

Together

NEWS FROM JRS UK
SUMMER 2026



“At the root of the call of the Gospel to welcome the stranger is that recognition of the value of the human person. That comes from recognising that God is present in everyone.”

Archbishop Richard Moth

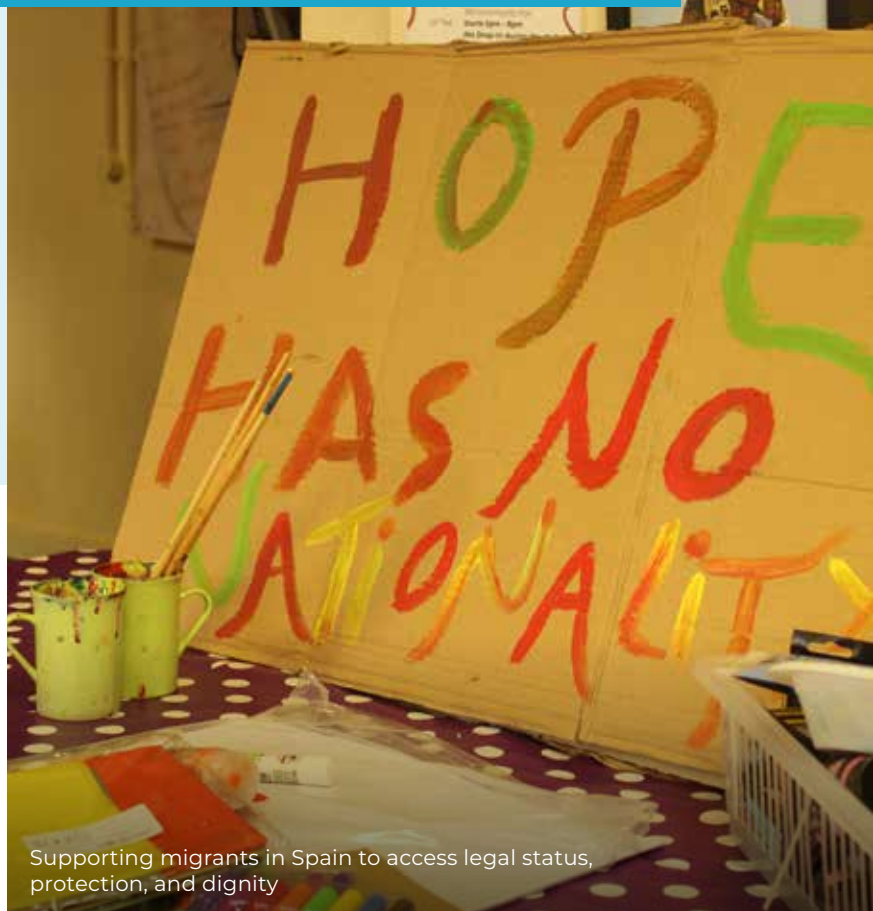
Spain launches extraordinary regularisation process for undocumented migrants

Spain has approved an extraordinary regularisation process allowing thousands of undocumented migrants to apply for legal residence and work permits under Royal Decree 316/2026. The measure, which entered into force on 16 April 2026, opens a window for applications until 30 June 2026.

The initiative is aimed at foreign nationals currently in an irregular situation who can demonstrate continuous residence in Spain prior to 1 January 2026. Successful applicants will be granted a one-year residence and work permit, marking a significant step toward inclusion and legal security.

The Jesuit Migrant Service Spain (Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes – SJM), a member of the JRS Europe network, has welcomed the measure as a **positive and necessary response to the realities faced by many migrants living in precarity**. SJM highlights that the regularisation provides not only legal recognition but also access to rights, protection, and dignified participation in society.

Across the country, the 14 organisations that make up the SJM network are actively supporting individuals throughout the application process. This includes legal guidance, accompaniment, and the preparation of vulnerability reports required in certain cases. One example is the Centro Pueblos Unidos in Madrid, which is already assisting applicants by documenting situations of vulnerability and facilitating access to the procedure.



