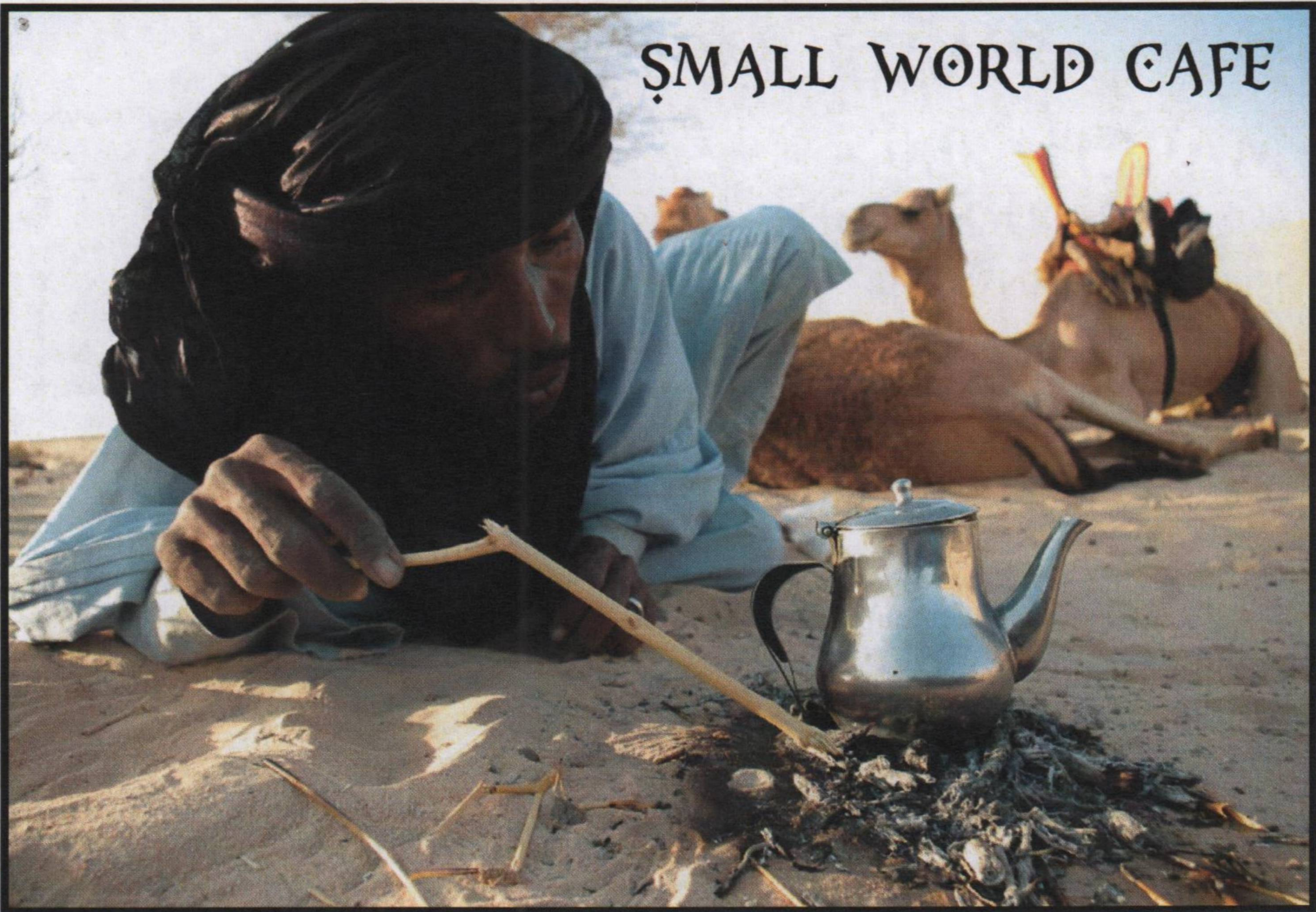


ŞMALL WORLD CAFE



# SMALL WORLD CAFÉ

## MARCH 2010

04th MONGOLIAN NIGHT

18th ALGERIAN NIGHT

25th IRANIAN NIGHT \*

Fundraiser for Nottingham

Arimathea Trust

## APRIL 2010

8th ZIMBABWEAN NIGHT

With Nottingham Zimbabwean Community Network

22nd AFRICA NIGHT\*

Fundraiser for Aegis Trust and NNRF's Tuesday Night Project

29th CITY OF SANCTUARY FUNDRAISER\*

*Food (including vegan option) is served at 7pm, Entertainment at 8pm. \*Tickets Only*

