

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2009

Refugee Action

(limited by guarantee)

Company no. 1593454

Registered charity no. 283660



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Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 31 March 2009

Trustees Julia Meiklejohn (Chair)
Susan Cueva
Mino Jalali
Colin Hodgetts
Chris Randall
Sheila Fox
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Andy Gregg
Jeremy Lester (Honorary Treasurer)

Company Registered Number 1593454

Charity Registered Number 283660

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Chief Executive and Secretary Sandy Buchan

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Refugee Action is an independent, national charity working to enable refugees to build new lives in the UK. We provide practical emergency support for newly arrived asylum seekers and long-term commitment to their settlement. As one of the country's leading agencies in the field, Refugee Action has 28 years' experience in pioneering innovative work in partnership with refugees.

Message from the Chair for the year ended 31 March 2009

I am proud to be Chair of Trustees of Refugee Action. The staff continued to deliver an outstanding service to refugee communities and individuals alongside formulating and implementing new projects. We remain a flexible organisation that aims to respond to changing needs and to changing government policies. Working with the staff the Trustees give generously of their skills, their ideas and time as do the many other volunteers.

In 2008-9, Refugee Action expanded its services providing advice to asylum seekers and refugees. For example we started the Refugee Integration and Employment Service in the North West, South West and South Central regions on 1st October 2008. By the end of March, this service had helped 700 refugees, each with individual personal integration plans involving mentoring and advice on housing and employment.

We also expanded our Gateway Programme in Greater Manchester, which helped resettle 200 refugees mainly from Ethiopia and Iraq. This built on constructive partnerships between Refugee Action, local authorities and the Home Office.

The extra resources which the Home Office put into these programmes are already showing positive outcomes in terms of the personal support they have given individuals and their families. They have been given a real opportunity to build their new lives and become active members of their communities.

As an important part of our work Refugee Action continues to argue that if the government could find similar resources to fund legal and welfare advice in the early stages of the asylum procedure, this would be the best way to tackle the problems that arise around fair determination and the treatment of asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected.

In line with this idea, we have begun to discuss with the Home Office ways of providing more continuous, one-to-one advice to individuals throughout the asylum determination process. We believe that by cutting back on the number of transitions and erroneous decisions in the way the determination process is currently run, such improvements could pay for themselves as well as delivering a fairer system. We hope the Home Office will take up our suggestions. We trust that the Home Office will listen to our argument and be able to respond positively in the year 2009-2010.



Julia Meiklejohn
Chair

Trustees' report

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law, submit their annual report and the financial statements of Refugee Action for the year ended 31 March 2009. The Trustees confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the Charity comply with current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP 2005).

Public benefit of Refugee Action's work

When planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. Our work is focused on improving the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. By providing advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers our work is of public benefit both by supporting those individuals, relieving their poverty and distress, and by reducing the strain on other community and statutory organisations.

The awareness-raising sessions and training that we provide to community groups, statutory organisations and voluntary organisations also have wider ramifications for the public benefit by improving public understanding of why refugees and asylum seekers come to this country, their rights while here and their potential contribution to the UK. This in turn reduces hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees and improves understanding between different communities.

Refugee Action carries out some of its work through partnership with other refugee agencies, community groups, statutory and non-statutory agencies. We take an active part in a number of partnerships such as the Inter-Agency Partnership, Refugee Week and the Still Human Still Here Coalition.

Vision, purpose, values and aims

Refugee Action exists to enable refugees to build new lives, through advice and information, community development, enhancing opportunity, and campaigning for refugee rights.

Our vision

We want a society in which refugees are welcome, respected and safe, and in which they can achieve their full potential.

Our values

All our work must be guided by the aspirations and needs of refugees, and their empowerment.

We believe that successful settlement is best achieved via organised refugee communities in creative partnerships with the wider society.

We must facilitate partnerships with refugees and with wider groups in carrying out our work, and we will do this in a creative and non-competitive way.

Trustees' report

We must seek to advance refugee rights through innovation and leadership, and through delivering high quality service and evaluation.

Our role must be to provide additional services, which refugee communities or other voluntary or statutory services, cannot provide as well as or better than ourselves.

We must enjoy the diversity of our staff and stakeholders, and promote a culture in which everyone can express their potential.

Aims 2007 to 2010

Refugee Action operates on a three-year planning basis. 2008/09 is the second year.

Our aims are to:

- 1 Ensure that refugees and asylum seekers know their rights, responsibilities and the opportunities and choices available to them.
For example we will provide:
 - excellent reception and orientation services
 - accurate, high quality advice and information
 - specialist services to meet the needs of more vulnerable clients
 - client-centred advocacy and support services.

- 2 Increase and enhance opportunities and choice for refugees and asylum seekers
For example we will:
 - work with other service providers, practitioners and policy makers to increase access to services such as health, education and employment
 - build bridges between refugees, asylum seekers and other service providers
 - work with refugees and asylum seekers to build their confidence and ability, so that they can make the best use of the opportunities and choices available to them
 - work to reduce prejudice and racism, and to raise awareness about refugees and asylum.

- 3 Promote the development of refugee communities to enable them to be active participants in wider society
For example we will:
 - bring refugees and asylum seekers and other people in their neighbourhoods into creative and constructive relationships with each other
 - support refugee-led groups and others to develop new services for refugee communities
 - support refugees in engaging (individually and collectively) with local, regional and national forums, networks and groups.

- 4 Raise awareness of refugee issues, influence policy and campaign for refugee rights.
For example we will:

- engage with policy makers to both identify issues and propose practical knowledge-based solutions, as well as contributing to the debates and consultations initiated by policy makers
 - raise public awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers
 - campaign for improved refugee rights
 - raise Refugee Action's profile as a voice for refugees.
- 5 Ensure the highest quality organisational policies and practices, as befits a refugee agency.
- For example we will ensure:
- regular reviews and updates of policy and practices
 - excellent financial management
 - excellent human resource practice and policy with opportunities for staff training and development.
 - the maximum number of frontline staff to relative to support staff
 - maximum efficiency, quality and effectiveness in meeting the needs and aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers within a multicultural society
 - a diverse funding base that enables Refugee Action to meet its aims
 - excellent and clear reporting on achievements.

Key Priorities for 2007 to 2010

By 2010 we will have:

- responded effectively to the key concerns of our clients, in particular those of racial harassment and abuse, and relating to access to services such as legal advice, health, and employment
- continued to work with refugees and asylum seekers as our core client group. We may work with other migrant groups where there are clear human rights abuses and/or forced or highly exploitative migration (eg, trafficked women). We do not intend to include the wider migrant population within our work because we do not wish to weaken our voice for refugees and asylum seekers
- improved the quality and reach of our direct services
- increased legal provision through partnerships rather than direct provision
- developed counselling for people who have a choice about return
- explored and developed models of support, advice and counselling for people who are having to face up to the fact that their appeal rights are exhausted and that their future in the UK is uncertain
- expanded our client base to include unaccompanied minors aged between 15 and 18 years. This will largely be achieved via needs-led regional planning and fundraising
- continued to build on our successes and strengths, for example our culture of needs-led services, quality of services, client care, service development, partnerships, awareness raising, and specialist projects for more vulnerable groups/individuals; and

we will have ensured that we have retained our ability to respond flexibly and quickly to environmental change

- continued to develop good practice in working with and supporting volunteers and interpreters
- increased our capacity to research, influence policy and campaign for refugee rights, as well as increasing our pro-active contribution to policy formation. Alongside these activities, we will have continued to comment upon, influence and challenge policy development and implementation
- raised our public profile. This will be achieved through a variety of different channels. We will have increased our capacity to campaign, and influence and raise public awareness. We will deepen our regional and national relationships, hold regional and national events, improve our use of IT for information and service delivery, mount donor campaigns, and improve our publicity materials. Our reputation and credibility will depend above all on the quality of the actual services we provide, and the difference we make for refugees and asylum seekers
- strengthened our ability/capacity to fundraise regionally for specialist projects
- diversified our funding to increase our independence and flexibility and to support core functions that cannot be funded from other sources
- expanded and developed professional training for external agencies, and charged for this service where it is ethical and appropriate to do so. This work should be financially self-supporting and, whilst unlikely to achieve a profit, it has great potential to improve the services provided and the opportunities available to refugees
- developed smaller regions/teams as appropriate e.g. Leeds, Birmingham, and Derby
- achieved and demonstrated excellent 'value for money', ensuring that we have the right balance between front line and support staff, and are able to maintain the cultural aspects of Refugee Action valued by staff, as well as ensuring we have developmental capacity and the ability to win competitive tenders
- increased our use of IT for information, communication and service delivery
- developed volunteering within the organisation to ensure we are maximising the skills and abilities of our volunteers to improve and add value to our services
- strengthened the diversity of the agency: this may involve formalising training opportunities for refugees
- moved to an integrated structure for service delivery, to increase value for money and more holistic integrated service delivery.

