a snapshot of what we've achieved this year: from offering safe accommodation to female refugee friends at Emilie House, to providing food and other essentials amid the cost-of-living crisis. You'll also find more about our work to support people in immigration detention – which has always been such a fundamental part of JRS UK's mission.

The future begins today and it begins with each of us. Thank you to everyone who has walked with us this year as we work towards a better future for all those seeking sanctuary here.

Sarah Teather,
Director JRS UK



Filling the skies with Hope Campaign

Calling on the new Prime Minister Liz Truss, JRS UK and more than 100 other organisations, joined Together With Refugees, urging the government to change course on the cruel policy of removing refugees to Rwanda. Orange hearts used in the Filling the Skies With Hope campaign which carried a simple message, that of showing welcome to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.



The human impact of the Rwanda plan

- Daryan's experience

Since its introduction in May 2022, JRS UK actively opposed the Rwanda policy through our Advocacy work. We consistently voiced strong opposition to the cruel and unworkable policy, highlighting the potential human rights violations and the trauma it could cause asylum seekers.

We also supported legal actions against the policy, whilst providing direct support to asylum seekers facing the threat of removal to Rwanda. We worked throughout the year to raise public awareness about the policy's implications and encouraged people to advocate for a more compassionate asylum system.

Daryan, a Kurdish national from Iran, was one of the people we supported in a Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre. He had made the difficult decision to leave his home in the hope of finding safety in the UK. After a long and dangerous journey, he was detained on arrival, along with everyone he was with, and taken first to a police station to be fingerprinted before being transferred to detention. The following day he had a screening interview – the first step of an asylum claim. during which basic details are collected about the individual's case, that will be instrumental in any decision further along the process.

The next day, he received a document that he could not read or understand. It was a "Notice of Intent" informing him that if the UK government found his asylum claim to be "inadmissible" he would be considered for transfer to Rwanda. The letter informed Daryan that he had 7 days to send further representations to the Home Office as to why his case should be admitted to the UK asylum system, but he had not yet had any contact with a solicitor. Daryan explained to us: "after all this misery, I arrived here for safety, but then they transferred me to the detention centre and gave me mental torture. I suffered a lot."

Everyone in detention was stressed and anxious. The extent of understanding of the Notices of Intent were the words "7 days" and "Rwanda". No one had been told what the Notice of Intent said, what action they needed to take, or what their options were.

Finally, in June 2023 the Court of Appeal ruled that transferring asylum seekers to Rwanda was **not legal**. Our Director Sarah Teather responded: ***"Plans to forcibly send men, women and children seeking sanctuary here to Rwanda are inhuman. They are also completely impractical. They are destructive, and mean slamming the door shut on refugees, denying our duty to offer refugees sanctuary. We welcome this judgement as we continue to resist this cruel policy in solidarity with refugees."***

I entered a world hidden from public view

- Valeria's experience volunteering as a Detention Visitor

I had the opportunity to be able to volunteer as a detention officer with the Detention Outreach team at JRS UK for nearly two months during the summer vacation of my Law degree at university. It was an incredibly enriching experience, providing deep insights into the UK's immigration and asylum law system, and the human stories within it.

As a law student, I learned so much more than I could from a university module. The team was so welcoming and supportive, making me feel like part of the JRS UK family. They cared deeply about each other and the people they served; it was tangible.

I witnessed the joy of refugees receiving positive asylum decisions and the release of people from detention, which highlighted the importance of working for social justice. My work involved supporting and explaining the system to people in detention, many of whom were refugees or victims of human trafficking, held in inhumane conditions for minor infractions.

Seeing the profit-driven nature of immigration detention was eye-opening and troubling. This experience has driven me to pursue social justice with greater passion and awareness of the flaws in the law and immigration systems.



JRS UK published our report into Napier Barracks in March 2023 – Napier Barracks: the inhumane reality

JRS UK began working with asylum seekers at Napier barracks in Kent in autumn 2020. Despite significant criticism and a High Court judgment declaring the facilities inadequate, the government extended the site's use for five more years in September 2021, using emergency powers and bypassing local consultation.

Our research highlighted the harsh and re-traumatising conditions faced by asylum seekers in such remote camps. The government plans to make these sites standard for asylum accommodation, which our report argues would be profoundly destructive.