\*\*\*\*\*  
★  
★  
★  
**Tuesday Night Project**  
*Celebrating Afghan, Iranian & Kurdish New Year*  
**NAWROZ PARTY**  
*With Live Music & Delicious Food From*  
*Afghanistan. Iran & Kurdistan*  
**SUNDAY 21st MARCH**  
5.30pm to 10.30pm  
At The Pakistan Centre,  
163 Woodborough Rd, Nottm NG3 1AX  
TICKETS £ 7.00 Advance / £10.00 on the door  
\*\*\*\*\*

# Nottingham & Nottinghamshire REFUGEE FORUM

2000 – 2010

**This summer Refugee Forum (NNRF) celebrates 10 years of working with and for asylum seekers and refugees**

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## THE BEGINNING

The Forum was set up in July 2000 when Nottingham became host to asylum seekers dispersed by the Home Office. A disparate group of local people, some from faith groups, trades unions and the Racial Equality Council and also concerned individuals, wanted to extend the hand of friendship to those who arrived in the City, often traumatised, confused and fearful for the future. A room was hired one evening a week at the International Community Centre to provide a place where the new arrivals could get information and advice and meet others. A packed conference was held in Autumn 2000 where asylum seekers expressed their many problems.

Under the Chairmanship of Mike Scott, the Forum obtained funding to appoint a part-time coordinator, Sam Azad, and early in 2001 moved into its first home, 118 Mansfield Road. This enabled us to start drop-in advice sessions several times a week which were soon packed out,

with queues outside, in the cramped hall and kitchen! It also gave scope for the Forum to take on other activities and service provision as needs were identified and funding could be obtained (principally from the Big lottery). The funding from 2003 of a One Stop Shop Advice service by the City Council (thanks to an initiative of Jon Collins) was an important contribution. Other contracts and grants have enabled the Forum to diversify and employ specialist staff. But the voluntary nature of the Forum has remained essential to its life and work. There are an average of 100 volunteers involved at any one time – many of whom are refugees and asylum seekers.

Eventually, 118 became too small for the growing project and in September 2005, we moved into the Square Centre. This enabled further diversification of our work including a wider range of social and educational activities.

Since 2000, there has been an

average of 1000 asylum seekers present in the City at any time. Several thousands of these have been granted leave to remain and have chosen to settle in the City. Others have sadly been refused, often as a result of faulty legal processes but are too scared to return home. The Forum has always and continues to work with people at all stages of the asylum process - from arrival to settlement - or destitution. Over the decade, the vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham have visited us and we have built up a reputation of trust amongst them and are seen as a place of friendship.

The Forum has always placed importance on the need to defend the Human Rights of asylum seekers both as individuals and as a group. Since 2000 these rights have been repeatedly under attack as the government has bowed to the media's scape-goating of asylum seekers and migrants. We work with local and national groups to challenge these attacks and fight against injustice. We also work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