This report sets out our 2008/09 achievements as they relate to our aims and key priorities above and showing the public benefit of our work.

Objects and constitution

The objects of the Charity are 'the relief of persons who have become displaced persons or refugees from the country of their origin or domicile by reason of hostilities, persecution, oppression, discrimination, natural disaster or other like causes, and their families and dependants who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress.' The Charity is governed by its memorandum and articles of association.

Governance

Refugee Action's Trustees are responsible for the overall management of the Charity. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting, or, where vacancies arise, can be appointed by the Board of Trustees. Trustees are chosen for their commitment to refugees, and for expertise (including life experience as refugees), which may be useful in governing the Charity. The Trustees who served during the year, and who are still serving, are shown on page 3.

Biographical details of Trustees are on our website: www.refugee-action.org.uk.

The Trustees set and oversee the policies and the three-year and annual plan of Refugee Action, oversee its financial affairs, and supervise the work of the salaried Chief Executive in carrying out these policies and plans.

All Trustees are unpaid and are offered an induction programme that includes visits to our advice and community development teams and to Head Office and hold an annual away day with an experienced voluntary sector consultant at which the responsibilities, the future programmes and the risks and challenges facing the charity and its trustees are discussed. Details of trustee expenses and related transactions are disclosed in note 4 of the accounts.

The Chief Executive is appointed by the Trustees and is accountable to them for managing the agency as a whole. He is in turn advised by a Senior Management Team (SMT), whose members in 2008/09 were:

Sandy Buchan, Chief Executive
Lyn Adams, Assistant to Chief Executive
David Garratt, Director of Operations
Nicola Parker, Human Resources Manager
Jill Roberts, Strategic Director
Yemane Tsegai, Finance Director

Structure and main activities

At the start of this financial year, we completed the full integration of all our services at a regional and national level which was one of our Key Priorities. The benefits of this are a single point of contact for each client in each regional office and the joining up of all our policy practice and activities across the range of services.

All of our advice work and projects seek to help people regardless of race, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability, age, or gender.

Advice and support for refugees and asylum seekers

Our advice work fits with all five of our specified Aims and a large number of the Key Priorities.

Funded by the Home Office, the **One Stop Services**, based in the North West, South West, East Midlands and South Central received 56,399 client contacts and of these 32,479 were provided with more in-depth advice and support. The top concerns of clients related to destitution, support arrangements, reporting and access to a solicitor. The top four countries of origin were Iran, Iraq, Zimbabwe and China.

A total of 8,564 clients presented as destitute and we continued to develop two new models of service provision to help refugees in this situation as well as providing emergency funds and food, either directly or through partner agencies, to help alleviate some of the suffering.

On October 1st 2008 we started our **Refugee Integration and Employment Service** in the North West, South West and South Central regions. This is a UK Borders Agency (UKBA)-funded programme which offers intensive caseworker support for new refugees for up to a year, focused on immediate integration needs and employment. In the first six months of the service we have carried out needs assessments and begun in-depth work with 697 new refugees. Key client needs include housing, health, re-qualification and access to English Language support.

The service includes referral to an employment expert and, where appropriate, a host community volunteer mentor, often from a profession in which the refugee had experience or interest. At the end of March 2009, 144 refugees were working with our employment experts and 29 had been referred to a volunteer mentor. The service as a whole aims to enable clients to live a full life in the UK, where possible undertaking employment which makes full use of the range of skills, experience and knowledge which refugees bring to the UK. RIES has greatly increased the reach of our services and is building new skills across the agency.

Paul, asylum seeker from Zimbabwe, received advice from Refugee Action's One Stop asylum advice service in Nottingham:

"Our situation was desperate. I went to Refugee Action. The people there, they mean a lot to me. I do respect them. They helped me and have made me the man that I am today. They brought back my smiles.

"We were stopping with a friend - nine of us in one house. It was so hard for me as I couldn't work and I had been refused asylum. We had no support. The children were enrolled in school but couldn't have access to school dinners or anything. Refugee Action applied to Section 4 for us for support. They also referred us to the Refugee Legal Centre to make a fresh claim for us."

In Liverpool, our **Wraparound Service** provided an expanded service, supporting newly arrived asylum seekers to access the limited benefits and housing to which they are entitled, and acted as an independent advocate for them. The service is based in initial accommodation provided by Liverpool City Council and Metropolitan Resources and briefs clients about their rights and responsibilities, the asylum process and aspects of life within the UK. In 2008/2009 the Wraparound service gave 7,036 face-to-face sessions, comprising 3,885 briefings, 2,129 NASS 1 forms completed and 1,082 sessions of ongoing advice.

Voluntary return

Refugee Action's **Choices** service continued to provide advice and information to people considering voluntary return to their country of origin. Our Choices caseworkers help people make informed choices about returning home by providing impartial advice and information in a confidential and non-pressurised environment.

Funded by the International Organisation for Migration (through the European Return Fund and the UKBA,) there were over 7,000 enquiries from clients and agencies about voluntary return during the year. The top countries of origin among our clients accessing Choices were Iraq and Iran. Our clients are typically young men at the end of the asylum process. We have seen a lot of particularly vulnerable people this year. This included older people with severe health problems, female headed households with domestic violence issues present, and many experiencing the psychological effects of being destitute.

Outreach information sessions and awareness-raising about voluntary return is a core part of our work. Choices staff gave 336 information sessions/outreach presentations. We delivered these sessions to a range of stakeholders such as regional refugee forums, refugee community organisations, and local support groups working with asylum seekers and refugees.

Helping refugees build new lives

Refugee Action's **Gateway Protection Programme** team (funded by the Home Office) has worked with around 200 refugees mainly from Ethiopia and Iraq over the past year who have been brought to the UK under the UNHCR Humanitarian Resettlement Programme across six local authority areas in the Greater Manchester region.

Plans to expand the scheme further in 2009/10 include increasing the numbers of local authorities participating to eight, as well as increasing the overall numbers resettled to the region to between 400-600 (approximately two thirds of UKBA's national target).

Key achievements this year have been: negotiating the expanded programme, working with complex cases (including women at risk, high needs medical cases), working across cultural client groups (Ethiopian and Iraqi cases), developing pre-arrival information for refugees with UKBA/IOM, building the capacity of clients through a developmental

approach, eg, ESOL classes, Iraqi Women's project.

In addition to our Home Office-funded activities many of our offices provide additional, specialist projects for refugees and asylum seekers, helping them to gain the support they need to manage their lives.

Our five-year **Basis** project completed its first year. The Basis project is a partnership with The Refugee Council funded by The Big Lottery Fund to provide a new, England-wide service giving one-to-one support to hundreds of refugee community organisations (RCOs) to help them manage, develop and sustain their work. The Basis Project is the only national specialist project to support RCOs in all the English regions.

