

Space2Grow #14

ASYLUM SUPPORT FUND

2020 / 2021

MONITORING REPORT



Report on the support delivered by 2 Barnet based charities to refugees in temporary accomadation

YOUNG BARNET
FOUNDATION

BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH



Overview

Open for Applications :	18 th December 2020
Application Deadline :	21 st December 2020
Panel Meeting:	21 st December 2020
Panel Members:	Lizzy Hawkins, Chair, Young Barnet Foundation William Cooper - Deputy Head of Strategy – Strategy and Engagement, Barnet Council Jess Baines-Holmes Assistant Director for Adults Joint Commissioning, Barnet Council
Total Number of Applications:	2
Cumulative amount requested:	£31,400
Total number of applications for Consideration by the panel after due diligence :	2
Revised Cumulative Amount :	£31,400
Total Amount Available:	£31,400
Number of Awards:	2
Total Amount Awarded:	£31,400
Awarded Date	21 st December 2020
Funding Provided by:	London Borough of Barnet.

Note: Usually Young Barnet Foundation do not take an administration fee for the management of the Space2Grow grants, using core or project funding to support the administration of our grants . In this instance Young Barnet Foundation were awarded £100 for the administration of this fund.

Monitoring and Evaluation Overview

Total Predicted Participants	1,130
Total Actual Participants	1,800

Executive Summary

Space2Grow#14 was a closed round of funding (by invitation) to support organisations who were already working with Young Refugees who were being housed in a range of hotels and other accommodation within the Borough of Barnet.

A number of Barnet Councillors had raised the issue of support for these young people within discussions of applications for the Barnet Community Response Fund in late 2020, and Barnet Council identified two organisations who would be well placed to provide such services. They were invited to provide an outline of their proposed delivery, and on the basis of this were then invited to apply for funding through Young Barnet Foundation's Space2Grow Fund.

Funding was to deliver services for 6 months (January – June 2021).

Key points which the grantees raised within their Monitoring & Evaluation include:

- A continued increase in numbers of Asylum Seekers in Barnet within the period in which the projects operated led to increased demand for services; both organisations needed to provide increased support because of this, and at times felt overwhelmed by numbers. It should be noted that the organisations assisted 670 more participants than they had predicted within their original applications.
- The lockdown and restrictions in place during Q1 of 2021 caused operational difficulties, including difficulties in the ability to access Service Users. This was not helped by the attitude of staff employed by the contractors employed by the Home Office, and it should be noted that the Home Affairs Select Committee has asked the Home Office to investigate the behaviour and management of these organisations.
- Both organisations indicated one issue was a lack of appropriate and private space in which to deliver services.
- The change in provider of the ASPEN card payment system for Asylum Seekers caused significant issues for Service Users and increased workload for both organisations.

Provided below are summaries of the completed Monitoring & Evaluation for the 2 projects.

S2G#14.1 – Barnet Refugee Service (now New Citizens Gateway)

Start Date of Project	02/01/2021
End Date of Project	30/06/2021
Number of families / individuals helped by the project.	800
Age of Youngest Participant	16
Age of Eldest Participant	72

Key Achievements

We supported over 800 clients newly arrived asylum seekers in 3 hotels in Barnet with their various needs i.e.lack of basic essentials, health access, legal support, complaints about inadequate food, snacks and lack of essential items provided by the hotels. However, through our regular outreach support work, we have been able to build a bridge between the Clear Spring management in the hotels and the client groups residing there. We have involvement in various networks of statutory and voluntary organisations ;i.e. Home Office, NHS, Local Authorities and Charities. We have been able to proactively raise the voice of asylum seekers, which has undoubtedly helped to get a much quicker response from the Home Office.

Quotations from Participants

"BRS helped me to register with a GP, I was very ill and did not know where to turn to".
"with BRS's outreach workers present at the hotel, I feel safe and supported, Nivin has been brilliant".

Quotations from Organisation

"We have been overwhelmed with increasing demand from our services supporting the asylum seekers in the hotels. The funding provided by the you has profoundly changed the quality of the service that asylum seekers have been receiving in the hotels, in Barnet."

Indications of the Impact that the outreach work achieved

With the increasing level of asylum seekers in Barnet, from 600 to 800 since March 2021, we surely could not have been able to achieve what we have done, without the support of your grant.