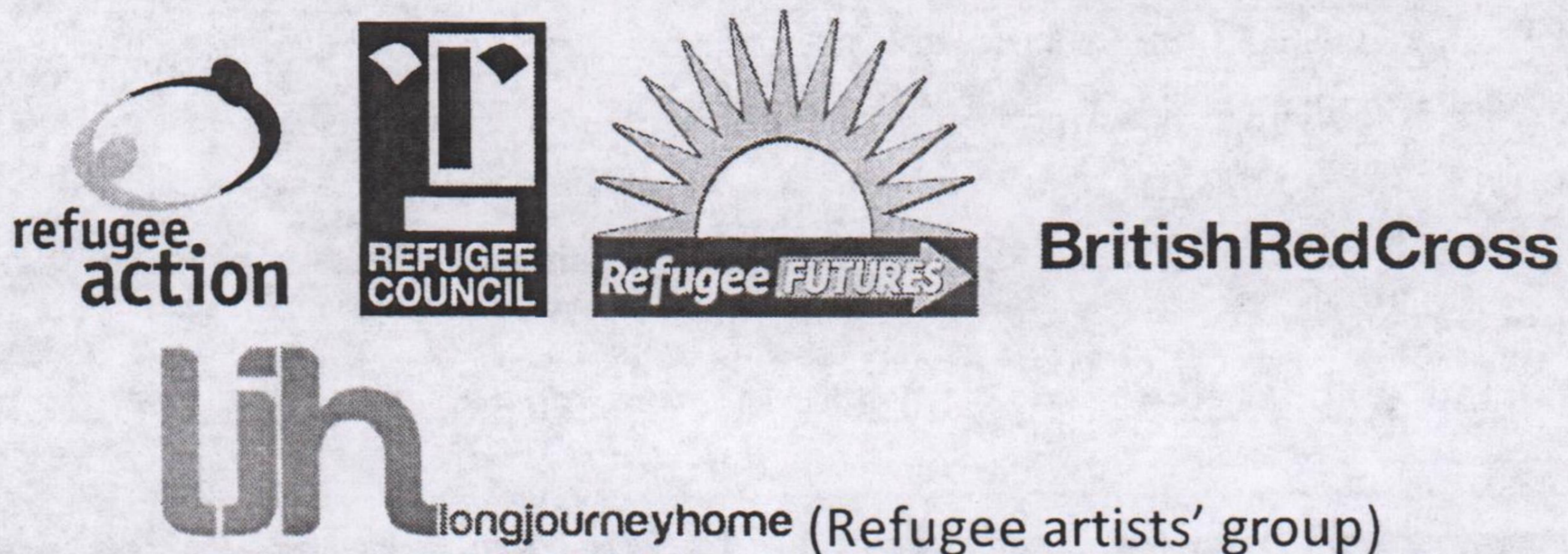
#### WHY NNRF'S WORK IS STILL NEEDED

The support we provide for people is essential. They have fled to the UK from over 40 different countries,

many after suffering persecution, rape, torture, imprisonment and the effects of war or displacement. Most have left families behind. After arrival in the UK, anxieties caused by the asylum process can exacerbate their trauma. Lack of English language and the unfamiliarity of UK life and customs can add to feelings of isolation and disempowerment. The hostility people face from the host community further contributes to feelings of alienation and psychological trauma. Many are living on basic benefits, asylum support or are destitute, barred from working - or finding it difficult to enter the job market, and so form one of the poorest and most deprived sections within British society. Refugees and asylum seekers are often marginalized and discriminated against within British culture and its institutions. We work both with them and external organisations to bridge this gap and ensure that they are able to access services and lead full and productive lives.

The work of the Forum has developed and changed over the past decade in response to the changing needs of asylum seekers and refugees. We have no vested interest in continuing for another 10 years, but while the need remains, we will strive to meet it!

**EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING FROM NNRF**

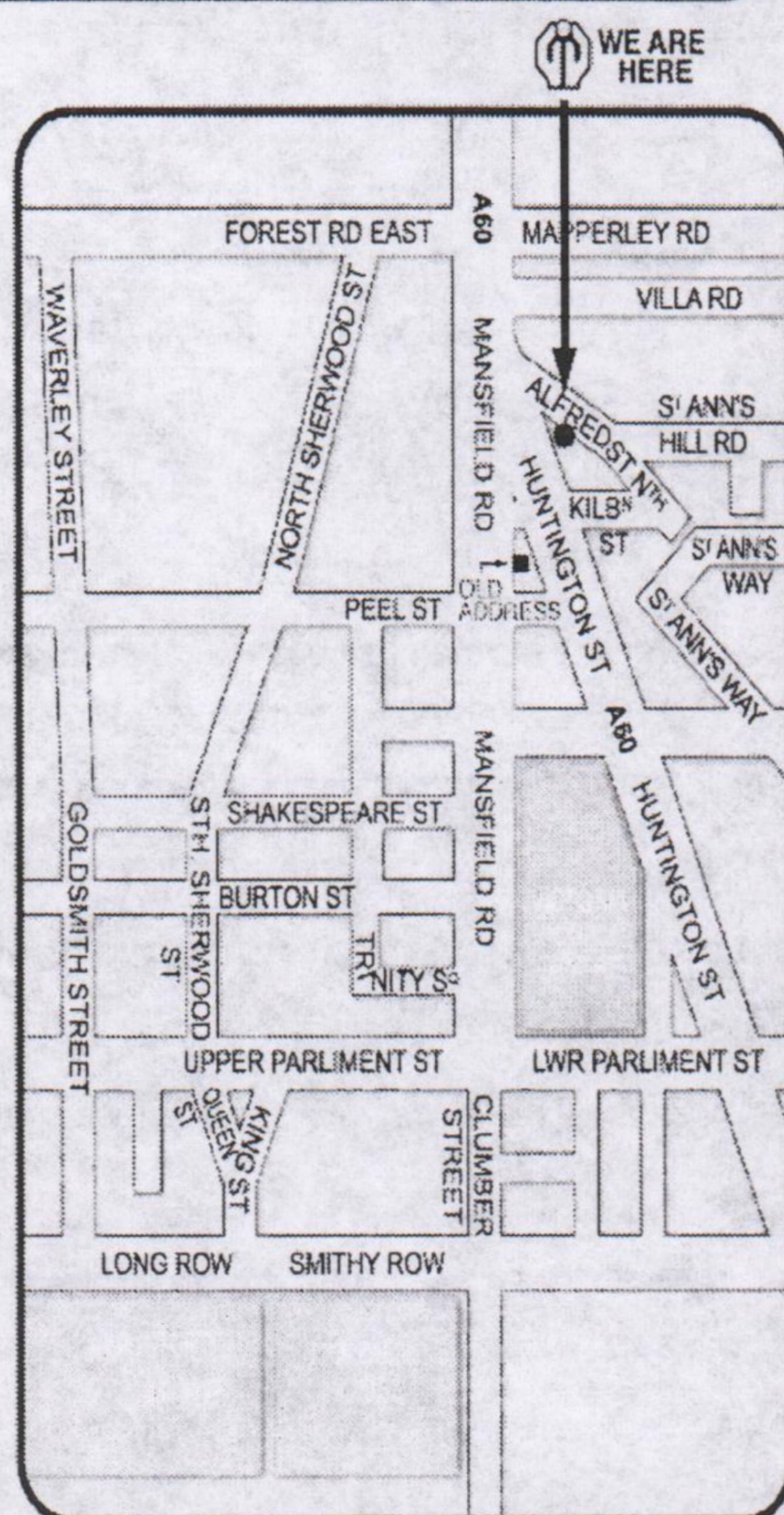


**Nottingham and Nottinghamshire  
Refugee Forum (NNRF)**

The Square Centre  
Alfred Street North  
Nottingham  
NG3 1AA

Tel: 0115 9415599  
Fax: 0115 9475358

[www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk](http://www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk)  
[info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk](mailto:info@nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk)



*Refugee Forum is an independent, voluntary organisation of local people, asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire*

We offer advice, practical assistance and friendship to all refugees and asylum seekers regardless of race, religion or political opinion. Refugee Forum is a volunteer led organisation, run by a volunteer management committee. The Centre has a number of paid staff but relies heavily on the time, dedication and enthusiasm of volunteers from both refugee/asylum seeking backgrounds and the host community.

Within this leaflet you will find information about all the services and facilities offered at the Square Centre by Refugee Forum. In addition to this we are open Mondays - Thursdays during the morning (10-12) for anyone wishing to come to use the centre as a meeting place or to access the internet.

If you would like to support our work, get involved as a volunteer or refer someone to us for assistance, please contact us (see back page for contact details).

- What's available**
- Campaigning**
  - Classes**
  - Community Links**
  - Housing Support**
  - Anti-destitution support**
  - Women's Group**
  - Social Activities**
  - Drop-in advice sessions**
  - Legal support**
  - Specialist Advisors**
  - Internet access**

Interpreters available through Big Word telephone interpreting service but not all languages guaranteed immediately. Please bring a friend to your first visit if you can.

The services detailed here were correct when this leaflet was produced



Nottingham  
City Council



the  
Tudor trust

Registered Charity No: 1121560

# What we offer

## Drop in advice sessions

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 1-4.00pm (last entry 3pm)

- Information regarding the asylum process
- NASS support problems
- Section 4 issues
- Assistance with interpreting and writing letters
- Contacting organisations e.g. solicitors, utilities companies, councils, employers
- Advice for people who are homeless or destitute

## Basic Legal Advice (by appointment only)

- Applications for travel documents and Citizenship
- Signposting to solicitors
- Contact Home Office about changes of circumstances

## Benefits Adviser (by appointment only)

- Information and advice about benefits
- Assistance to apply for benefits e.g. Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Child Benefits, Working Tax Credits, Disability Living Allowance and Housing Benefit
- Applying for Crisis Loans
- Transition into work
- Benefits problems and appeals
- Debt problems

## One Stop Shop Advice (by appointment only)

Assistance in accessing mainstream services including

- Health, Education (children & adult), Children's services
- Housing & accommodation
- Social care support
- Racial harassment support
- Domestic violence support

## Into The Mainstream

Health Project offering assistance to asylum seekers and refugees to register with GPs and access healthcare.

## Children's Project

- Provides activities, play sessions and trips for children and families.
- Provides the 'Stay and Play' session at Women's Group.
- Support and guidance around children's emotional, social and developmental needs provided on Friday's at Women's Group and through individual appointments.
- Information about and referrals to child related services in the city.

## Anti-destitution Group

- Provides limited help to asylum seekers who are without support, homeless or destitute. A referral form is required to access this support (this can be done during a drop-in advice session).
- This work is supported entirely by donations from supporters
- A Tuesday morning (10-12) anti-destitution clinic provides limited advice and support to destitute asylum seekers and food is distributed on Saturday mornings

## Culture Exchange Women's Group

Friday during term-time, 10 – 2pm

Provides activity sessions (such as massage, sewing, dance), cooking courses, information sessions from other agencies and a crèche for children. Builds friendships, support networks and is a good opportunity to practise English in a welcoming environment.