Since January 2008 the Refugee Action Basis team supported 71 RCOs, giving structured support to identify their aims and needs and devise plans to achieve those aims. 65 RCOs received tailored training on various elements of good governance and 58 RCOs received training in financial management, project management or fundraising, including seminars with funders or second tier organisations. The RCOs are supported by Basis workers to work in partnerships within their communities. For example one RCO in a deprived area of Manchester is delivering French classes for Francophone refugee children and children from the host community, which is bringing the communities together and improving understanding.

Our **Move on Advocacy project** in Bristol (funded this year by Quartet Community Foundation and unrestricted income) came to an end. This has been a dynamic project, advising and supporting refugees newly given Leave to Remain using volunteer mentors trained and supported by project co-ordinators. This year, we worked on transferring the Move on project systems, policies and practices to fit with the new Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) being implemented by Refugee Action in Bristol and started RIES volunteer recruitment and training.

In Manchester, **the Horizons project**, funded by the government's GoldStar programme for exemplary volunteering projects, provided quality volunteer placements for 40 refugees (58 per cent male/42 per cent female) in a wide range of work placements. It also provided mentoring and personal development courses to build confidence and skills and gave 'Refugees into Volunteering training' to 71 local organisations.

A telephone survey found that 68 per cent of clients rated their volunteer experience as very good and 32 per cent as good. At least 18 per cent of volunteers have gone on to get employment and 25 per cent have gone on to access training.

During the year GoldStar funding ended and funding was secured from the Big Lottery Fund's BASIS programme to focus on building the capacity of volunteer centres to recruit and support more refugees and asylum seekers.

The Salford Community Integration Project, funded from 2006 to 2009 by The Big Lottery Fund, reached a total of 354 refugees, 1,419 members of the wider community and 53 organisations providing a very tangible public benefit in the area. It ran a large number of awareness raising training, hate crime prevention sessions and community events bringing asylum seekers and refugees together with the host community, and by encouraging the reporting of racial harassment. Successful activities have included: mums and toddlers groups, drama projects, youth groups and a 'welcome to new arrivals' project by one residents' group.

We focused our approach on community cohesion and integration at a street/ neighbourhood level with successful results, which enabled the project to now continue until 2011, thanks to the Migrant Impact Fund from the Government Office North West. The project meets our Key Priority of 'responding effectively to the key concerns of clients, in particular those of racial harassment and abuse'. The public benefit of this in raising awareness and understanding of asylum issues and improving relationships in communities is something we are committed to working on.

"We had lots of problems where we lived. Youths threw stones through our windows at least 15 times. This would happen Friday, Saturday and Sunday and they would smash the windows. We had to change the glass 11 times. We were scared and one day glass hit my mum's leg. I called the police and they came and the ambulance did as well. The people were never caught.

"We went to the One Stop Shop at Refugee Action and while there we met Mathilde from the Prevention of Racial Harassment Project. With her, we arranged a new cultural group in our area, and as asylum seekers we could then support each other. I became the chairman as I was good at English. We were all from different countries. Every week lots of people would come together from different communities to get support and the police came to talk to us."

The **Women's Development Project**, in Leicester and Nottingham, supported by a variety of funders this year including the Big Lottery Fund, Comic Relief, the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children and the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, came to an end this July.

This three year project worked in partnership with other organisations to create a number of safe spaces for refugee and asylum-seeking women and children to meet and access support. The project provided support to 145 women this year and, over the life of the project, 350 children under five years old also benefited.

When the project ended, we piloted a Refugee Action-hosted, volunteer run, **Women's Friendship Group (WFG)** in Nottingham at the request of the women involved and the existing volunteers from July 2008. This focused particularly on art, working with local arts groups and Loughborough University to produce an exhibition 'A Sense of Belonging'. From September 2008 Castle College provided free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to the WFG with a crèche provided by New College Nottingham and funded by the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children. The project is also supported by the Vine community centre.

In September, Leicester's **Time Together** scheme which started in October 2005, came to an end. The project, funded by TimeBank, matched mentors from the local community with refugees. It helped refugee mentees integrate and mentors to make new friends, learn about other cultures and develop new skills. During the project, 78 mentees found a mentor and 49 of those matches lasted for more than 10 months.

Many of the mentees found the scheme really helpful and as a result of it:

37 mentees found volunteering placements.

30 mentees found employment. Mentors helped many of them with applications or interview preparation.

15 mentees successfully passed the British citizenship test.

10 mentees passed their driving test.

12 mentees got places at local universities.

Yollande a mentee from the Democratic Republic of Congo:

"Since I met my mentor, I am able to do a lot of things on my own; I don't have to wait for my children to translate for me. I am able now to make or cancel doctor appointments. I can now use the washing machine properly, which I couldn't do before."

For mentors there were also many things to learn and experience:-

Sue was a mentor for 10 months. She said: "It has re-ignited my belief in 'community'... we are so materially lucky in UK and should have the grace to realise this. But equally it has highlighted to me the isolation of the UK society when compared to other cultures where friends and family are so important..."

I certainly look at things differently having been a mentor -it has helped me to achieve something that I have been trying to do - re-focus on the basics in life."

Supporting young people

In Liverpool, **The Refugee Parent Project** was funded by Liverpool City Council (Sure Start) and the Dept for Education and Science Parenting Fund (from September 08-March 2009) to offer services to families with children under five years and over five years respectively. This included advocacy and support, access to services, information on Rights and Entitlements, positive activities and training for Sure Start Children's Centres. The project held over 100 referrals and had daily contact with families and partner agencies across a wide range of services.

Peers, Pride or Prejudice ran from June 2007-May 2009, supported by the Camelot Foundation and The City of Liverpool, bringing together young asylum seekers and young people from the host community – a project with considerable public benefit in terms of community cohesion, as well as individual benefit in terms of personal support to the young asylum seekers themselves. The project explored prejudice from the young people's point of view and culminated in a documentary DVD and shared community project which questioned and combatted prejudice. The learning from this was taken forward by the Get Connected project and will continue to inform our youth work as we develop future projects.

The Get Connected project, funded by BBC Children in Need, started in June 2006 and ran to May 2009. It delivered intensive advocacy support to more than 150 15-18 year old unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in Liverpool. It has made in-roads into securing improvements in the delivery of essential services through individual and group advocacy and through attendance at operational and strategic forums.

We strengthened existing partnerships with local, youth-connected organisations, consolidated on previous work and enabled many young people to gain opportunities, confidence and security as they build new lives in the city. Extensive efforts are being made to secure funding to enable the continuation of this work.

Changing attitudes, improving lives

Our Communications and training work fits directly with Aim 4 in our current plan, which is to 'raise awareness of refugee issues, influence policy and campaign for refugee rights' and indirectly with all our other aims. It also fits in with a large number of our Key Priorities, particularly those of raising our public profile and developing professional training and volunteering.

The Communications team leads the agency's campaigns to secure the rights of refugees, to raise public awareness about issues affecting refugees and to lobby for change. Our Communications work fits with aims 3 and 4 in our three-year plan.

In the media

Refugee Action continued to provide a proactive press office service, promoting the work and views of the agency and to better inform public debate on asylum. We continued to work with journalists to place the voices of refugees at the centre of mainstream debate, gaining coverage in national media such as *The Guardian* and in local media, telling the stories of refugees and asylum seekers in their regions. We also worked with scriptwriters on investigative programmes like *Silent Witness*.

Issues we publicised during the year include the inhumanity and ineffectiveness of the policy of destitution, the danger posed to Zimbabwean returnees, restrictions on access to healthcare for refused asylum seekers, the success of the Gateway Protection Programme, the work of our Refugee Awareness Project, and publicity for nationwide events during Refugee Week.

We continued to harness the voices of asylum seekers, refugees and British volunteers who wished to speak out in the local and national media. For example, *Society Guardian* covered the success of our Refugee Awareness Project from the perspective of one of our volunteers.

We completed a powerful awareness-raising DVD through which our clients told their stories about why they fled and their experiences in the UK. This film is now being used throughout our agency for external training and campaigning, and by other agencies, in training and awareness-raising.

