

the lives in our day

2004



9.30



10.46



12.11



17.03



the lives in our day

8.45am: Waiting to start the day. The Refugee Arrivals Project (RAP) starts each morning in many different ways. Asylum seekers, interpreters, volunteers, our own staff and those of many other agencies all form part of our work. This report gives you a snapshot of our lives and our working day in January 2004.



9.30



9.43



9.45



10.28

“Every day is different. You arrive, and you don’t know what to expect. There are so many clients with so many different needs. It’s like a story book, with people telling you their lives. Many have suffered a lot.”

Anwar Abdirahman
Project Worker,
Advice Team

9.30am: An Eritrean asylum seeker, staying with friends in West London, arrives at our head office in Hounslow to get help. Many asylum seekers who are living in London come to our office each day. Some have just arrived in the country, while others are already living in the community.

9.43: A member of RAP staff meets newly arrived asylum seekers at Heathrow. Immigration officers refer to us any destitute, newly-arrived asylum seeker arriving at an airport in the South East of England. We also help people who arrive on the back of lorries. We support all our clients through an acutely difficult time, when they are vulnerable, frightened and bewildered.

9.45am: The RAP advice team meets for a briefing session to prepare for the day ahead. During the day the team will offer advice to many clients, helping them apply to the government’s National Asylum Support Service (NASS) for support. Though some of our clients stay in the community, many more are homeless and have no money or possessions. We arrange basic accommodation for them in West London while they wait to hear if NASS will grant them support. Most are with us a few days or weeks, but some stay with RAP much longer.

Our staff are uniquely qualified to work with a diverse client group. We come from many backgrounds and between us speak more than 40 languages.

10.28: A Kurdish asylum seeker talks to a member of staff.



the lives in our day

10.36am: A member of RAP staff helps clients get ready to board a coach that will take them to Leeds. Some have been with us for a few days or weeks, others for much longer. Our dispersal team helps them prepare for the journey and their new destination.



11.00

"RAP has helped me in lots of ways. They've given me food, somewhere to sleep. I was worried to be leaving RAP but they've explained where I'm going, and that someone will be there to meet me. I feel better about it now I know what is going to happen."

Iranian asylum seeker



11.25

11.00: The Leeds coach leaves. Our clients stay with us while they wait to hear if the government will offer them support. In most cases, if they are granted NASS support, the asylum seekers are required to move to another part of the UK where they stay while their application for asylum is considered.

NASS sends our dispersal team lists of who is travelling and where they will go. We contact each asylum seeker and explain the procedures. We tell them about where they are going, what will happen when they arrive, and give them details of local organisations. Two or three coaches leave us every day, each carrying between 5 and 25 people. In some cases, people don't travel because they decide to stay with friends or relatives, or because they have been granted refugee status. RAP helps these clients move into the community.



11.46

11.25: Executive Director Elizabeth Little meets an external consultant to discuss planning for the year ahead. RAP works in a complex and changing environment. Government policy has gone through further change, with a new Asylum and Immigration Act approved in 2004. War and persecution in different countries mean we can never predict how many people will arrive and where they will come from. RAP has become skilled at responding to change. Our aim is to make sure that high quality reception services continue to be in place for new arrivals.

11.46: At Heathrow, our Young Person's Adviser is helping a child who has arrived on his own. The boy is holding a simple information card in his own language, given to all our young unaccompanied clients to help them understand what is happening.

12.09: RAP's volunteer co-ordinator meets a new recruit.



12.09



the lives in our day

12.11: RAP's Child and Family Welfare Adviser visits a family in emergency accommodation. The parents have escaped persecution in the Middle East, bringing their twin babies with them. Both girls are blind.



12.55



13.10



13.26



13.41

"My babies are blind, and I didn't know where to go for help. I was in a room where I couldn't cope. Marion (the Child and Family Welfare Adviser) helped me move to a flat where the babies are safe and can move about. She's helped with hospital visits, she brings baby clothes, she comes to play with the children. She makes sure we're alright."