## English Classes

ESOL classes for different abilities – please contact the Forum for more information

## Social Events

We run regular social activities (including the Tuesday Night Project) where all are welcome! Please ask for details and look out for posters and fliers.

## Campaign Group

Activists campaigning around human rights issues and issues that affect asylum seekers and refugees

# What is available

**Drop-in advice sessions**

**Classes**

**Campaigning**

**Specialist Advisors**

**Anti-destitution support**

**Internet access**

**Tea, coffee, biscuits**

**Access to interpreters**

**Floating support**



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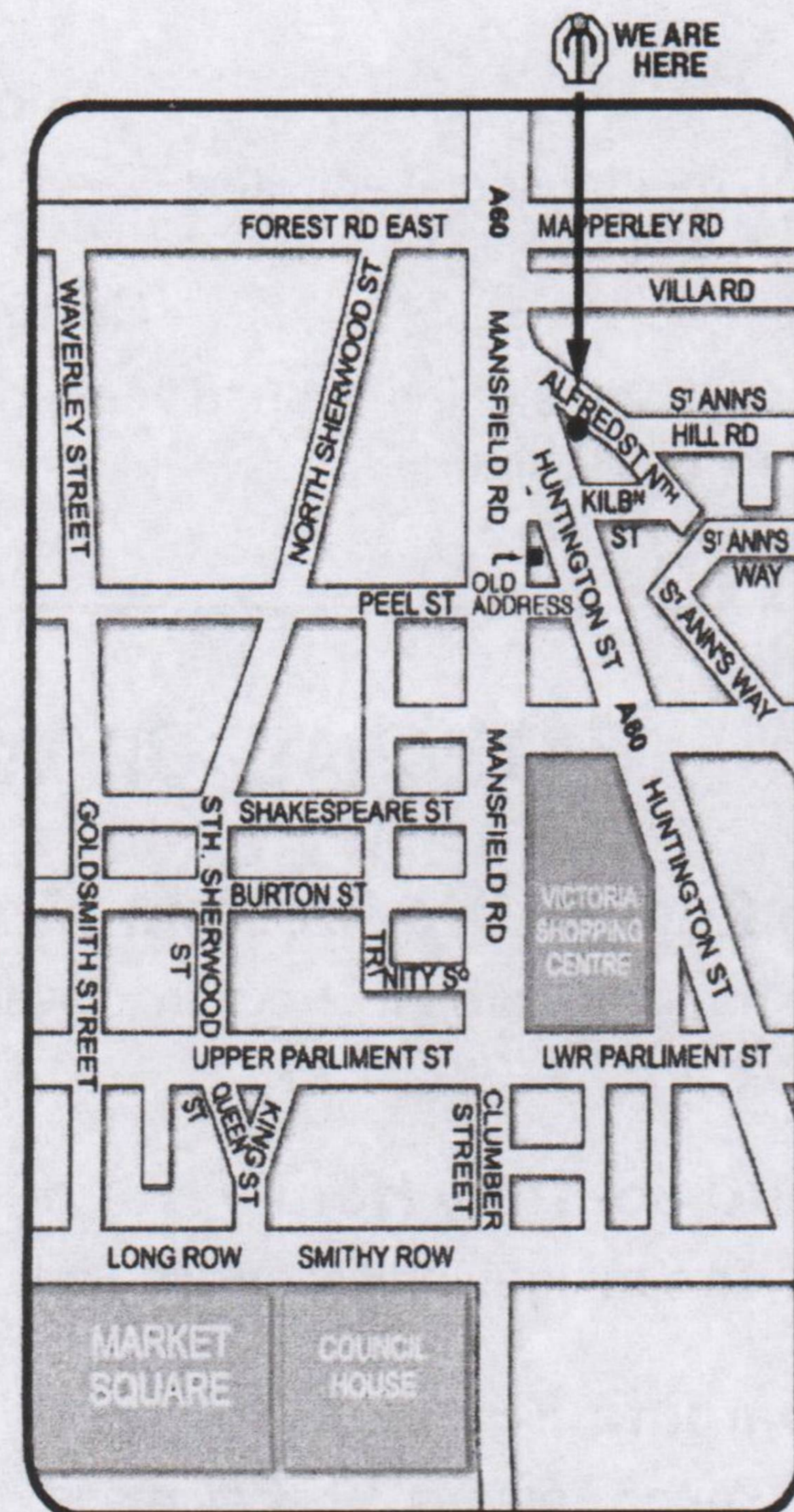
If you would like to support our work, get involved as a volunteer or refer someone to us for assistance, please contact the Centre Administrator.

