

Annual Review  
2018 - 2019

# A welcoming community



[www.assistsheffield.org.uk](http://www.assistsheffield.org.uk)

ASSIST Sheffield is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. 1154862

## ASSIST Sheffield: Our role in the community



Here at ASSIST Sheffield we support people who have been unsuccessful in their applications for asylum and as a result have been made destitute on the streets of our city.

Refused asylum seekers do not currently have the right to work, housing, benefits or other vital support in the UK, despite escaping the unimaginable horrors of war, violence and persecution. This puts them amongst the most marginalised people living in Sheffield, unable to participate in daily life we take for granted and pushed into destitution and homelessness.

All of our clients show impressive fortitude and resilience despite the terrible circumstances they face. Simply telling the truth about the nightmares they have fled is often not enough to secure their basic rights.

At ASSIST Sheffield, we hope to remove some of these barriers, returning some freedom and personal autonomy to our clients. Empowering them not just to survive but to grow.

Thanks to our supporters, ASSIST Sheffield is an invaluable lifeline for refused asylum seekers in Sheffield. We offer solidarity, support and hope in the form of accommodation, welfare payments, bus passes and signposting to services and community groups. We will not stop campaigning until the discriminatory laws that marginalise our clients are changed.



## A welcome from our Joint Chairs

**Richard one of the founders of ASSIST has been joined by Phil as Joint Chair. Phil brings his experience as a retired CEO of a charity to his role. ASSIST has a very active Board of Trustees working across several sub groups, joint chairs enables share of responsibility.**

“Welcome everyone to another year of ASSIST. Every healthy organisation inevitably develops and changes as it grows whilst remaining true to its original ethos and purpose.

ASSIST was created to challenge financial destitution but there is no worse form of destitution than homelessness.

As the years have passed, providing accommodation has become a top priority for us. We have recently acquired our 8th house for asylum seekers. This is in addition to our night shelter and guest/host scheme, and we have launched our “sponsor a room”

campaign to encourage donors to support this development.

We continue also to challenge the causes of destitution, and are involved in campaigns to change those policies that so badly affect the welfare of those we support.

Great thanks to all our hard working staff and all who volunteer for us and help us in so many various and important ways. Without you we could not exist.

The need for ASSIST shows no sign of ending and we greet another year ready to meet any new challenges that may arise.”

*Richard Chessum*



## The Leadership Team: A decision making collaborative

**The ASSIST leadership team, established in November 2017, comprises three staff members and two volunteers, who are ensuring that a strong volunteer voice remains at the heart of the running of the organisation.**

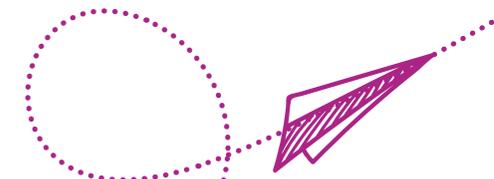
The Leadership Team is there to coordinate all parts of the organisation, so that we can bring the maximum benefit to destitute refused asylum seekers in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. We also ensure the charity is compliant with the Charity Commission's regulations and guidelines, as well as the requirements of other regulatory bodies.

We are incredibly proud of our collective achievements. Every night up to fifty clients have a safe place to stay in our night shelter, with host families or in our shared houses. We are financially supporting up to a hundred asylum seekers, and have been able to increase the amount of money we provide every week.

The wellbeing of people we support is central to all we do and we are focusing efforts to make sure their views inform the further development of our services. The feedback we received through the 'Client Voices' research this year was encouraging - please see page 7 for details. Giving our clients more say about our services and how they are provided, will be a central priority for the Leadership Team for the coming period.

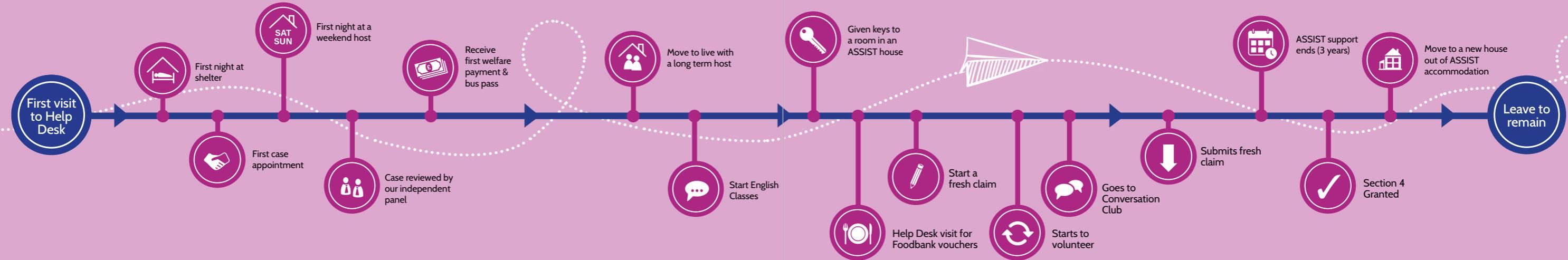
The tireless effort of volunteers has once again been vital for our achievements this year. Each month volunteers contribute a staggering 3,000 hours+ of work to support destitute asylum seekers. Our

volunteers make ASSIST what it is: a unique movement of Sheffield people, determined to show solidarity, support and friendship to people who are seeking sanctuary in our city and are left destitute by a flawed and inhumane asylum system.