Published alongside the **Illegal Migration Bill**, *Napier Barracks: the inhumane reality* warned that this legislation would push many asylum seekers into marginalised and closed-off spaces like Napier, exacerbating their isolation and suffering.

The main criticisms of Napier Barracks include:

- ***Overcrowding***
- ***Poor Living conditions***
- ***Lack of privacy***
- ***Health and safety concerns***
- ***Mental health impact***
- ***Legal issues***

These highlight the severe and damaging effects of housing asylum seekers in such unsuitable conditions for the administrative purposes of the asylum process.

A very tangible example of the hostile environment in action.

We launched the report at a local event in Folkestone which was very well attended and led to a full morning of reporting on BBC Radio Kent.



Developing Skills at Emilie House

We have seen wonderful developments at Emilie House, our accommodation provision for women who have been made destitute during the asylum process, which has been made possible by the Sisters of St Emilie.

Opened during the uncertain times of the COVID 19 pandemic, a year or so later we were struck by the difference in the residents. At the launch celebration in 2021, the residents were visibly shy, felt nervous speaking, and didn't feel comfortable with each other. Everyone cooked their own dish, and one resident didn't attend the opening celebration because she was anxious about being around so many new people. This year, the residents' BBQ was completely different. They were excited and proud to welcome people to their house and worked together to prepare the dishes.

Creating a home and a supportive environment requires a focussed effort to bring people together, help them to understand each other and build relationships.



Women living in the house come from a range of different nationalities, ages and cultural backgrounds. They all have different ideas about how a house should be run, from what food should be bought, how often it should be cleaned and how common spaces should be used. The role of the Accommodation Team at JRS UK is to create opportunities when the women can come together and to facilitate discussion. To do this, they hold house meetings once a month, followed by a shared lunch and also run regular activities -such as sewing and gardening- that are supported by our volunteers. The team also meet residents on a one-to-one basis to discuss any challenges they are facing in the house and focus on their personal goals.

A refugee friend tells us what she likes about Emilie House:

Everything- there is a garden, good people. We are together, talking. Sometimes, when you are crying, there are other people there. Even people who speak my language. It is good. There are Africans, Asians-everybody! Together, talking: "good morning, good morning." Everyone. It is nice!



Unmuting hearts and voices through Poetry

During the COVID-19 pandemic, JRS UK organized the Open Writing Space to help our friends improve and develop their writing skills and combat social isolation. The sessions, led by poet Laila Sumpton, covered different writing genres and provided a supportive community. Over the course of months, a collection of poems and prose grew, which we published in a book titled *Home is a feeling not a place*. This initiative offered a creative outlet and a sense of accomplishment for our friends, helping them express themselves and build confidence.

Han, a refugee friend and contributing author to the book said:

‘Writing is a powerful instrument to communicate and engage with another individual. I hope this book will leave a lasting impression of the powerful voices of the muted people in society, that it will open new avenues of thoughts and ideas which were never considered before.’



During Refugee Week our friends were able to perform their works in public libraries and the Photographer's Gallery Soho – these were joyful, fun occasions which everyone enjoyed.



Our Community Kitchen serves up much more than great meals

The Community Kitchen at JRS UK is a space where refugee friends come together to share recipes, teach each other how to cook, and enjoy meals together. Each week, a refugee friend leads the session, guiding others in preparing and cooking the meal. This practical activity helps break down barriers, fosters new friendships, and creates a joyful, communal atmosphere.

Mark Dunn, our Activities Co-ordinator explained the original way in which it works:

“Our refugee friends don’t write down their recipes. They just know them in their heads. They don’t need to weigh things. They just know intrinsically what needs to be done, how much spice is to be used for certain foods. Most of it, I think is very intuitive to people... which is completely different to how I cook!”



And everyone attests to the fact that the results are superb. Such an absorbing, collaborative activity turns out to be beneficial in a multitude of ways – apart from providing our friends with a delicious hot meal. Mark elaborated:

"Our friends have said that it's really helped with their mental health, that they feel a lot more relaxed coming together in the kitchen, that they aren't stressed or thinking about the Home Office, or their accommodation issues, and that their mental health and their mood have really been lifted through coming together and doing the Community Kitchen."