Campaigning

For the last year our campaigning work has continued to focus on aiming to end destitution among those who have been refused asylum in the UK, this met the Key Priority we had set to 'increase our capacity to research, influence and campaign for refugee rights, as well as increasing our pro-active contribution to policy formation'.

Our work has been funded by The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the LankellyChase Foundation, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and the Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust.

We have continued to work as part of the Asylum Support Partnership to compile data on destitute clients across the sector, and contributed to a report *The Second Destitution Tally* and recommendations for policy makers. We have also worked closely with the Still Human Still Here coalition, contributing to its policy group and co-ordinated lobbying and campaigning work.

Through an improved website, e-campaigning and social networking, we increased the number of campaign supporters from 2000 to 2,700 with 1,200 taking campaign actions, writing to or emailing their MP about destitution. We have also supported our regional offices in outreach and lobbying work, and have helped them to recruit campaign volunteers to increase their capacity.

We have endeavoured to increase the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers in our campaign by using asylum seeker spokespeople to tell their stories in the media and in our campaign materials.

Awareness-raising

Combating negative and misinformed attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers is something our Refugee Awareness Project (RAP) has sought to do in three locations – Nottingham, Bristol and Liverpool since July 2005, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and co-financed by the European Refugee Fund Phase II.

The project came to an end in December 2008. During the calendar year, volunteers and project staff delivered a total of 112 refugee awareness talks and workshops to 110 different groups. These involved 1,697 people, mainly concentrating on groups working with young people (49%), plus voluntary groups or groups using volunteers, other community groups and some statutory groups such as the police.

An inspiring and groundbreaking project, RAP changed attitudes among communities by training volunteer speakers to give lively awareness-raising sessions to community groups and providing them with eye-catching, informative materials. This work specifically related to our Key Priorities of raising our public profile. RAP workers coordinated regional and national events and used IT and striking visual materials very successfully for information delivery (see below).

The strategy of pairing up local and refugee or asylum seeker volunteers to run the sessions continued to prove extremely effective, helping to promote mutual understanding between individuals and communities. In the project's final year (which ran Jan to Dec 08) 65 volunteers worked on the project, 52 per cent of whom were refugees or asylum seekers. The volunteers were drawn from more than 25 different nationalities.

A bespoke RAP project website was developed: www.raproject.org.uk. Like the RAP printed materials, the website is written in a chatty and innovative style. The website went live during Refugee Week in June 2008 and will play an important role in disseminating good practice and lessons learnt from the project even after the project has ended, providing a long-standing public benefit. The site makes all our activities and resources readily available for use by other projects and organisations.

In 2008, more than 10,000 copies of *Mobiles, money and mayhem: the facts and fibs about asylum* and more than 6,000 copies of *Make your neighbourhood nicer: how to welcome refugees and asylum seekers in 11 easy steps* were distributed to people attending the sessions, at events and to other organisations on their request.

96 per cent of attendees at our sessions reported that they had become better informed about asylum issues by receiving new information in our workshops and talks.

Comments from attendees giving feedback after a RAP session:

"I sent your myth busting booklet to UKIP headquarters after hearing 2 or three UKIP campaigners talking complete nonsense about asylum seekers and economic migrants in the street."

"I found out that the stereotypes aren't true."

"I learnt not to be prejudiced against refugees as we don't know their situation. It's not their choice to come to the UK."

The Refugee Awareness Project supported an increased number of public events such as Asylum Dialogues, a powerful theatre production using the real words of asylum seekers and refugees. RAP also led the agency in transforming its communication with the public at festivals and key events such as Refugee Week, and in providing the agency with engaging, effective training materials which can be used by the whole agency.

Each of the volunteer teams on our Refugee Awareness Project based in Bristol, Nottingham and Liverpool was nominated for a Queen's Award for Volunteering last year. The project was also short-listed for the prestigious Institute of Community Cohesion/Barings Foundation Awards for Bridging Cultures.

Apart from through RAP, many of our offices offered **training** around the country to develop understanding of refugee and asylum issues among other agencies, such as health services, Citizens Advice Bureau and schools.

In Manchester, the **Refugee Realities training project**, funded by Bolton Community Homes and the Home Office, was extended to cover three new areas of Greater Manchester, training 1,760 people in 153 sessions. In addition to refugee awareness sessions, a range of new training packages were designed and delivered, including mental health, unaccompanied minors and awareness on female genital mutilation (FGM). The sessions promote better understanding of the realities of asylum and increase the capacity of voluntary, community, statutory and private organisations to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

Looking to the future

As we are at the end of the current planning cycle (2007-2010), our key priorities will be revised for a new 2011-2015 plan next year. We will also implement a new Client Feedback evaluation next year.

Changing environmental context

We are analysing current trends and planning for how they may affect us, so as to be able to ensure the best service for our client base. These include:

- A growth of the centre right (and in some countries, the extreme right), across Europe may have negative implications for immigration and asylum policies.
- The global recession which is already resulting in public spending cuts is likely to increase over the next decade, and could result in heightened refugee flows.
- A potential change in UK government by 2010 and likely cuts in government services.
- Re-tendering of all our current grants and contracts with UKBA scheduled for 2011.
- An increase in environmental refugees as climate change results in conflict over natural resources and increased political disruption.
- A growing debate over the treatment of asylum seekers whose cases have been rejected.
- The supply of legal advice for asylum seekers has been contracting sharply.

Given this context the following approaches are being pursued:

- We are already engaged in a dialogue with UKBA and our partner agencies on what the new services should look like to ensure the best outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers.
- We are discussing with the Home Office ways of improved treatment of asylum seekers, including rejected asylum seekers, through a more holistic process where they can have more consistent relationships with their advisors.
- It may be possible for Refugee Action to provide assistance through para-legal work to publicly funded providers of immigration advice.
- We are engaging with the Green Party and Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) in discussions about a better human rights framework for 'environmental refugees'.
- We are increasing our media profile to get across more accurate and positive narratives around refugees and asylum seekers.

Behind the scenes

Our administrative and organisational support worked to ensure the highest quality organisational policies and practices, as befits a refugee agency (Aim 5). We also met our Key Priorities to diversify our funding, to strengthen our ability to fundraise for specialist projects, to increase our use of IT for information, communication and service delivery, and to develop volunteering within the organisation.

People power

During 2008/09 Refugee Action expanded to 185 individual staff (excluding interpreters) mainly due to new service delivery contracts (RIES) across three regions. Human Resources supported this by co-ordinating the recruitment activity of 68 posts and welcomed 46 new members of staff through a revised organisational induction day. Of the successful candidates, 15 per cent were from a refugee background.

HR continued to keep abreast of changing legislation and best practice and following extensive face-to-face consultation with staff, amended our Contract of Employment and our Disciplinary Policy.

We also took part in a HR benchmarking survey across the voluntary sector (covering 20 per cent of all employed in the voluntary sector) and were able to conclude from this that our workforce was more diverse in terms of ethnicity than 95 per cent of survey participants, our staff turnover and absence levels were lower than our peers whilst our spend per head on training was greater.

We continued to support staff development by organising a programme of training courses as well as co-chairing the staff group who plan the annual Staff Conference. Following consultation with staff, we were also pleased to be able to expand the services offered by our Employee Assistance Programme which now include counselling, phone advice and access to on-line information.

Once again, **volunteers** have been central to our work supporting clients, and an enormous asset to the agency as a whole, and increasingly, to the cities and areas where we work. Volunteers provide a range of services at Refugee Action from being a speaker, providing administrative support, becoming volunteer 'advocates' for refugees, or assisting caseworkers seeing clients in Asylum Advice.

Most volunteers give, on average, half a day a week. By the end of 2008/09 we had 180-200 volunteers, around 47 per cent of whom were refugees or asylum seekers.

Volunteering is an excellent pathway into work with Refugee Action and other organisations. Many of Refugee Action's current employees used to volunteer for Refugee Action.