# The client journey: From isolation to integration

- Support runs for up to 3 years.
- Clients are given a room in a house for up to 12 months.



## Client Voices: A few words from the people we support

### The more we listen to what our clients have to say about our services, the more we learn about what they need.

To improve the service we provide for destitute asylum seekers we conducted a study based on the feedback of people who are or have been receiving support from ASSIST. Their view of our services was overwhelmingly positive, with 92% of respondents rating services as “very good”.

Respondents expressed appreciation for all the services they are receiving from ASSIST, with accommodation and signposting most highly commended.

Clients also felt that ASSIST support allowed them to make connections and feel part of Sheffield life.

The Clients Voices report also identified a number of areas where clients felt that ASSIST could have a bigger impact on the life of destitute asylum seekers. These included giving more choices in terms of accessing our support, improving facilities at the night shelter and expanding the availability of accommodation.

**Client Voices is part of a continuous dialogue with our clients to make sure that our services are effective and meet the actual needs of the people we support.**

“With ASSIST I feel included in the community.”

“Best thing about ASSIST was friendship. It made me feel at home. ASSIST is my second family.”

“ASSIST has a wide range of activities. They have signposted me to Time Builders, the gym, football and foodbanks. People at ASSIST are good at sharing information.”

## ASSIST Help Desk: Connecting clients to services and activities

### A touch point for asylum seekers in the heart of the city offering support and signposting to vital services.

Help Desk is open weekly and is the first point of call for all of our clients. Our 22 strong volunteer team provide practical support to clients, referring them to the night shelter, issuing emergency payments and directing them to food banks. We provide information and sign post them to other relevant agencies, such as the Red Cross, Citizens Advice Bureau, Migrant Help and City of Sanctuary Sheffield. We are also able to refer more complex cases directly to Paul Blomfield MP, as his caseworker is also based at the weekly drop in.

Wellbeing is also very important and social isolation is a big problem for refused asylum seekers. The Help Desk provides clients at

the weekly drop-in with information about free or cheap activities that take place in Sheffield such as gyms, swimming lessons and food projects. We have also made an increasing number of referrals to COMAC, an organisation that provides free bicycles to asylum seekers.

**Each client has diverse needs and the Help Desk makes sure to tailor their service to the individual.**

Help Desk responded to **640** individuals in **1612** appointments.

They made **772** foodbank referrals and **99** referrals to the Archer project.



## Fundraising: Generating the funds to enable our good work

When people come together to support the most vulnerable in society, great things can happen.

We are continuously overwhelmed by the generosity of the people of Sheffield and beyond, thank you.

Regular monthly donations are particularly important as they give us the confidence to plan and adapt services to fit client's needs.

A big thank you to all the churches and other community organisations supporting us so kindly. We are proud to be able to say that every penny donated by our regular monthly donors goes to welfare payments given directly to clients every week.

We continue to raise awareness at organisations and meetings. We join

people at fundraising events and work in partnership with a variety of groups to raise money and to challenge asylum destitution in our city.

The fantastic addition of a new house adds to our ongoing maintenance costs. Continuous and sustainable fundraising is essential to ensure our houses are heated, lit and maintained to good standards.

We continue to be supported by a wide range of grant funders for which we are very grateful.

**Thank you!**



## Volunteering: The people of Sheffield making a difference

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community and we are doing everything we can to support their incredible work.

This year, we have continued to develop the training we offer to volunteers, recognising the challenging nature of their work.

We have developed a new programme of confidentiality, safeguarding & boundaries training, which has been attended by 125 volunteers.

We have also continued to run regular workshops on issues requested by our volunteers; including supporting LGBT asylum seekers, human trafficking, listening skills and mental health.

In April, our interpreters enjoyed a training away-day at the Bamford Community, and we have held two social events at the Showroom Cinema for all ASSIST volunteers to get together and celebrate their achievements.