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Nottingham  
City Council



Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales

Registered Charity No: 1121560

# How we can help

## **Drop in advice sessions Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 1-4.30pm**

- Information regarding the asylum process
- NASS support problems
- Section 4 issues
- Assistance with interpreting and writing letters
- Contacting organisations e.g. solicitors, utilities companies, councils, employers,
- Advice for people who are homeless or destitute

## **Basic Legal Advice (by appointment only)**

- Applications for travel documents, passports and Citizenship
- Signposting to solicitors
- Contacting Home Office about changes of circumstances
- Applications for permission to work
- Applications for extension to Leave to Remain

## **Benefits Advisors (Tues – Thurs, 9.00 – 4.30pm by appointment only)**

- Information and advice about benefits
- Assistance in applying for benefits eg. Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support Child Benefits, Working Tax Credits, Disability Living Allowance and Housing Benefit)
- Applying for Crisis Loans
- Transition into work
- Benefits problems and appeals
- Debt problems

## **One Stop Shop Advisor (by appointment only)**

Assistance in accessing mainstream services including

- Health, Education (children & adult), Children's services
- Housing & accommodation
- Social services
- Racial harassment support
- Domestic violence support

*Outreach and women-only advice sessions can be arranged*

## **Home Support through REFUGEE FUTURES**

- Assisting refugees to get housing
- Helping clients to bid for houses on the Homelink system (Mondays 1-3pm)
- Help with setting up home, including contacting utilities companies, assistance with benefits, community care grants, finding furniture, etc.

## **Anti-destitution Group**

- Provides limited help to asylum seekers who are without support, homeless or destitute. A referral form is required to access this support (this can be done during a drop-in advice session).
- This work is supported entirely by donations from supporters
- A Tuesday morning (10-12) anti-destitution clinic provides limited advice and support to destitute asylum seekers and food is distributed on Saturday mornings

## **Nottingham Refugee Women's Group**

Every Friday from 10 – 2pm. The Women's Group organises a variety of activities (e.g. yoga, beauty therapy) as well as occasional trips and days out. Childcare is available. **All women welcome.**

## **English Classes**

ESOL classes for different abilities – please contact the forum for more information

## **Social Events**

We run regular social activities where all are welcome! Please ask for details.

## **Campaign Group**

Activists campaigning around human rights issues and issues that affect asylum seekers and refugees

## **EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AT NNRF**

### **No English, No Problem (Chris Jackson)**

Informal, drop-in English classes, Mondays (3.00-4.30) Saturdays (6.30 - 8.00)

### **Long Journey Home/Travelling Light**

This refugee artists' group uses the centre as base

### **Roaming Pictures**

Young persons' video/film and communications project.



What is available

**Drop-in advice sessions** **Classes**

**Campaigning** **Specialist Advisors**

**Anti-destitution support**

**Internet access** **Tea, coffee, biscuits**

**Floating support** **Access to interpreters**



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Registered Charity No: 1121560

# How we can help

## Drop in advice sessions Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 1-5pm

- Information regarding the asylum process
- NASS support problems
- Section 4 issues
- Signposting and referrals to solicitors
- Assistance with interpreting and writing letters
- Form filling e.g. travel documents, passport forms, citizenship applications, DVLA forms
- Contacting organisations e.g. solicitors, utilities companies, MPs, councils, employers, Job Centre Plus
- Advice for people who are homeless or destitute
- Information about the options available at the end of the asylum process

## Benefits Advisors (by appointment only)

- Information and advice about benefits
- Assistance in applying for benefits (Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support Child Benefits, Disability Living Allowance and Housing Benefit)
- Transition into work
- Benefits problems and appeals
- Debt problems

## One Stop Shop Advisor (by appointment only)

Assistance in accessing mainstream services including

- Health
- Education (children & adult)
- Children's services
- Housing
- Social services
- Racial harassment support

*Outreach and women-only advice sessions can be arranged*

## Tenant Support

Assisting new refugee tenants by helping them to set up home, including contacting utilities companies, assistance with benefits, community care grants, finding furniture, etc.

## Anti-destitution Group

- Provides limited support to asylum seekers and refugees who are without support, homeless or destitute. A referral form is required to access this support (contact Refugee Forum)
- This work is supported entirely by donations from supporters
- A Tuesday morning (10-12) anti-destitution clinic provides limited advice and support to destitute asylum seekers and food is distributed on Saturday mornings

## Campaign Group

Activists campaigning around human rights issues and issues that affect asylum seekers and refugees

## Training Courses

e.g. ESOL classes, driving theory test, IT skills

## Women Only Sessions

Every Friday from 10 – 2pm. The Women's Group organise a variety of activities (e.g. yoga, beauty therapy) as well as occasional trips and days out.