For example, only recently the Home Office decided to change the ASPEN card payments to asylum seekers, which caused a massive problem in the system. Many clients did not receive the card replacements and had no access to food or money in the hotels for a few days and some were left without it for weeks. Through our outreach support work, we managed to raise the matter with Migrant Help very quickly and also to get the local Authority and organisations involved to assist a large percentage of the most vulnerable clients in the hotels with emergency food vouchers, cash payments and other support that they made available to them.

In addition, our counselling support, youth work, ESOL language classes, Legal Aid and immigration support have been a great addition to what the clients normally get at a hotel in London. More recently, with the improvement in the weather, we have opened our allotment, where various therapeutic activities take place on weekly basis. This has helped the clients to come out of the confined hotel spaces and work on the allotment, where they can also enjoy meeting others and the refreshments provided.

Furthermore, the outreach team, with the help of management and the local NHS/ GP's, have managed to get every willing adult, over the age of 18, vaccinated in the hotels. This campaign of mass vaccination in the hotels could not have happened, as a matter of priority, if it wasn't for the active involvement of our operation manager and the outreach team who

tirelessly encouraged the NHS and hotel management to get people vaccinated prior to their dispersal to various accommodations in the remote parts of the UK.

Challenges caused by COVID-19 which impacted your delivery

Since the pandemic, the Home Office has placed over 6000 newly arrived asylum seekers in different hotels across London. In particular, there are now around 800+ asylum seekers in few hotels within London Borough of Barnet, where our outreach team is active. Our Advice Team was overwhelmed, by the referrals, received from refugee agencies, who only sign posted and individuals, who were desperate to get help and support for their basic needs. meeting the demand for our services have been our biggest challenge.

Budget Variation

Our initial budget granted was £17,500. From 1st January to the end of June we spent £10,463 which covered the salaries , emergency, hardship fund, telephone and travel costs. As we managed to get funding from other funders and the demand for this service continues, we continued with this service and would like to use the £7,037 underspent for the continuation of the services for another 3 months and use it as match funding (N.B. a breakdown of expenditure has been provided to Barnet Council, and the use of this underspend to continue with the project for a further three months has been agreed)

S2G#14.2 – Persian Advice Bureau

Start Date of Project	01/02/2021
End Date of Project	31/07/2021
Number of families / individuals helped by the project.	1000
Age of Youngest Participant	1
Age of Eldest Participant	65

Key Achievements

The project assisted 95-100 asylum seekers in Holiday Inn Golders Green, and between 250-320 asylum seekers in Holiday Inn Brent Cross on a rolling fluctuating basis since February 2021.

Key achievements:

Preventing charges against two young asylum seekers. Because of this, one has since obtained his refugee status.

Referral and safeguarding minors to MASH in Barnet on several occasions, although some were not aware that they had been placed in the wrong immigration category. Immediate transfer of a mother and child subjected to domestic abuse while staying at one of the hotels. Persuading hotel staff to change many of their daily conducts concerning asylum seekers.

Quotations from Participants

Quotations from Organisation

Over the past six months, PAB has worked vigorously and with enthusiasm, protecting and promoting

the asylum seekers situations in the two Holiday Inns in Barnet.

'Such a bad situation to be in.'

'I cannot imagine the route they have passed to reach the shores of this country!'

Indications of the Impact that the outreach work achieved

For the outreach worker very challenging, mentally exhausting and stressful, but very rewarding.

This work assisted many asylum seekers that were in desperate need and assistance. They did not know where to turn to and were somehow lost in an environment with principles that are alien to them.

Language barriers, lockdowns and lack of support from the government escalated their fear of the unknown. I believe that the presence of our outreach workers somehow gave them hope that at least there is someone that they can reach out to.

Challenges caused by COVID-19 which impacted your delivery

- Not having a fixed place of work close to the hotels so that the asylum seekers can reach us without having to pay for travelling.
- Not having enough workspace to maintain client confidentiality and privacy.
- The unbearable attitude of some of the SBHL staff whilst we were on site.
- The constant fear of attracting the virus by being in a confined area without good ventilation and meeting with new arrivals from various parts of the world.

Budget Variation

It was very soon apparent that the planned budget initially just for one outreach worker was very unrealistic, given the quantity of Service Users in both hotels. In order to respond to the demand, PAB amended their planned budget so that three outreach workers were available in the hotels for the majority of the time. Then the work followed a stream of meetings, emails, purchases (in-store or online). Due to the change in budget plan, the back-office functions consisting of record maintenance, regulatory compliance, accounting, etc were to a greater degree than planned covered by PAB's existing funding. One lesson learned was that beyond the planned work, after-hours calls and issues that we receive from some asylum seekers needed to be addressed, and at times urgently.