We held our national volunteer event which provided us with the opportunity to celebrate the contribution of volunteers, provide training and for the agency to receive feedback from volunteers directly.

We scoped and fundraised for a national volunteer coordinator and we are working on accredited training of volunteers.

Maintaining financial independence

2008/09 was the second year of our three-year fundraising strategy to 'build a diverse funding base to increase our independence and flexibility' as stated in our Key Priorities. By communicating with supporters we also broadened their understanding of refugee issues.

We engaged our committed, individual supporters by demonstrating what their donations achieved through regular project updates, e-bulletins and newsletters. We focused on promoting regular giving and continued to invest in attracting new supporters via press advertising and at events. We recruited 193 new donors, encouraged 120 new regular gifts and raised £164,673 from individuals including £25,610 through gift aid.

We supported our first team of runners in the 5km Women's Challenge in September 2008. Our supporters also inspired each other to take on some brilliant fundraising events; from cycling the length of the country to organising art exhibitions. They raised £4,268.

We worked in partnership with companies like LUSH, Marie Claire and Frank Communications to promote refugee issues to their customers and raised £1,177.

We maintained strong relationships with our funders, who financed some of our most innovative projects like the Destitution Campaign, the Women's Development Project and the Refugee Awareness Project. We raised £91,266 from trust funders and £64,828 from statutory sources (while Area Managers and staff raised further income).

Finance and IT

The Finance and IT departments continued to support the operational work of the charity, meeting Refugee Action's strategic aim 5 – 'to ensure the highest quality organisational policies and practice as befits a refugee agency'. Through the use and deployment of appropriate, sound, robust and future proof technologies, we have leverage on performance, efficiency and cost.

Emergency readiness

Our emergency readiness programme fits in with Aim 1 in our three-year plan 'to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers know their rights, responsibilities and the opportunities and choices available to them.'

Refugee Action maintains emergency readiness in case of future short-notice large-scale arrivals, such as occurred with the Bosnians in 1993-97, the Kosovars in 1999, and the Montserratians in 1997-98.

Financial Review

For the year ended 31 March 2009 the charity achieved an unrestricted surplus of £128k (2008: £139k). However, as there was a deficit on restricted funds of £566k (2008: £1.0m) the overall result for the financial year was a deficit of £438k (2008: £910k). Details of the state of the charity's reserves are given in the Reserves Policy section below.

Incoming resources

The charity's incoming resources from continuing activities for the year ended 31 March 2009 increased to £7.8m (2008: £6.8m).

From the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) we received grant funding of £5.2m (2008: £5.9m). During the financial year the charity won a contract to deliver Refugee Integration & Employment Services (RIES) and received contract funding of £1.1m from UKBA.

The balance of the income for the year ended 31 March 2009 included grants and donations £1.3m (2008: £1.3m), and investment income of £142k (2008: £260k).

Resources expended

The charity's total resources expended for the year ended 31 March 2009 increased to £8.2m (2008: £7.3m). Out of this, the direct cost of providing services to our clients was £7.9 million (2008: £7.0m).

Staff costs for the year ended 31 March 2009 were £5.9m and accounted for 72 per cent of total costs (2008: £5.4m).

The cost of generating voluntary income was £259k for the year ended 31 March 2009 (2008: £248k).

The cost of providing governance for the charity was £53k for 2009, accounting for 0.7 per cent of total costs (2008: £52k).

Investment policy

The Trustees consider the most appropriate policy is for surplus funds to be held on bank deposit.

Reserves policy

Having considered the likely expenditure and future levels of income of Refugee Action, the Trustees have agreed the following policy at 2009:

Restricted funds are those subject to specific restrictions imposed by funders.

The Trustees, as explained in note 11 to the financial statements, have established designated funds for the following purposes:

- 1 To ensure that the Charity has the resources to meet committed expenditure which is either definite (such as commitments under premises leases), or reasonably

foreseeable (such as commitments to meet staff sickness and maternity leave obligations).

- 2 To pay for important work which is otherwise unfunded - including money raised from the Guardian's 2001 Christmas appeal, which is being used to pay for work with raising awareness, and money set aside to combat destitution amongst the Charity's clients.
- 3 To provide matching funds where funders are not prepared to meet the full cost of important projects.

The General Fund is comprised of funds that represent accumulated surpluses and deficits in the Statement of Financial Activities after transfers to and from the Designated Funds. The funds are available for use at the discretion of Trustees to further expand the current activities of Refugee Action, or may be used on one-off projects.

Currently a high level of Refugee Action's funding comes from UKBA, and it is clear that the total loss or a significant reduction of such funding is the biggest threat for the agency. Given this fact, the Trustees consider that funds should be retained in the General Fund to ensure, in the event of the loss of UKBA funding, up to two years of budgeted revenue expenditure on the staff necessary to carry out the following strategic activities of the Charity:

- 1 Advice to the most vulnerable clients.
- 2 Providing models of good practice.
- 3 Research and policy formation.
- 4 Managing, planning and fundraising.

The annual revenue budget of the Charity's staff needed to carry out those roles is estimated to be around £799k. The year-end balance in the General Fund, amounting to £1.5m, is currently somewhat below twice the annual budget of such staff.

The Charity produces quarterly accounts, thereby allowing the Trustees to monitor the Reserves Policy on a regular basis. The policy will be reviewed annually.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Charity, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Risks are identified under the four headings suggested by the Charity Commission: Governance and Management; Operational; Financial; and Operational/External Environment. There is greater clarity around the level of risk, in terms of likelihood and impact, together with measures that have been taken to mitigate risk, further action required, and the monitoring process.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company and charity law applicable to Charities in England/Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity, and enable them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdiction.

The Trustees have confirmed that, so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charity's auditors are unaware, and that they have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

A resolution proposing that Gotham Erskine LLP be re-appointed as auditors of the Charity will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

This report was approved by the Trustees on Friday 9 October 2009 and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Meiklejohn', written in a cursive style.

Julia Meiklejohn

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF

REFUGEE ACTION (Company reg. no. 1593454)

We have audited the financial statements of Refugee Action for the year ended 31 March 2009, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the Charity's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 235 of the Companies Act 1985. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND AUDITORS

As described in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities the Trustees (who are also the directors of Refugee Action for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We report to you whether in our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the Charity has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and transactions is not disclosed.

We read the Trustees' Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

BASIS OF AUDIT OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Charity's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

OPINION

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice of the state of the Charity's affairs as at 31 March 2009, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, in the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985; and
- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

Gotham Erskine LLP
Chartered Accountants
& Registered Auditors
Friendly House
52 - 58 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4NJ



9 October 2009

REFUGEE ACTION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(Incorporating income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 March 2009

	Notes	Restricted funds £'000	Unrestricted funds £'000	Total 2009 £'000	Total 2008 £'000
INCOMING RESOURCES					
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds:</i>					
Voluntary income	2	1,049	236	1,285	1,307
Investment income - interest receivable		9	133	142	260
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3	4,591	1,740	6,331	5,241
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CONTINUING ACTIVITIES		5,649	2,109	7,758	6,808
<i>Incoming resources from discontinued activities:</i>					
Asylum Advice, client costs		-	-	-	(1,030)
Home Office-funded community development programme		-	-	-	634
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		5,649	2,109	7,758	6,412
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
<i>Costs of generating funds:</i>					
Costs of generating voluntary income		-	259	259	248
<i>Charitable expenditure:</i>					
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Refugee Integration and Employment Service		-	1,098	1,098	-
Asylum advice and community development services		6,031	435	6,466	6,274
Communications		9	158	167	127
Governance costs		22	31	53	52
RESOURCES EXPENDED ON CONTINUING ACTIVITIES		6,062	1,981	8,043	6,701
<i>Charitable expenditure from discontinued activities:</i>					
Home Office-funded community development programme		153	-	153	621
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	5	6,215	1,981	8,196	7,322
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(566)	128	(438)	(910)
TOTAL FUNDS AT START OF YEAR		1,483	2,570	4,053	4,963
TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR		917	2,698	3,615	4,053

NOTE

Details of movements in restricted funds are given in Note 12.