Supporting migrants in Spain to access legal status, protection, and dignity

JRS Europe also welcomes this development

as an encouraging sign within the broader European context. At a time when migration policies across the continent often prioritise deterrence and control, this initiative reflects a people-centred approach grounded in dignity, humanity, and inclusion.

JRS Europe **calls on other European States to consider similar regularisation** pathways that recognise the realities of irregular stay and contribute to more cohesive and inclusive societies. Ensuring that no one is left in legal limbo is essential for building communities where everyone can live with dignity and contribute meaningfully.

Message from the editor



Dear friends,

Here at JRS UK, we know that welcome is not an abstract idea. It is something we live, practice, and choose – over and over again. Sometimes welcome is not easy, and takes courage and faith.

This summer marks 75 years since the Refugee Convention promised protection to people forced to flee persecution (pages 10-11). That promise matters now more than ever, and yet this newsletter arrives at a deeply sobering moment. As I write, news reports are emerging about the deaths of two women on their journey to seek sanctuary in the UK: the third deadly incident in just over a month. Disturbing scenes are also unfolding in Dunkirk, where children have been forcibly separated from their parents to prevent families boarding boats. And media outlets are reporting that a young man, returned to France under the UK's 'one in, one out' deal, is now at risk of onward removal to Syria, having fled forced conscription and lost contact with his family.

These are not isolated incidents. They are the human cost of policies that leave people with no safe routes to seek protection.

For Christians, the call to welcome is not optional. Catholic Social Teaching begins with

the conviction that every person is made in the image of God, and that our responsibility to one another does not stop at borders. To welcome people seeking safety is to recognise Christ in others, and to insist on the dignity and worth of every human life. This was powerfully affirmed during Archbishop Richard Moth's visit to JRS UK (page 9), when he spent time listening to refugee friends and reminded us that the Gospel judges us by how we respond to those on the margins.

That's why this summer we're asking you to join us in our campaign to defend asylum, by praying, speaking out, and acting together. On pages 4-5 we share more information on what we're calling for and how to order resources for your community to take part in the campaign.

Also in this newsletter, you'll read some moving reflections from Jonathan, whose legacy will help us advocate for a system that welcomes and protects people seeking sanctuary (page 6), a beautiful reflection on this year's Refugee Week theme, Courage, by Emma, Director of Pray As You Go (page 7), and some words from refugee friends about the Together March earlier this year, which brought together thousands of people walking for unity and hope (page 8).

As ever, thank you for walking with us. I hope you'll join us as we speak up for change, making it clear that we choose courage over fear, and hope over hostility.

With gratitude,

Victoria

From our kitchen to yours!

Enny Hot Chili

"Thank you for the wonderful lunch, and for the recipe for the chilli sauce!"

– Archbishop Richard Moth

Ingredients

- 20 scotch bonnet peppers
- 2 medium onions
- 1 tablespoon Jumbo all-purpose seasoning
- 20 ml vegetable oil

Method

1. Clean the scotch bonnet peppers and onions thoroughly. Rinse them with cold water.
2. Peel the onions, cut each into 4 equal parts, and rinse again with cold water.
3. Add the scotch bonnet peppers and onions into

a blender. Blend until you achieve a roughly smooth consistency.

4. Transfer the blended mixture into a saucepan and cook on low heat for 12 to 15 minutes.
5. Add the vegetable oil, stir well, and continue cooking for a few more minutes.
6. Add the Jumbo all-purpose seasoning, stir thoroughly, and let it cook for an additional 5 minutes.
7. Allow it to cool, and it's ready to serve.

Note: The spiciness depends on how hot the scotch bonnet peppers are—some are milder, while others are extremely spicy.

(Last appeared Summer 2025)



As Christians, we stand with refugees. Join us.

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”

(Matthew 25:35)

As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger – to build communities where people forced to flee can live in dignity and hope.

Yet today, people seeking sanctuary face growing hostility. Many struggle to access protection, and division leaves people cut off from community.

We want this to change.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that every person is made in the image of God, and that solidarity does not stop at borders.

This summer, from Pentecost Sunday (24th May) to the 75th anniversary of the Refugee Convention (28th July), we’re calling on Christians across the UK to come together to defend the right to asylum. We’re calling for a renewed commitment to protection, one that reflects the values of our faith.