Community Building with the WASH*Wombles!

The *Wapping & Shadwell Wombles are a local group of caring citizens who meet weekly to collect litter and keep our neighbourhood beautiful. As part of our efforts to help our refugee friends integrate into the local community and residents a chance to meet our friends, some of them began to volunteer regularly on the Saturday morning litter-picks.

It went very well! Abdul commented

“The volunteers of this project greeted me with a warm welcome and we began picking litter at the local park and kept going through the waterways, streets, parking bays, ponds, and housing estates.”

They collected bags and bags of rubbish from the ground.

A surprisingly simple, yet effective, unifying experience, which leaves the area looking lovely. This activity costs nothing financially but brings one out into the fresh air and into contact with nature and offers an opportunity to speak to people we might never meet in another way. This has happily become an established new activity for our refugee friends.



Sharing the beauty of an English Garden



During the summer months we try to organise outdoor excursions which will help our friends spend some time in beautiful spaces and get in touch with nature. As in recent years, the trip to Kew Botanical Gardens provided a wonderful experience of green beauty.

Here's what one of our friends said:

"Thanks, JRS, once again for providing us with an opportunity to visit the historical Kew Gardens. To escape from our tumultuous lives and spend some time with Mother Nature. It was an amazing experience to see the most diverse collection of living plants and to observe history at the former summer retreat Palace of King George III. We found solace in walking around floral displays and themed gardens. Felt amazed at the Palm House to observe the eco-system of exotic rainforests and experience different climate zones at the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Giant lily pads at the Waterlily House were also fascinating. At the end of our tour, we visited the former summer residence of King George III. At that point, I felt that somebody propelled me into the 18th century with a time machine because almost everything was kept in its natural form. It was a wonderful experience to see, observe, and learn many things in one day! Thank you very much, JRS, for arranging this event!"

A supportive, holistic approach: JRS UK's legal service

Through our legal service, JRS UK is working to help refugee friends reach a point where they are no longer living in limbo. This is vitally important work, which could not take place without the wider wrap-around support provided for refugee friends.



Our friend 'B' tells us:

“Before I was supported by our legal service, I couldn’t work, I was not getting any support, and I couldn’t study. I was afraid – afraid I might be deported and separated from my family. I was afraid that if I went out, I wouldn’t come back home.

After support from the legal team, I started working. I have been working for some months now as the Home Office allowed me to work. Now I can study too, I am going out more and feel more relaxed. I can support my family. Every day I remind myself that my life is different now to how it was before. My life has changed thanks to the JRS Legal Project.

The most important thing for me about JRS UK as a whole is the approach – you feel more relaxed, more accepted there. You don’t feel afraid to ask anything, you don’t feel like you’ll be rejected. Everyone is very friendly and welcoming. I don’t go to any other charities because I like the approach here – keep doing what you are doing!”

Thank you to Staff and Volunteers

We are proud to have a highly skilled staff team with an unwavering commitment to accompanying, serving, and advocating for refugees.

We remain committed to retaining a strong staff team and providing opportunities for professional development.

Volunteers

JRS UK simply would not be able to support refugee friends in the way we do without the support of our dedicated volunteers. We are so grateful to everyone who has gifted us their time this year as the contribution of volunteers is invaluable to our work.

This year volunteers supported us with the following:

- **Shop volunteers**
- **Practical support phone volunteers**
- **Telephone befrienders**
- **Detention volunteers (on phone and in person visitors)**
- **Hosts**
- **Emilie House volunteers**
- **Napier volunteers (interpreting and accompaniment)**
- **Office, administration and fundraising volunteers**

Support from Jesuits

We were once again fortunate to have support from a Jesuit in Formation over the past year. We are very grateful to Dunstan Rodrigues for his excellent work on our new Reconciliation project which is exploring ways to greater community cohesion and integration of our refugee friends in Wapping and Dagenham.

Having Jesuits in formation support our projects is a valuable experience for all and the JRS UK team are extremely grateful for the gifts they bring, their commitment and dedication.

Thank you to Funders

We are entirely indebted and unable to deliver our services without the generosity of our Funders, so thank you to you all. There are many who are not on this list due to space, but you know that you are most appreciated.

- Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation
- British Jesuit Alumni Charitable Trust
- Cardinal's Lenten Appeal
- Caritas Westminster
- Catholic Women's League
- Charlotte Marshall Charitable Trust
- City Bridge Trust
- Columban Sisters
- Community of St Francis
- Congregation of Jesus
- Cosaraf Charitable Foundation
- Cuckoo Hill Trust
- Daughters of Jesus CIO
- Daughters of the Heart of Mary
- Daughters of the Holy Spirit
- East End Community Foundation
- Fidel Goetz Foundation
- Foster Charity
- Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood
- Generalate of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy
- Gignoux Photos
- Helpers of the Holy Souls
- Holy Family of Bordeaux - Provincial House
- Holy Family Sisters (St Emilie)
- Jesuit Social Justice Fund
- JRS Europe
- Laing Family Trust
- LDS Charities
- Little Company of Mary
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- London Faith and Belief Awards
- London Legal Support Trust
- Loreto Sisters
- Lothian and Saint Anthony Trust
- Marist Sisters
- Mary Kinross Charitable Trust
- Mazars Charitable Trust
- Methodist Church Fund for Human Need
- Migration Exchange
- Muriel Woellwarth Trust
- National Lottery - Awards for All
- Oak Foundation
- Porticus Foundation
- Positive Action In Housing
- Presentation Convent
- Refugee Action
- Religious of Christian Education
- Religious of the Assumption
- Roman & Natalii Guminski Foundation
- School Sisters of Notre Dame
- Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide
- Sisters of St Joseph of Peace
- Sisters of St Louis
- Society of Jesus
- Society of Saint Francis
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- St James the Great

- The Al-Mizan Charitable Trust
- The Bernadette Charitable Trust
- The Bike Project
- The Gay & Keith Talbot Trust
- The Institute of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- The Muriel Woellwarth Trust
- The Ursuline Sisters
- Tony and Audrey Watson Charitable Trust
- Trust Fund C.R.I.C.
- Ursuline College
- Ursuline Sisters - Forest Gate London
- Vera Outhwaite Charitable Trust
- Wakefield and Tetley Trust

Governance

JRS UK is a work of Jesuits in Britain, who are governed by a Board of Trustees, chaired by the Provincial, Fr Damian Howard 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 work in partnership with other religious congregations, humanitarian organisations and with refugees themselves, encouraging co-responsibility, communal discernment and participative decision-making.

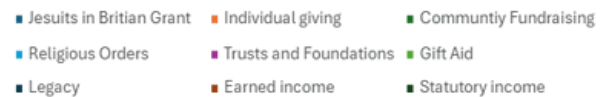
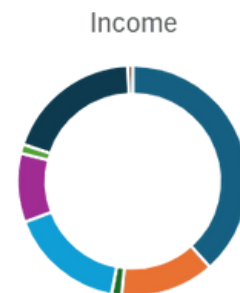
We endeavour to be openly accountable for our work. We have an independent bank account, budget, and payroll. The Jesuits in Britain delegate oversight of JRS UK to a Management Committee chaired by Fr Michael Holman SJ. Our Management Committee includes Jesuits, other charity practitioners, and refugees we accompany. The Management Committee reports to the British Jesuit Provincial.

The Jesuits in Britain are The Society of Jesus Trust (of 1929) for Roman Catholic Purposes. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales (230165) and Scotland (40490).



Income and Expenditure

Jesuits in Britain Grant	£683,702
Individual Giving	£234,714
Community Fundraising	£25,158
Religious Orders	£172,179
Trusts & Foundations	£22,543
Gift Aid	£22,543
Legacy	£341,302
Earned Income	£12,216
Statutory Income	-
Total Income	£1,781,434



Emergency Response/Practical Support	£451,097
Refugee Activities	£159,661
Accommodation and hosting	£179,701
Legal Project	£160,104
Detention Outreach	£139,081
Fundraising	£143,190
Advocacy and communication	£279,889
Office Administration	£279,889
Total Expenditure	£1,662,615

Expenditure





UNITED
KINGDOM

Jesuit Refugee Service UK 2022-23



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www.jrsuk.net