## Social Events

We run regular social activities where all are welcome! Ask for details.

## EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AT NNRF

### CareerGrad

Advice for unemployed asylum seekers and refugees regarding education, training and jobs (appointment required).

### Homelink – Nottingham City Council

A drop-in service provided by HLG to assist people on the housing waiting lists to use Homelink (process for bidding for council properties).

### No English, No Problem (Chris Jackson)

Informal, drop-in English classes


### Long Journey Home/Travelling Light

This refugee artists' group uses the centre as base

### Roaming Pictures

Young persons' video/film and communications project.

# THE TUESDAY NIGHT PROJECT

A photograph showing a group of people, including men and women, sitting around a table in what appears to be a meeting or forum. They are looking at documents on the table. The background is slightly blurred, showing what might be a chalkboard or a wall with some papers. The overall scene is one of a collaborative discussion.

@ REFUGEE FORUM  
EVERY TUESDAY 5PM TILL 9PM



## Nottingham & Nottinghamshire REFUGEE FORUM

### Who we are

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) was set up by local people in 2000 when, in response to the Government's decision to disperse asylum seekers from London and the South-East around the country, Nottingham became host to c.1100 asylum seekers at any one time. Several thousands of these have been granted leave to remain and have decided to settle in the City. Its supporters include political, religious and students groups, trades unions and concerned individuals, as well as refugees and asylum seekers who have always been involved in the running of NNRF

The Forum is an independent voluntary organisation, and from 1 April 2008 we have been operating as a Company Limited by Guarantee. We work with and for refugees and asylum seekers in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offering practical advice, information, support and friendship and also campaigning on issues affecting them. In addition to providing services we actively encourage them to integrate within the community and use our Centre as a social venue to help reduce isolation. We work with people at all stages of the asylum process – from assisting new arrivals with claiming asylum through to post-decision assistance (this includes resettlement for those who are granted Leave to Remain and also working with asylum seekers who have been refused). The work is now carried out in a large leased building, located in the City Centre, providing offices, social space, training room, a catering area, free internet access and other resources

The organisation was initially run entirely by volunteers, using a hired room one evening a week. It is still led by a volunteer Management Committee, a third of whose members are refugees and asylum seekers and many activities are run by groups of volunteers. There are currently nearly 100 volunteers of whom 40% are refugees and asylum seekers.

As funding has become available we have been able to employ staff to run our centre and to deliver a range of advice and support services paid for by either grants, or contracts from Nottingham City Council. In 2001, funding was obtained from Comic Relief to pay a half-time co-ordinator and rent on a city-centre building for one year. From 2003 to 2008 funding to run the centre was obtained from the Big Lottery.

Refugee Forum is recognised by the City Council and other major organisations in this field as playing a key role in the City in supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers leading to their integration into our communities and assisting in the development of community cohesion.

### What we do.

#### ***Advice, Advocacy and Support***

We provide help with a range of issues during our drop-in advice sessions (3 afternoons per week). This is largely delivered by a number of trained volunteers with supervision from paid staff. A monthly average of 400 attends these sessions. In addition to this we also have 2 paid staff (funded by the City Council) who provide specialist advice (e.g. around housing issues and welfare rights, health, education, welfare benefits, Asylum Support).

We are part of Refugee Futures, the Nottingham City Council's Supporting People contract to assist new refugee tenants to set up and sustain their new homes.

As an organisation we are registered to Level 2, Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) enabling us to provide basic signposting and more complex referrals to people still within the asylum process.

An increasing number of people with Indefinite Leave to Remain request our assistance with Citizenship and passport applications.

### ***Anti Destitution Work***

The number of people who are being refused asylum has been at a constant for a number of years and increasing numbers of people in Nottingham are now homeless and destitute for prolonged periods of time. In addition, changes in the legal system have meant that more and more people become destitute earlier due to poor legal advice and a decreasing number of legal advisers.

The Forum carries out a significant amount of work around destitution, including the provision of food parcels and small amounts of cash to those whose asylum appeals have failed and are receiving no assistance from the State. This provision is made possible by donations from friends, supporters and members. In addition to this we have a number of volunteers and staff who work on a more holistic basis with clients who are homeless and destitute. This includes looking at other legal options, other support options, health needs, reducing social isolation, hot meals, forums to express themselves, shelter and ways of empowering vulnerable people.