Three essential changes

Restore the right to asylum

All of us deserve to live in safety and dignity. And, if we were ever forced from our homes, we would want the opportunity to rebuild our lives safely elsewhere.

For most people fleeing war or persecution, there are **no safe routes** to reach the UK.

Yet current policies punish people for how they travel, block access to fair asylum procedures, and leave people living in limbo – even after being recognised as refugees.



Together we can defend the right to asylum and rebuild dignity and hope

Sam was forced to leave his home as a child and came to the UK seeking sanctuary.

Due to a government error and poor legal representation on his asylum case, he was initially refused asylum. He spent nearly a decade without status, with no access to work, support, and accommodation.

Eventually, with the help of JRS UK, he made further submissions and was recognised as a refugee. He wants to rebuild his life and participate in the community: “We’re desperate to be a part of society that works, has a family, has a decent normal life.”

If he were granted refugee status under the new rules, Sam would be forced to reapply for protection every two and a half years, facing the threat of removal, and with his future once again determined by the outcomes of a hostile and complicated decision-making process.

We’re calling for

- Repeal of anti-refugee laws
- Creation of safe routes
- An asylum system that examines all asylum claims fairly on their merits

Put dignity at the heart of protection

Everyone wants to live safely in community and to access essential services without fear.

Yet much of our asylum and immigration system marginalises and isolates people and forces them into poverty. Levels of asylum support are so low that people face a daily struggle to meet their basic needs.

And, if refused asylum, people are made destitute and subjected to the hostile environment, a set of laws and policies designed to make life unbearably difficult for them. People can spend years struggling to access healthcare, without a stable place to live, and at risk of exploitation until they are finally granted status. And every year, thousands of people refused asylum and made destitute are recognised as having been in need of protection all along.

What we're calling for:

- Right to work and access to support
- Housing in communities
- An End to the Hostile Environment
- A longer refugee 'move-on' period, so that newly recognised refugees are not made homeless

"Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbour. The concept of "neighbour" is...universalized..."

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est



Walking together for a world where everyone can live safely, with dignity and support

End immigration detention

Every year, tens of thousands of people are held, without time limit and without judicial oversight, in prison-like conditions.

Detention destroys lives and damages our communities. It is profoundly harmful to both physical and mental health, and impacts people for years after they have been released.

Immigration detention violates human dignity and isolates people from their friends, families and communities.

What we're calling for:

- End immigration detention
- Asylum support in communities, not detention
- A strict, short time limit as an immediate step

What you can do this summer

"The communities that welcome [refugees] can...be a living witness to hope, one that is understood as the promise of a present and a future where the dignity of all as children of God is recognised"

Pope Leo XIV, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2025

- **Pray:** Hold a prayer vigil or include refugees in your parish prayers.
- **Act:** Join JRS UK, CSAN, and SVP in sending a postcard to the Prime Minister, asking to Restore the Right to Asylum, end immigration detention, and put dignity and protection at the heart of the asylum system.
- **Share:** Put up a poster or start a conversation in your church or community.
- **Gather:** Host an event or invite JRS UK to speak in your parish.

Defending the right to asylum is part of our call to recognise Christ in people forced to flee – and to build a society where dignity, justice, and welcome are real.

Together, we can choose welcome over fear.

Learn more about our asks, find resources for your community, and order campaign materials free of charge at www.jrsuk.net/defend-asylum

A legacy of welcome and hope



A legacy of welcome: supporters visiting JRS UK

A great privilege of working with the Jesuit Refugee Service UK is meeting supporters who are determined to build a better future for people seeking sanctuary. Everyone's starting point is different: an encounter, an experience, a conversation...

For Jonathan it began with friendship:

"In the 1990s we befriended a family of Catholic Iraqi refugees fleeing the persecution of Saddam Hussein and his son Uday. They had a very difficult escape and journey to the UK, an experience that deeply traumatised their two younger daughters. They arrived with few possessions, and life was hard - but at least it was before the 'hostile environment' approach of later governments.

We were struck by their resilience and determination to integrate. We enjoyed many celebrations with the small Chaldean Catholic community in London. And when the family's fourth daughter was born, we were privileged to become her godparents."