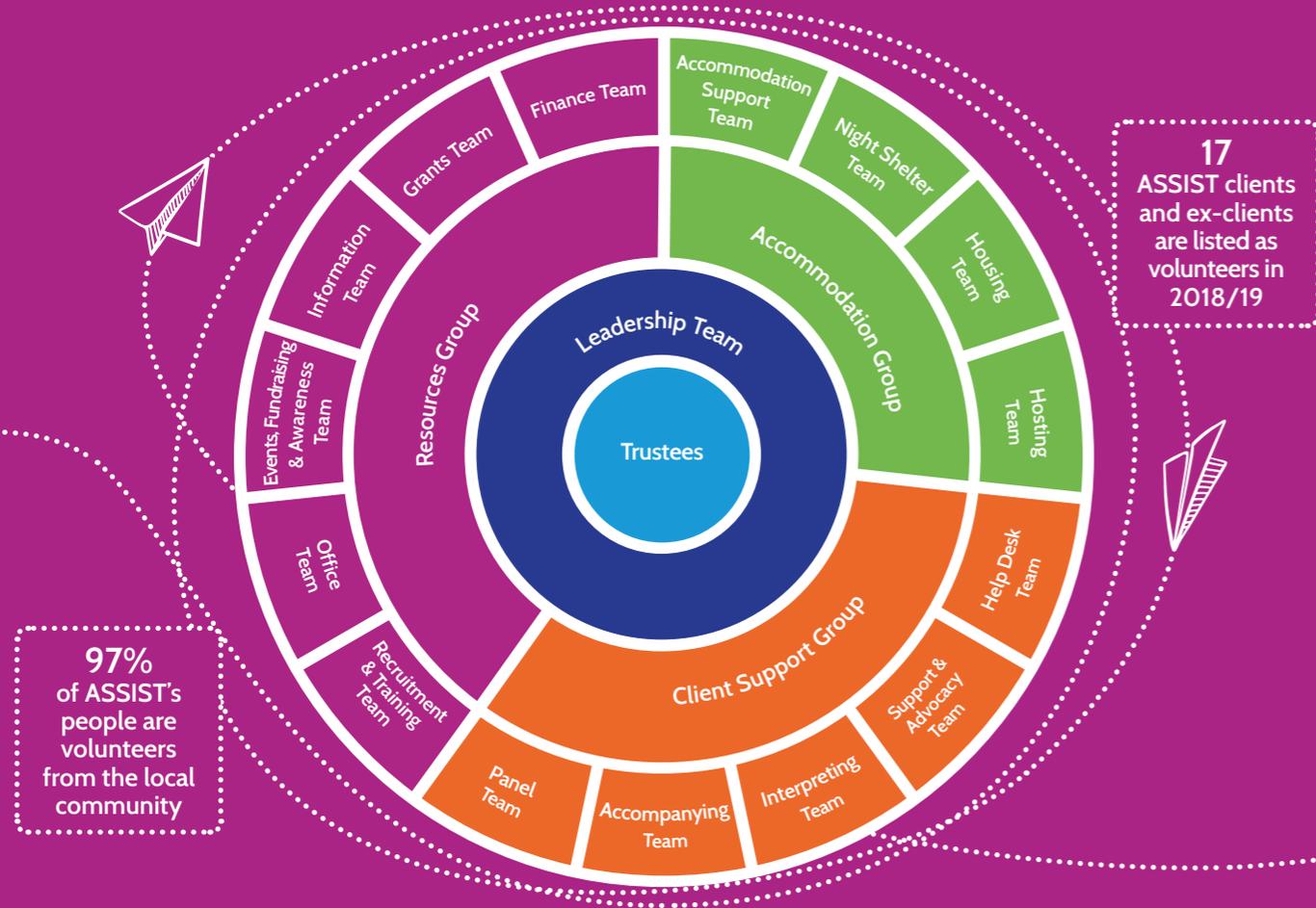
**334**  
volunteers in 15 teams

**3000**  
hours of voluntary  
work a month

**353**  
participants in our  
volunteer training



## Organisational diagram: How we work together



## Finance: A breakdown of our income in 2018/19

**Our finances have been independently examined and our full financial statements will be available on the Charity Commission website.**