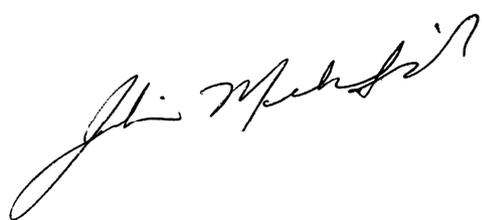
The notes on pages 28 to 40 form part of these financial statements

REFUGEE ACTION
(A company limited by guarantee)

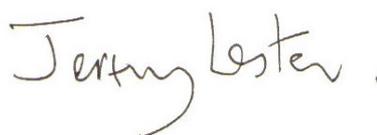
BALANCE SHEET
As at 31 March 2009

	Note	2009 £'000	2009 £'000	2008 £'000	2008 £'000
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	8		108		122
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	1,737		736	
Cash at bank and in hand		3,910		4,810	
		<u>5,647</u>		<u>5,546</u>	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>2,140</u>		<u>1,615</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>3,507</u>		<u>3,931</u>
NET ASSETS/TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	12		<u><u>3,615</u></u>		<u><u>4,053</u></u>
CHARITY FUNDS					
Restricted funds	12		917		1,483
Unrestricted funds:					
General Fund	12		1,527		1,446
Designated funds	12		1,171		1,124
			<u>3,615</u>		<u>4,053</u>

The financial statements were approved, and authorised for issue, by the Trustees on 9 October 2009 and signed on their behalf by:



Julia Meiklejohn
Chair



Jeremy Lester
Treasurer

The notes on pages 28 to 40 form part of these financial statements

REFUGEE ACTION

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

For the year ended 31 March 2009

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Net cash flow from operating activities (see below)	(987)	(555)
Returns on investments (interest receivable)	142	260
Capital expenditure (purchase of tangible fixed assets)	(55)	(89)
INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH IN THE YEAR	(900)	(384)

RECONCILIATION OF NET CASH FLOW TO MOVEMENT IN CASH BALANCES

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Increase/(decrease) in cash for the year	(900)	(384)
Net cash balances at the start of the year	4,810	5,194
Net cash balances at the end of the year	3,910	4,810

NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	(438)	(910)
Return on investment - interest income	(142)	(260)
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	69	73
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(1,001)	365
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	525	177
NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATIONS	(987)	(555)

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (SORP 2005), the Companies Act 1985 and applicable accounting standards.

1.2 Company status

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. The members of the company are the Trustees named on page 2. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member.

1.3 Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objects of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income.

- Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of specific performance by the Charity, are recognised when the Charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the Charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in the accounts.
- Incoming resources from contracts and grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are recognised as the Charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

1.5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources. In particular office costs have been allocated on the basis of the number of staff working in offices on different functions. Support costs have been allocated on the basis described in Note 7.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities which are shown under Communications costs. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the Charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. Governance costs are those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

Furniture, fittings and equipment	-	5 years
Computer equipment	-	4 years

All fixed assets costing more than £500 are capitalised. Computer software costs are not capitalised.

1.7 Operating leases

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as incurred.

1.8 Pensions

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme (see Note 14) and the pension charge represents the amount payable by the Charity to the scheme - or to employees' individual pension schemes - in the year.

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

2. VOLUNTARY INCOME - GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	Restricted Funds £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Total 2009 £'000	Total 2008 £'000
Grants from government and other public authorities:				
DfES - Strengthening Families	-	-	-	71
DCFS - The Parenting Fund	70	-	70	59
Liverpool City Council	78	-	78	30
Manchester City Council	17	-	17	-
The Big Lottery Fund:				
Bristol Move On	-	-	-	11
Refugee Awareness	26	-	26	102
Women's Project	8	-	8	33
Anti Racial Harassment	46	-	46	43
Well being project	-	-	-	10
The Camelot Foundation	-	-	-	80
Bolton Community Homes	44	-	44	44
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	-	-	-	(18)
European Refugee Fund	50	-	50	92
Dept of Communities and Local Government	-	-	-	54
Other grants and donations:				
The LankellyChase Foundation	25	-	25	19
John Moores Foundation	-	-	-	5
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	25	-	25	8
The Scurrah Wainwright Charity	-	-	-	5
Quartet Community Foundation	5	-	5	10
The Housing Associations	-	-	-	10
Arts Council England	-	-	-	9
TimeBank	20	-	20	92
Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales	-	-	-	8
Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust	10	-	10	-
The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund	13	-	13	-
Refugee Council	467	-	467	156
BBC Children in Need	84	-	84	79
Comic Relief	6	-	6	17
Caritas Austria	7	-	7	-
Gold Star	44	-	44	45
Capacity Builders	-	-	-	40
Sundry donations	4	236	240	193
	1,049	236	1,285	1,307

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS For the year ended 31 March 2009

Any funders who made grants and donations during the year below £5,000 have not been shown separately above unless they made a contribution exceeding £5,000 in the previous year.

The Charity also received grants from the Home Office as shown in Note 3 below.

3. INCOMING RESOURCES FROM ACTIVITIES IN FURTHERANCE OF THE CHARITY'S OBJECTIVES

	Restricted Funds £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Total 2009 £'000	Total 2008 £'000
Home Office grants and contracts:				
Asylum advice and community development services	3,315	554	3,869	3,324
Voluntary return (see below)	400	-	400	516
Core grant	-	-	-	681
Gateway Settlement services	739	103	842	383
SUNRISE programme	137	23	160	337
Refugee Integration and Employment Service	-	1,060	1,060	-
	<u>4,591</u>	<u>1,740</u>	<u>6,331</u>	<u>5,241</u>

The Voluntary return programme grants are channelled through the International Organisation for Migration.

4. NET INCOMING RESOURCES

This is stated after charging:

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	69	73
Audit fees	16	15
Other fees payable to auditors	-	1
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The Chair has an expense float of £300 and was reimbursed travel and subsistence expenses through it of £662 (2008 - £216). 5 other Trustees (2008 - 4) received reimbursements for travel and subsistence expenses amounting to £1,187 (2008 - £1,835). No Trustees received any remuneration (2008 - the same).

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

5. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED BY EXPENDITURE TYPE

	Staff costs £'000	Office costs £'000	Other direct costs £'000	Support costs £'000	Total 2009 £'000
Costs of generating funds					
Fundraising & publicity	147	18	74	20	259
Charitable expenditure					
Refugee Integration and Employment Service	680	134	176	108	1,098
Asylum advice & community development services	4,465	723	585	693	6,466
Home Office funded community dev't programme	95	24	31	3	153
Communications	102	18	30	17	167
Costs of activities in furtherance of Charity's objects					
	5,342	899	822	821	7,884
Governance	24	6	18	5	53
Support costs	431	61	354	(846)	-
Total expenditure	5,944	984	1,268	-	8,196

Details of Staff costs and Support costs are given respectively in Notes 6 and 7. Other direct costs for Governance costs include audit fees and trustees' expenses (see Note 4).

The method of allocating Office Costs is on head count.

6. STAFF COSTS AND NUMBERS

Staff costs were as follows:

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Salaries	4,549	4,168
Social security costs	454	415
Pension costs	411	380
Redundancy payments	36	33
Agency staff	494	397
	5,944	5,393

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS For the year ended 31 March 2009

The average monthly numbers of employees during the year was as follows:

	2009 No.	2008 No.
Fundraising and publicity	4	4
Asylum and community development services	127	140
Refugee Integration and Employment Services	26	-
Communications	3	3
Support costs	10	10
Governance costs	1	1
Interpreters (cost included in Asylum advice)	63	60
	<u>234</u>	<u>218</u>

Two members of staff received gross salaries in the range of £60,000 to £70,000. Pension contributions at 8 per cent of salary were also payable. All other employees earned less than £60,000.