That relationship shaped the choices Jonathan and his wife made over decades: **"We didn't have time to give hands on assistance,"** he reflected, **"but we supported refugee agencies financially and in their campaigns. Having been educated by the Jesuits, I was particularly attracted to JRS UK's ethos of accompaniment."**

When the couple later moved to Warwickshire, their parish helped secure housing for Syrian families and welcomed new neighbours from across the world. **"So, when my wife and I made our wills"** Jonathan said, **"it felt right for us to make provision for the charities we had been supporting regularly, including JRS UK."**

Many of our services for refugee friends, from practical support and safe accommodation, to help navigating complex systems, are possible because supporters like Jonathan and his wife chose to leave a gift in their will.

These gifts help ensure that people seeking sanctuary will continue to find friendship and accompaniment - extending the values our community already lives by: that every woman, man and child forced to flee their home should be treated with dignity; that compassion should outlast the news cycle; and that hope is here to stay.



You can leave a gift to support people seeking sanctuary, when you make or update your will, by providing your solicitor with our details:

**Jesuit Refugee Service UK
The Hurtado Jesuit Centre, 2 Chandler Street,
Wapping, London E1W 2QT**

Registered Charity Numbers
England & Wales: 1207742 and Scotland SC053495
(JRS UK is the refugee agency of the Jesuits in Britain)

**For more information see:
www.jrsuk.net/leave-a-legacy**

Have courage!

Emma Hudson is Director of Pray As You Go, a Jesuit ministry helping people to find God in daily prayer. She also works with the Thinking Faith team, supporting digital projects in Ignatian spirituality. Here she reflects on this year's Refugee Week (15-21 June) theme of courage.

'But now I urge you to keep up your courage...'

Unbelievably, Saint Paul's words here are spoken whilst travelling on a ship, as a prisoner, during a storm with "hurricane force wind".

Imagine the journey... the boat... the force of the wind... the shouts of despair... the darkness of the water... What does Paul's voice sound like?

We might imagine him shouting these words... or maybe, Paul is able to say them calmly, even in the midst of some of the worst situations that can be thrown at a human.

The courage that Paul calls us to can be intimidating. We can sometimes end up feeling guilty about being afraid, or that we've failed for not being able to summon this courage on demand!

We too often forget that courage is a gift; a gift from the living God of love, seeking to be active and consoling even in our darkest moments.

Paul's experience is not unique. For many people who have made – or are still making – perilous journeys in search of safety, whether by sea or land, courage can feel in short supply. There are people in our communities today who have faced storms not unlike this: forced to flee, waiting in uncertainty, hoping for the chance to rebuild their lives.

We too are part of this story – called not only to receive courage, but to recognise and respond to the experiences of others, and to stand in solidarity with them.

Acts 27:21-25

"After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

This can feel daunting. But perhaps we become courageous when we are open to the closeness of Christ in the chaos of our lives.

Psalm 34:18 tells us that *'the LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.'*

Whenever we face distress and are "crushed in Spirit", we become even more united with God who is acquainted with suffering; with Christ who fled for his life as a child in search of safety; with the Holy Spirit who brings the gifts of consolation and courage.

What does courage look like for you today?

It could look like Paul, encouraging those with him. Or standing in solidarity with people whose rights are under threat.

Spend a moment reflecting on where you notice courage in your life. You might like to speak with God as one friend speaks to another, asking for this gift of courage in the coming days.

Join us in prayer for refugees at www.jrsuk.net/praying-with-refugees and find resources to guide your prayers at www.prayasyougo.org

We marched Together – for welcome, dignity, and justice

On Saturday 28th March, JRS UK joined thousands of people at the Together March, standing in solidarity with refugees and people seeking asylum. We marched together alongside churches, charities, and communities in the Christian bloc to call for compassion, dignity, and justice.

For many of our refugee friends, the day was deeply moving.

“I feel emotional to be honest. Most of the time, I feel I don’t belong, it’s been hard for decades. This was the first time that I felt positive energy, and it’s great, it’s important.”

In recent years, so much of the public conversation about people seeking sanctuary has been fuelled by hostility. Lately, the co-opting of Christian language in hostile narratives has deepened.