Middle Eastern
asylum seeker

Many of our clients arrive with children. Some are single parents. Some are pregnant when they reach the UK, sometimes as a result of rape. Some of the children have special needs. In all cases, the parents face the anxiety of trying to help their children feel safe in a situation where they have little control.

In 2003, we set up the new post of Child and Family Welfare Adviser, in order to offer additional support to families seeking asylum. The adviser – an experienced child and adolescent social worker – has helped staff understand the particular needs of parents and children. Wherever possible, RAP has become a child-friendly environment, with toys in the interview cubicles and waiting areas. Our adviser visits every family, spending more time with the most vulnerable clients, such as those with special needs. This post is funded by Lloyds TSB and the Pilgrim Trust.

12.55: After a night in our basic accommodation, newly arrived asylum seekers are taken by minibus to our head office, where the advice team will help them fill in NASS forms and give them information and support. They carry with them all their immigration documents.

13.10: Our clients have complex and varied needs. We keep careful manual and computer records: this year our client database has been upgraded.

13.26: An interpreter and member of staff help a client whose asylum request has been turned down, and who is no longer entitled to support. These vulnerable clients have to leave our care. We do all we can to ensure they have some protection, by linking up with agencies working with the homeless and other projects.

13.41: New asylum seekers arrive by plane throughout the day.



the lives in our day

13.42: Helping people find the way. A member of RAP's support team shows a client the way to another office. During their time with us, our clients need to link up with a number of local services, including schools, GPs and other organisations. We help them make these contacts.



14.17

"I'm glad I can help people who are in need. In the support team, we tend to see the clients who stay with RAP longer, because they are so vulnerable. It means we get to know them – we find out about the problems people don't mention at first, to do with torture and other experiences."

Fozia Elmi
Project Worker,
Support Team



14.28

RAP's support team helps clients with special needs, such as people who have been tortured, the seriously ill, people with mental health difficulties, pregnant women and families with children. The team works with people staying in RAP accommodation and with asylum seekers living in the community. Some of the work involves referring clients on to other agencies, such as counselling services or solicitors. The team also helps newly released detainees.

14.17: A member of our advice team helps a client fill in the NASS application forms. As well as explaining the NASS system, the advice workers help with other queries or problems the client may have. Each interview lasts at least an hour, and can take longer if an interpreter is involved. Between interviews, the team does administrative and follow up work.



14.40

14.28: A four day old baby, born a few weeks after his mother reached the UK, visits the RAP office in Heston with his father. RAP arranged for the mother to see a midwife, and is helping the family adjust while they wait to be dispersed by NASS.

14.40: Newly-arrived asylum seekers at airports such as Heathrow, Gatwick, London City, Luton and Stansted are sent to meet our reception team staff at Heathrow after going through Immigration Controls. Other new arrivals are also sent to Heathrow, including people who arrive on lorries, and others already in the community. Our reception team meets them, listens to their needs, and explains the system. They deal with any urgent problems, and arrange accommodation if the asylum seeker has nowhere to stay.

15.49: RAP's Young Person's Adviser talks to a teenager who has arrived at Heathrow on her own.



15.49



the lives in our day

15.15: A RAP volunteer meets up with a client she has befriended. Through our Amigos project, trained volunteers offer friendship and help to our most vulnerable clients.



15.29

"I've been an Amigos volunteer for several years. In that time, I've befriended different asylum seekers, and met fantastic people. I try to be a friend, and to help with basic things like knowing where to shop, or how to make an appointment. I learn a lot about what it is like to seek asylum, what people go through."

Diane Peters, volunteer



15.50

Volunteers play a vital role in our work. Many asylum seekers stay with us for several months, and include people such as survivors of torture, single parents and people with complex health needs. Volunteers are matched with these clients through our befriending scheme, Amigos, and the support they give is invaluable. In 2004 we also started weekly group befriending sessions for our longer term clients. The meeting provides a safe space where people who are isolated can meet each other and develop new support networks.

We run an induction and training programme for all our volunteers, so they can develop skills and knowledge which they can then share with the asylum seeker they befriend. Volunteers help us with other aspects of our work. The volunteering programme is supported by the Community Fund.