### ***Refugee Women's Group***

Since March 2006, the Centre has provided a women and children only space on Friday mornings. This is designed to provide women refugees and asylum seekers, especially those with childcare responsibilities, somewhere to come and access services and meet people. We facilitate various activities each week, including arts and crafts, English speaking classes, food preparation and information sessions from external organisations. We aim to empower women from the community to help community cohesion, reduce social isolation and gain skills and we have supported the development of the Nottingham Refugee Women's Group organised by its members.

### ***Refugee Community Organisations***

Another of NNRF's roles is to work with newly emerging Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs), providing help and advice in developing their infrastructure and obtaining funding. We do this by regular individual & network meetings, and e-bulletins containing information about developments in relevant areas. We currently have links with 14 local RCOs.

### ***Social Activities***

Our Centre also serves as a place where people can meet each other and feel less isolated. Regular social events are held, open to all centre users, volunteers and host community.

We provide free Internet access 6 days a week.

Furthermore, we actively encourage RCOs to use the building for their meetings and social events.

### ***Volunteering.***

Asylum seekers and refugees are encouraged to volunteer at the Centre and are provided with a range of training opportunities. In addition we encourage members of the host community to volunteer and have had particular success in recruiting students from the universities. We currently have nearly 100 volunteers of whom 43 are refugees and asylum seekers who are gaining knowledge and skills whilst assisting others. This rich mix of volunteers fosters mutual understanding and has resulted in many friendships between local people and refugees.

### ***Education***

ESOL (English language) with Citizenship, are run 6 times a week, 2 of which are for women with children for whom a creche is provided. IT and Driving Test theory courses have also been held.

### ***Legal Advice and Signposting***

We are registered at Level 1 with the Office of Immigration Services' Commissioner and have trained a group of volunteers to provide basic guidance to asylum seekers who are experiencing difficulties with their cases and with Citizenship matters.

### ***Work outside the Centre***

Staff and volunteers are involved in raising awareness and providing training for a number of organisations on the asylum process and problems faced by asylum seekers and refugees – and their rights to services. We also advocate on behalf of these groups, take part in consultations with service providers and are presented on a wide range of relevant forums. We take up issues affecting our users at both local and national levels and work with other campaigning organisations to improve Human Rights observance.

Forum supporters are involved in national and local campaigns in support of individuals and groups of asylum seekers.

### ***Demand for NNRF's work***

There are currently approximately 900 asylum seekers in receipt of UKBA financial support living in Nottingham and an estimated 5000 refugees recently settled in the City. An unknown number of refused asylum seekers without support – some of whom may be in the process of having their cases re-opened – are also living in the City.

The demand for our service is ever increasing. On average, between 300 and 350 people use the centre each week for assistance, support or as a meeting place. Of these, we see approximately 90-110 people during the drop in advice sessions. Others come for appointments throughout the week with advisers and support workers.

In addition to this we provide support to 30-40 people through our anti-destitution group on Saturday mornings.

### ***Why NNRF's work is needed***

The support we provide for these people is essential. They have fled to the UK from over 40 different countries, many after suffering persecution, imprisonment, effects of war or displacement. Most have had to leave families behind. After arrival in the UK, anxieties caused by the asylum process can exacerbate their trauma. Lack of English language and ignorance of UK life and customs can add to feelings of isolation and disempowerment. Most do not as yet have the benefit of having their own communities to support them, and regularly meet hostility from the host community. Many are living on basic benefits, asylum support or are destitute, barred from working – or finding it difficult to enter the job market, and so form one of the poorest and most deprived sections within British society.

Refugees and asylum seekers are often marginalized and discriminated against within British culture and its institutions. We work both with them and external organisations to bridge this gap and ensure that they are able to access services and lead full and productive lives.

### ***What we have achieved so far***

- Built up a reputation of trust amongst asylum seekers and refugees.
- Since 2003 assisted well over individuals and heads of families, with an average of 10 new people each week.
- Through partnership working, built valuable relationships with over 100 relevant organisations that also help this client group. Both statutory and voluntary sector organisations in the City rely on our frontline knowledge to inform their actions.
- A team of committed staff, volunteers, both refugees and local people and a Management Committee of 15 of whom 5 are refugees.
- Recruited and trained more than 350 host community and over 100 refugees and asylum

seekers as volunteers, fostering supportive relationships and mutual understanding.

- A supporting membership of 340 individuals and 60 local organisations,
- Won contracts and grants from Nottingham City Council to provide a One Stop Shop Advice Service, Benefits Advice and Refugee Tenant Support. And, as part of a consortium, a new Supporting People contract.
- Facilitated the development of Nottingham Refugee Women's Group, now run by refugee women who provide support for each other.
- Provided advice and support to emerging RCOs.
- Consistently defended the Human Rights of asylum seekers and taken part in national campaigns for ESOL provision, against detention of children and for more humane treatment of those who have been refused.