The march offered something different: hope, welcome, and a sense of belonging.

“The past few years, we’ve heard so much negativity. This gave me hope and positive energy.”

Being present together mattered. The Gospel is clear about the need to build welcoming communities of solidarity. Walking alongside thousands of people showing support, helped some feel more confident to have their voices heard:

“Before, I didn’t feel I had the right to protest, now I feel more comfortable.”

“It’s good to have an organisation with us, so we can raise our voice.”



Marching together: a powerful day of solidarity, hope, and belonging

The atmosphere on the day was joyful, proud, and full of connection.

“It was a joyful day, like a party.”

“Many people are with us: that’s what we saw on Saturday.”

For JRS UK, this is what accompaniment looks like: listening, walking together, and creating spaces where people feel supported to speak out.

“I hope it makes a change, and a difference for us and for everyone!”

The Together March was a powerful reminder that solidarity matters: and that when we come together, hope grows stronger.

Will you stand in solidarity with people seeking sanctuary?

Join our campaign to defend asylum at www.jrsuk.net/defend-asylum

Archbishop Richard Moth visits JRS UK



Archbishop Richard Moth visits the JRS UK centre

This March, we were honoured to welcome Archbishop Richard, the new Archbishop of Westminster, to the Hurtado Jesuit Centre. He spent time with refugee friends, listened to their experiences of seeking sanctuary in the UK, and met supporters, volunteers, and staff who walk alongside them.

Visiting just one month into his role, Archbishop Richard arrived with a clear desire to understand the realities faced by people seeking asylum in the UK.

Throughout the visit, Archbishop Richard affirmed the Church's commitment to walking alongside people forced to flee their homes. Drawing on Matthew 25:35 - "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" - he reminded us of the importance of loving the stranger.

"The root of the call of the Gospel to welcome the stranger is that recognition of the value of the human person and that comes from recognising that God is present in everyone..."



Jesus says we're going to be judged on it, and so making that welcome available to all is absolutely key."

Archbishop Richard shared a meal – prepared by our incredible cooking team – with refugee friends at our social drop-in. He heard directly from refugee friends about the challenges of the asylum system: unsafe and insecure accommodation, financial hardship, and the impact of years of marginalisation and uncertainty.

"Very sadly, the amount of time it's taking to get paperwork done is getting longer and longer and still through all of that, JRS UK is there to be with them on that journey and to hear about the great value of that is impressive and moving"

Reflecting on the day, Archbishop Richard spoke to the broader significance of JRS UK's work:

"I think it strikes me today with this visit, that if more people could realise just what JRS UK is about, the impact that would have on our wider society would be extraordinary because we're living out the Gospel here."

Archbishop Richard's visit was a gift. His support for JRS UK, and the time he spent speaking with our refugee friends, reflected the Church's call to welcome people seeking sanctuary – a call we are invited to live out together.

The Archbishop's final words are words shared by many of us – "Thank you for the wonderful lunch and for the recipe for the chilli sauce!" (See page 3)

p.s. See the Archbishop's interview, at www.jrsuk.net/archbishop-holy-week

75 Years of the Refugee Convention



JRS UK was formed in 1994 and has always advocated for the rights of people seeking sanctuary here

The promise of protection

Seventy-five years ago, in the shadow of the Second World War, the international community made a solemn promise: to protect people who are forced to flee their homes.

That promise was set out in the Refugee Convention, adopted in Geneva on 28 July 1951.

One of the Convention's central principles is the absolute prohibition on returning refugees to a country where they would face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is known as non-refoulement.

States also agreed to enshrine basic rights such as shelter, education, healthcare and employment, enabling people seeking sanctuary to live with dignity and rebuild their lives.

The Refugee Convention was born out of moral and political failure. During the 1930s and 1940s, countless people fleeing Nazi persecution were turned away because no binding international obligations compelled states to offer refuge. Millions suffered, and many died as a result.

The Refugee Convention seeks to:

- Protect people from return to danger
- Establish fair procedures for determining refugee status
- Set minimum standards of treatment
- Encourage international cooperation and responsibility sharing

The Refugee Convention is very clear that refugees must not be punished for entering a country of asylum without documents.