16.23

15.29: A client staying in our accommodation visits the dispersal team to talk about when she will move.

15.50: New arrivals at the airport are sent to RAP accommodation in West London.

16.23: RAP's Head of Operations and the Child and Family Welfare Adviser meet a representative of a local youth and community service to discuss setting up a play project. RAP is part of the government's new network of induction centres, providing intensive advice and guidance to new asylum seekers for their first seven days in the UK. Through strong links with other agencies in Hounslow and beyond we are able to develop new initiatives to meet new needs.

16.48: A client holds their dispersal papers.



16.48



the lives in our day

17.05: RAP's Young Person's Adviser is based at Heathrow. He links up with immigration officers at a number of airports and ports in the South East to offer support when children and young people arrive without an adult.



17.16

"The airport was big. I was glad I was there but I was frightened and I cried.

James came and introduced himself.

He helped me and I no longer felt afraid.

I felt safe that someone was looking out for me."

15 year old Ethiopian asylum seeker



17.27

Young people arriving in the UK without an adult to accompany them or meet them are confused, tired and frightened. RAP's Young Person's Adviser Project remains the only specialist initiative offering help at the point of arrival. The Young Person's Adviser assesses whether the new arrival may be a victim of trafficking, arranges an interpreter, and stays with them through the airport process, making sure they are safe and looked after once they are released.

The project has seen a steady increase in the number of young people helped: 300 in its second year. Work with immigration officers has raised the profile of the project, and has led to more referrals. In addition, the project has indirectly benefited around 1,500 other young people, through training and information given to other professionals such as social workers.

The Project is funded by Diana Princess of Wales Fund.



18.45

17.16: RAP frequently gets phone calls from the media, wanting to find out about our work and the experience of asylum seekers. Our Communications Co-ordinator handles these requests, and also ensures that quality standards are met within RAP. In 2003, the Guardian sponsored a photographic exhibition in London showing the work of RAP, with photos by Howard Davies. Titled 'into the asylum' the exhibition attracted some 900 visitors. It is now on tour to a few other cities.

17.27: Staff at our head office discuss plans for the next day. The office closes at 17.00.

18.45: The desk of the Child and Family Welfare Adviser, with toys ready to be given to young visitors.

21.32: The reception team at Heathrow works until 11pm, seven days a week. A member of RAP staff is on call all night long to deal with emergencies.



21.32



Moving forwards

2004 is another year of change for RAP, with the introduction of new government systems regarding the arrival of asylum seekers, and the passing of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004.

The skills, expertise and flexibility we have built up over 15 years of offering reception services to new asylum seekers have stood us in good stead. Our experienced staff are planning the new induction centre process while still managing the existing systems. We have liaised with the Home Office, local authorities, refugee partner agencies and many other organisations to make the transition as smooth as possible for our clients.

The government's network of induction centres is now in development. Clients will stay with us for 7 to 14 days, and have briefing sessions and medical screening. In addition, because of our expertise in this area, RAP has arranged to care for clients with special needs. These clients will stay with us longer because of their complex situation.

Another new area of work has been the Gateway Protection Programme for refugees. This scheme is a partnership initiative of the government's Immigration and Nationality Directorate, in conjunction with the UNHCR and main refugee support agencies including RAP. Under the scheme, people who may have spent many years living in hardship in refugee camps are screened in or near their country of origin by the UNHCR, and arrive in the UK with refugee status already secured. The people selected are the most vulnerable and in need of international protection. RAP is a lead agency in the provision of reception and orientation, prior to the refugees' journey to other areas of the UK for settlement.

We continue to grow in other areas as well. We already offer a wide range of support to asylum seekers and refugees living in West London, and have secured funding from NASS for a One Stop Service to expand this work, which we expect to become an increasingly significant part of RAP's role. Our volunteering programme for our most vulnerable clients has also gone from strength to strength.

Our thanks go to all the volunteers, staff, trustees, supporters, colleagues and funders who help us with our work.