The Charity contributes 8 per cent of salaries to an independently operated, voluntary, non-contributory, money purchase scheme open to those of its permanent employees who wish to participate (see also Note 14). The Charity pays contributions for those employees who opt to participate in the scheme but has no liability to provide pensions to former employees. Staff can opt for the 8 per cent contribution to be made to their own personal pension schemes instead of the Charity's scheme. At the year-end there were outstanding contributions amounting to £42,176 (2008 - £49,128), which are included in Creditors.

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Finance	124	114
Human Resources	139	155
Information Technology	248	154
Chief Executive's office	133	123
Other support costs	202	208
	<u>846</u>	<u>754</u>

The cost of the Finance department has been allocated between functional cost headings in Note 5 proportionate to Direct costs. Human resources and Other support costs have been allocated proportionate to staff costs. Information Technology and the Chief Executive's office costs have been allocated on the same basis as office costs as described in Note 5.

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS - Furniture, fittings and equipment

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Cost		
At the start of the year	677	620
Additions	55	89
Disposals	(167)	(32)
At the end of the year	<u>565</u>	<u>677</u>
Depreciation		
At the start of the year	555	514
Charged for the year	69	73
Eliminated on disposal	(167)	(32)
At the end of the year	<u>457</u>	<u>555</u>
Net book value at the end of the year	<u><u>108</u></u>	<u><u>122</u></u>

9. DEBTORS (all due within one year)

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Trade debtors	624	-
Grants receivable	508	664
Prepayments and accrued income	536	-
Other debtors	69	72
	<u>1,737</u>	<u>736</u>

10. CREDITORS - Amounts falling due within one year

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Trade creditors	522	322
Taxes and social security	241	129
Grant income repayable (see below)	1,030	1,030
Accruals	32	66
Deferred grant income (see below)	315	68
	<u>2,140</u>	<u>1,615</u>

£1,030,298 of unused funding was repayable to the Home Office relating to a service which finished at the end of March 2007.

REFUGEE ACTION

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS For the year ended 31 March 2009

Deferred grant income comprises the following:

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Balance at start of the year	68	834
Add: Deferred in the year:		
Voluntary return	-	68
Refugee Integration and Employment Service	315	-
Less: Released in the year:		
Voluntary return	(68)	(70)
Asylum advice services	-	(764)
Balance at end of the year	<u>315</u>	<u>68</u>

11. COMMITMENTS

At 31 March 2009 the Charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases on its premises as follows:

	2009 £'000	2008 £'000
Expiry date:		
Within 1 year	57	56
Within 2 to 5 years	192	158
After 5 years	21	21
	<u>270</u>	<u>235</u>

At 31 March 2009, the Charity had a contractual commitment of £273,000 relating to the renovation of the office at Edge Street, Manchester. £28,610 of this balance had been paid as at 31 March 2009.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

12. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Brought Forward £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Resources Expended £'000	Transfers In/(out) £'000	Carried Forward £'000
DESIGNATED FUNDS					
Premises leases	538	-	-	62	600
Sickness & maternity leave	108	-	-	3	111
Guardian appeal	123	-	-	(78)	45
Destitution fund	25	-	(15)	15	25
Dev't managers fund	130	-	-	(60)	70
Top Up fund	200	-	-	-	200
Communications department	-	-	-	120	120
TOTAL	1,124	-	(15)	62	1,171
GENERAL FUND	1,446	2,109	(1,966)	(62)	1,527
UNRESTRICTED	2,570	2,109	(1,981)	-	2,698
RESTRICTED FUNDS					
Asylum advice services	322	3,315	(3,478)	-	159
Community development programme	221	-	(152)	-	69
Voluntary return project	111	400	(441)	-	70
Horizons Project	10	44	(47)	-	7
Community development projects	278	901	(871)	-	308
Home Office core grant	177	-	(171)	-	6
Gateway Settlement	41	738	(731)	-	48
Mentoring project	30	-	(30)	-	-
Refugee awareness	8	75	(83)	-	-
Sunrise project	1	139	(139)	-	1
Redundancy fund	274	9	(37)	-	246
Other projects	10	28	(35)	-	3
RESTRICTED	1,483	5,649	(6,215)	-	917
TOTAL FUNDS	4,053	7,758	(8,196)	Nil	3,615

DESIGNATED FUNDS

A designated fund has been set up to cover potential liabilities associated with the Charity's rented properties. These include the potential cost of dilapidations as well as the potential rent commitments which it may not be possible to assign should the Charity have to vacate some of its premises.

The Sickness and maternity leave fund was established to provide for exceptional sickness and maternity costs. The year-end balance is calculated as the cost of six staff being on sick leave for six weeks and six staff being on maternity leave for twenty weeks.

The Guardian appeal fund represents amounts raised from individual donors in the Guardian Newspapers 2001 Christmas appeal. The amounts are not restricted but the Trustees are using the funds for work with women and to combat racial harassment. The fund is being used to fund the salary and associated costs of a Communications worker until March 2010.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

The Destitution fund was established in the year ended 31 March 2003 to pay for work arising from the Government's implementation of Section 55 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Costs incurred for supporting clients in the year have been charged against the fund. Trustees expect the need for this fund to continue, since there remains a high level of destitution amongst our service users and the fund has been restored to the level at the beginning of the year of £25,000.

The Trustees have established the Development managers fund to meet the Charity's predicted costs up until March 2010 for two posts which in 2007/8 were being funded by the Home Office.

The Trustees have established the Top Up fund to help fund projects of national importance. A number of grant applications are being made to funders who will only provide matched funding - the Top Up fund enables the Charity to meet the matched funding requirement. The Top Up fund may also be used to provide bridge funding where a given project is ending, but we anticipate the beginning of a new project which will require similar skills to those possessed by the outgoing project's staff and volunteers. The Top Up fund may also provide a guarantee enabling us to commence a new project meeting urgent need even if there is a small financial shortfall. The Trustees have decided to increase the fund to enable the Charity to respond to more such needs. The fund will be utilised in 2009/10 for bridge funding and top up funding.

The Communications department fund has been established to provide funding for Communications staff and other Communications department expenditure until 2010.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Asylum advice services grants are received from the Home Office's Border & Immigration Agency (BIA) to provide a one-stop advice service (including operating a reception service and accommodation advice) to new refugees and to assist in-country asylum seekers. The balance on the Asylum advice services fund and all the other funds except for the Redundancy fund are due to be spent in 2008/9.

Community development programme grants are received from the Home Office to enable the Charity to plan and promote better services for asylum seekers, refugees and their communities.

Voluntary return project grants are also provided by the Home Office but are channelled through the International Organisation for Migration. The programme provides advice, information and counselling to individuals considering returning to their country of origin.

The Home Office and Volunteering England have provided funding towards the Horizons Project, which is a supported volunteer service for adult refugees and asylum-seekers who want to do voluntary work.

Various funders have contributed towards the Charity's community development projects, which aim to support and promote positive integration and long-term settlement of refugees and displaced people in different parts of the UK.

The Home Office core costs grant funds specific core staff salaries and related costs.

The Gateway Project, funded by the Home Office is run in partnership with Bolton and Bury Councils. The project provides integration support to refugees who arrived in the UK direct from refugee camps as part of the government's Gateway Protection Programme.

The Mentoring Project is supported by a range of funders, including the Camelot Foundation and the Pilkington Charities Fund. The project provides peer mentoring for refugees in the Liverpool area.

The Refugee Awareness Project was supported by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Refugee Fund, and aims to combat negative and misinformed attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers.

The SUNRISE project was funded by the Home Office to develop a personal integration plan for individual refugees.