Seeking safety in the UK

The United Kingdom was among the earliest signatories to the Refugee Convention and our society has long prided itself on offering sanctuary to those fleeing danger.

Yet in recent years, UK asylum policy changes have increasingly come into tension with the spirit of refugee protection, and with the very principles of the Refugee Convention making life harder for people fleeing persecution.

Changes include:

- restricting access to the asylum system for people who arrive 'irregularly' – despite there being no safe routes for most people to claim asylum in the UK. This is contrary to the Refugee Convention, which protects people's right to cross borders informally, in order to find safety.
- the expansion of immigration detention, where people are held, without time limit, in prison-like conditions
- enabling removal to third countries - despite humanitarian organisations repeatedly warning that this risks undermining the core protections of the Convention
- the suspension of family reunion, keeping families apart
- refugee status becoming temporary and insecure – creating ongoing uncertainty and making it harder for people to rebuild their lives

“You were a stranger and you welcomed me”

At a time of unprecedented global displacement, affecting more than 117 million people worldwide, the Refugee Convention remains the cornerstone of international refugee protection.

Its enduring power lies in its clarity: people fleeing persecution have rights, and states have responsibilities. But for Christians, this is only a starting point.

Catholic Social Teaching begins not with borders or legal categories, but with the inherent dignity of every human person. It calls us not only to protect people from harm, but to ensure that they can live with dignity and participate fully in community.

It also takes a broader view of who needs protection, setting out clearly how we have a responsibility to all who are forced to leave their homes – whether because of persecution, war, poverty, the climate crisis, or injustice.

Worryingly, in recent years we have seen Christian language and imagery used to justify exclusion and hostility. Yet the Gospel is clear: we are called to welcome people forced to leave their homes, and help them rebuild their lives and flourish.

“Immigration systems divide people into categories and assign differing rights according to their legal status. Catholic Social Teaching, on the other hand, places an emphasis on the equal human dignity of all citizens, migrants, and refugees.”

**Catholic Bishops of England and Wales,
Love the Stranger**



From reflection to action

In the UK and globally, the Jesuit Refugee Service walks with people experiencing detention, destitution, and exclusion, often in direct tension with the promises the Refugee Convention makes.

As we mark 75 years of refugee protection and witness the worrying rise of hostility towards people seeking safety, this is not only a moment to reflect, but a moment to act.

This summer, JRS UK invites you to take part in our campaign to defend asylum. You can read more on pages 4-5 of this newsletter, and find out more/order resources at www.jrsuk.net/defend-asylum

Protection is not simply a legal obligation. It is a shared responsibility – and a moral calling rooted in our faith.

“the Church, like a mother, accompanies those who are walking. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges”

Pope Leo XIV, Dilexi Te

You're cordially invited: *Faith and Hope*

To celebrate Refugee Week, the JRS UK Theatre Group is premiering their new play, *Faith and Hope*, to the public on Monday 22nd June.

Faith and Hope follows the struggles of a young woman without status and explores the question 'Is humanity always a victim in times of crisis?'

The performance was created by refugee friends through a series of improvisational workshops, inspired by Odon von Horvath's play *Faith, Hope and Charity*.

Join us for what is sure to be a wonderful evening of thought-provoking characters, suspense, and reflections on our current political climate.

22nd June 7pm

St George in the East, Shadwell



Find out more: www.jrsuk.net/refugee-week

The Jesuit Refugee Service works in more than 50 countries around the world.

JRS UK is made up of staff and many volunteers who work to accompany, serve and advocate for destitute and detained refugees in the UK, of all faiths and none.

If you can, please consider donating to JRS UK. With your support JRS UK can continue to accompany destitute and detained refugees in a spirit of hospitality, welcome and love.

Donate today

Visit www.jrsuk.net/donate

Email uk@jrs.net

Mail your cheque/postal order made payable to Jesuit Refugee Service to the address on the right.



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JRS UK is the refugee agency of the Jesuits in Britain (Jesuits in Britain CIO), a registered charity in England and Wales (1207742) and Scotland (SC053495)