Restricted Income - £349,386

Unrestricted Income - £164,559

**Total Income - £513,945**

Restricted Expenditure - £233,224

Unrestricted Expenditure - £156,901

**Total Expenditure - £390,125**

Restricted Surplus - £116,162

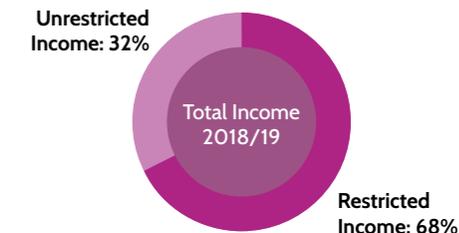
Unrestricted Surplus - £7,658

**Total Surplus - £123,820**

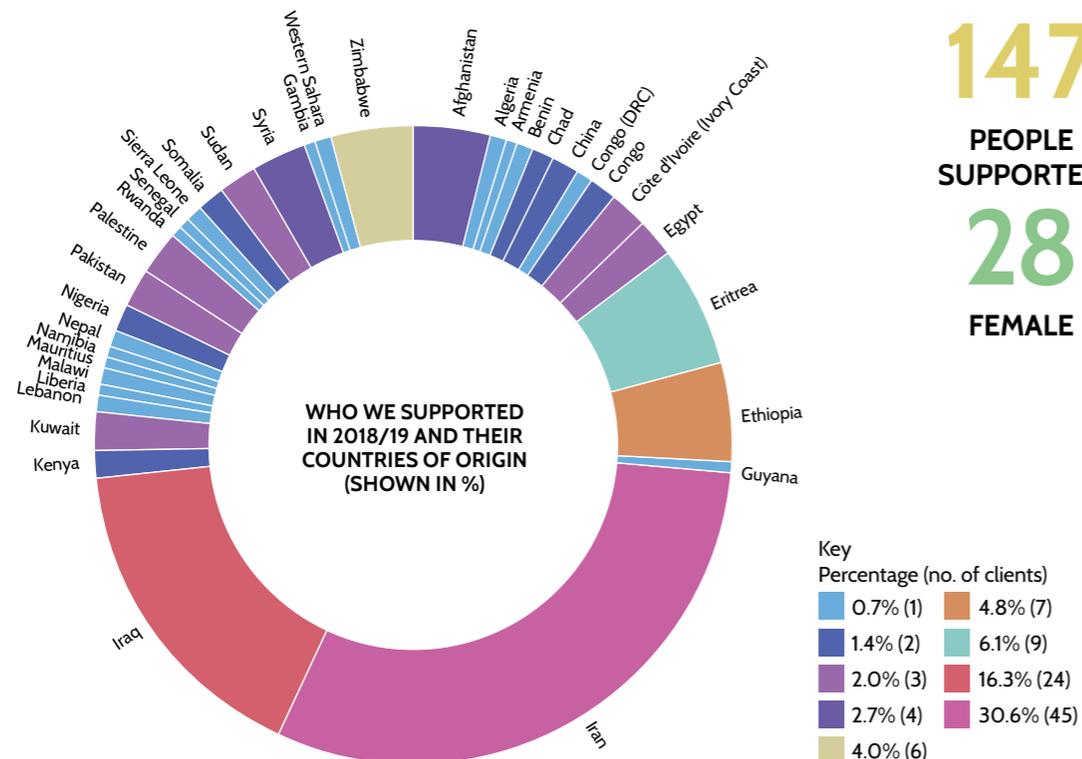
In 2018/19 ASSIST raised an income of £513,935. Approximately 68% of this income was restricted for use for specifically pre-agreed purposes (e.g. grants) and the rest is unrestricted and can be used to cover any costs. The restricted income included a large one-off donation of £68,750 (including gift aid) which was for the purpose of buying another house in which to accommodate our clients. This was amazing generosity for which we are so thankful.

We are very grateful to our many regular donors who contributed £53,272 and to those who contributed to the £53,738 given as irregular donations. We also really appreciate the two legacies we received that totalled £38,834.

ASSIST's expenditure in 2018/19 was £390,125 which, after taking into account restricted funds carried forward, left an unrestricted surplus of £7,658. The restricted surplus shown can only be used as originally agreed.



## Countries of origin: Where our clients are from



**147** PEOPLE SUPPORTED  
**35** DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

**28** FEMALE  
**118** MALE

Key  
 Percentage (no. of clients)

0.7% (1)	4.8% (7)
1.4% (2)	6.1% (9)
2.0% (3)	16.3% (24)
2.7% (4)	30.6% (45)
4.0% (6)	

## ASSIST Sheffield: A welcoming community





# There are so many ways you can get involved

Whatever your situation there is something you can do to help ASSIST continue to provide its crucial services.

- **VOLUNTEER** - Accompanying our clients to appointments, sleeping at the night shelter, helping with administration, running stalls at our events; these are just a few of the roles you can take on as an ASSIST volunteer. To find out more come along to one of our information sessions, posted in the Events section of our website.
- **HOST** - Host an asylum seeker in your home.
- **FUNDRAISING** - Set yourself a challenge, be it sporting or otherwise, or organise an event. We want to hear your ideas!
- **DONATE** - we appreciate all donations, big or small, one-off or by standing order. Or leave a gift for ASSIST in your will.

Find out more at:

[www.assistsheffield.org.uk](http://www.assistsheffield.org.uk) • [admin@assistsheffield.org.uk](mailto:admin@assistsheffield.org.uk) • 0114 275 4960



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