The Charity maintains a Redundancy fund from project grants to ensure that it will always have the resources to meet its contractual and statutory commitments in the event of having to make staff redundant. The fund is sufficient to meet the full cost of possible redundancies of current staff and accordingly no further transfers are being made into the fund from project restricted funds. Interest arising on the fund is, however, credited to it.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 March 2009

13. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible fixed assets £'000	Net current assets £'000	Total £'000
Restricted funds:			
Asylum advice	42	117	159
Community development programme	4	65	69
Voluntary return project	-	70	70
Horizons project	-	7	7
Community development projects	10	298	308
Home Office Core Grant	6	-	6
Gateway Settlement	7	41	48
Sunrise project	-	1	1
Redundancy	-	246	246
Other projects	-	3	3
Total restricted funds	69	848	917
Unrestricted funds (see below)	39	2,659	2,698
Total	108	3,507	3,615

Unrestricted funds include the designated funds shown in Note 12, all of which are represented entirely by net current assets.

14. PENSION SCHEME

Refugee Action participates in the Pensions Trust's Growth Plan (the Plan). The Plan is funded and is not contracted out of the state scheme. The Growth Plan is a multi-employer pension plan.

Contributions paid into the Growth Plan up to and including September 2001 were converted to defined amounts of pension payable from Normal Retirement Date. From October 2001 contributions were invested in personal funds which have a capital guarantee and which are converted to pension on retirement, either within the Growth Plan or by the purchase of an annuity.

The rules of the Growth Plan allow for the declaration of bonuses and/or investment credits if this is within the financial capacity of the Plan assessed on a prudent basis. Bonuses/investment credits are not guaranteed and are declared at the discretion of the Plan's Trustee.

The Trustee commissions an actuarial valuation of the Growth Plan every 3 years. The purpose of the actuarial valuation is to determine the funding position of the Plan by comparing the assets with the past service liabilities as at the valuation date. Asset values are calculated by reference to market levels. Accrued past service liabilities are valued by discounting expected future benefit payments using a discount rate calculated by reference to the expected future investment returns.

The rules of the Growth Plan give the Trustee the power to require employers to pay additional contributions in order to ensure that the statutory funding objective under the Pensions Act 2004 is met. The statutory funding objective is that a pension scheme should have sufficient assets to meet its past service liabilities, known as Technical Provisions.

If the actuarial valuation reveals a deficit, the Trustee will agree a recovery plan to eliminate the deficit over a specified period of time either by way of additional contributions from employers, investment returns or a combination of these.

The rules of the Growth Plan state that the proportion of obligatory contributions to be borne by the Member and the Member's Employer shall be determined by agreement between them. Such agreement shall require the Employer to pay part of such contributions and may provide that the Employer shall pay the whole of them.

PENSION SCHEME (Continued)

Refugee Action paid contributions at the rate of 8% (excluding inner London weighting) during the accounting period. Members did not make any obligatory contributions during the accounting period.

As at the balance sheet date there were 168 active members of the Plan employed by Refugee Action. Refugee Action continues to offer membership of the Plan to its employees.

It is not possible in the normal course of events to identify on a reasonable and consistent basis the share of underlying assets and liabilities belonging to individual participating employers. Accordingly, due to the nature of the Plan, the accounting charge for the period under FRS17 represents the employer contribution payable.

The last formal valuation of the Scheme was performed as at 30 September 2008 by a professionally qualified actuary using the Projected Unit Method. The market value of the Scheme's assets at the valuation date was £742 million and the Plan's Technical Provisions (i.e. past service liabilities) were £771 million. The valuation therefore revealed a shortfall of assets compared with the value of liabilities of £29 million, equivalent to a funding level of 96%.

The financial assumptions underlying the valuation as at 30 September 2008 were as follows:

	%
	per annum
Investment return pre retirement	7.6
Investment return post retirement:	
Active/Deferreds	5.1
Pensioners	5.6
Bonuses on accrued benefits	0.0
Rate of price inflation	3.2

In determining the investment return assumptions the Trustee considered advice from the Scheme Actuary relating to the probability of achieving particular levels of investment return. The Trustee has incorporated an element of prudence into the pre and post retirement investment return assumptions; such that there is a 60% expectation that the return will be in excess of that assumed and a 40% chance that the return will be lower than that assumed over the next 10 years.

If an actuarial valuation reveals a shortfall of assets compared to liabilities the Trustee must prepare a recovery plan setting out the steps to be taken to make up the shortfall.

In view of the small funding deficit and the level of prudence implicit in the assumptions used to calculate the Plan liabilities the Trustee has prepared a recovery plan on the basis that no additional contributions from participating employers are required at this point in time. In reaching this decision the Trustee has taken actuarial advice and has been advised that the shortfall of £29 million (as at 30 September 2008) will be cleared within 10 years if the investment returns from assets are in line with the "best estimate" assumptions. "Best estimate" means that there is a 50% expectation that the return will be in excess of that assumed and a 50% expectation that the return will be lower than that assumed over the next 10 years. These "best estimate" assumptions are 8.4% per annum pre retirement and 5.1% per annum post retirement (actives and deferreds) and 5.6% per annum post retirement (pensioners).

A copy of the recovery plan must be sent to the Pensions Regulator. The Regulator has the power under Part 3 of the Pensions Act 2004 to issue scheme funding directions where it believes that the actuarial valuation assumptions and/or recovery plan are inappropriate. For example the Regulator could require that the Trustee strengthens the actuarial assumptions (which would increase the scheme liabilities and hence impact on the recovery plan) or impose a schedule of contributions on the Scheme (which would effectively amend the terms of the recovery plan). The Regulator has reviewed the recovery plan for the Growth Plan and confirmed that, in respect of the September 2005 actuarial valuation, it does not propose to issue any scheme funding directions under Part 3 of the Pensions Act 2004.

The next full actuarial valuation will be carried out as at 30 September 2011.

PENSION SCHEME (Continued)

Following a change in legislation in September 2005 there is a potential debt on the employer that could be levied by the Trustee of the Plan. The Trustee's current policy is that it only applies to employers with pre October 2001 liabilities in the Plan. The debt is due in the event of the employer ceasing to participate in the Plan or the Plan winding up.

The debt for the Plan as a whole is calculated by comparing the liabilities for the Plan (calculated on a buyout basis i.e. the cost of securing benefits by purchasing annuity policies from an insurer, plus an allowance for expenses) with the assets of the Plan. If the liabilities exceed assets there is a buy-out debt.

The leaving employer's share of the buy-out debt is the proportion of the Plan's pre October 2001 liability attributable to employment with the leaving employer compared to the total amount of the Plan's pre October 2001 liabilities (relating to employment with all the currently participating employers). The leaving employer's debt therefore includes a share of any 'orphan' liabilities in respect of previously participating employers. The amount of the debt therefore depends on many factors including total Plan liabilities, Plan investment performance the liabilities in respect of current and former employees of the employer, financial conditions at the time of the cessation event and the insurance buy-out market. The amounts of debt can therefore be volatile over time. The Pensions Trust has advised that the estimated employer debt on withdrawal from the Plan as at 31 March 2009 was approximately £85,000.

Acknowledgements

Refugee Action would like to thank the following organisations for their support during 2008/09:

Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
BBC Children in Need
Bolton Community Homes
Bright Horizons Foundation for Children
Castle College, Nottingham
Comic Relief
European Refugee Fund (rename European Return Fund)
GoldStar
Home Office
International Organisation for Migration
JUSACA Trust
Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales
Migrant Impact Fund from the Government Office North West
New College Nottingham
Quartet Community Foundation
Sure Start: Liverpool City Council
The Big Lottery Fund
The Camelot Foundation
The City of Liverpool
The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
The LankellyChase Foundation
The Dept for Education and Science (DfES) Parenting Fund
TimeBank
Vine Community Centre

Many thanks, too, to all of our individual supporters and the many other local and community groups that have supported us.

To make a donation towards our work please go to www.refugee-action.org.uk
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Refugee Action is an independent, national charity working to enable refugees to build new lives in the UK. We provide practical emergency support for newly arrived asylum seekers and long-term commitment to their settlement. As one of the country's leading agencies in the field, Refugee Action has 28 years' experience in pioneering innovative work in partnership with refugees.

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working with refugees to build new lives