Dr. Girma Ejere Elizabeth Little
Chair, Board of Trustees *Executive Director*

Statistics

year ending 31st March 2004

Staff ethnicity

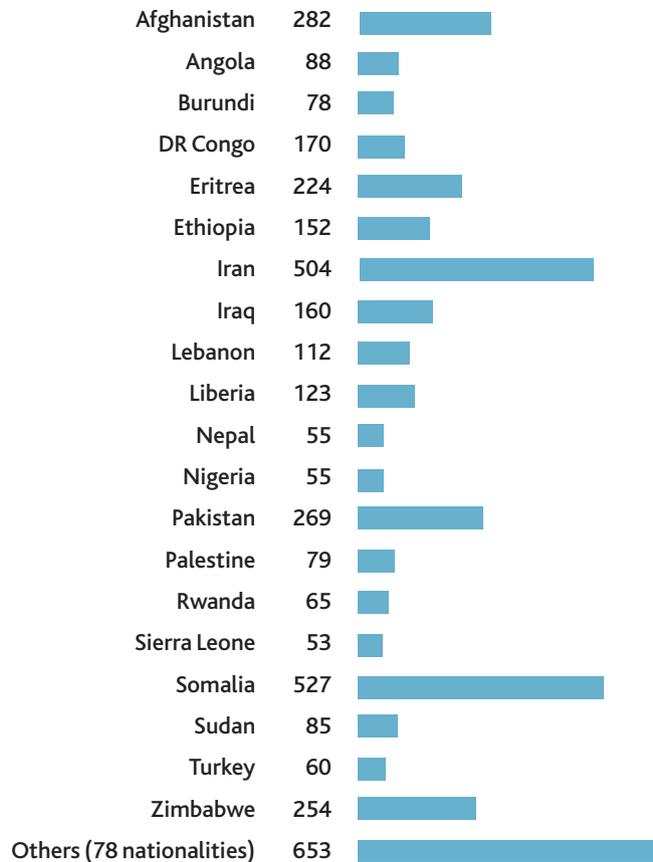
RAP staff come from more than 30 countries, including:

Afghanistan	Pakistan
Britain	Palestine
Colombia	Poland
Czech Republic	Portugal
Democratic Republic of Congo	Russia
Eritrea	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	Somalia
France	South Africa
Ghana	Spain
India	Sudan
Iran	Sweden
Iraq	Turkey
Kenya	Vietnam
Macedonia	Yugoslavia

"RAP is exceptional in the diversity of its staff. Having skilled professionals from such a range of backgrounds is vital, enabling us to work effectively and sensitively with new asylum seekers and refugees."

Ebow Idun, Human Resources Manager

Nationalities of clients



Languages spoken by RAP interpreters and staff

Afrikaans	French	Ndebele	Somali
Albanian	German	Nepalese	Spanish
Amharic	Greek	Pashtu	Tamil
Arabic	Hindi	Polish	Tigrinya
Bulgarian	Kiswahili	Portuguese	Turkish
Cantonese	Krio	Punjabi	Ukrainian
Czech	Kurdish	Romanian	Urdu
Dari	Lingala	Russian	Vietnamese
Dutch	Luganda	Serbo-Croat	
English	Macedonian	Shona	
Farsi	Mandarin	Slovak	

Source of referrals

Referred by	Individuals	Families	Totals
Heathrow	2242	401	2643
Gatwick	430	76	506
Stanstead	184	31	215
City	19	4	23
Luton	18	3	21
Self-referral	552	265	808
Other agencies	647	170	817

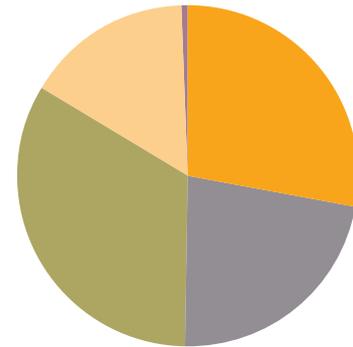
Age group

Age Group	Female	Male	Totals	%
Under 18	544	592	1136	28.11
18–24	336	574	910	22.5
25–34	501	860	1361	33.6
35–64	240	375	615	15.19
Age Over 65	15	11	26	0.6
Total	1636	412	4048	100

Numbers of single people and family groups

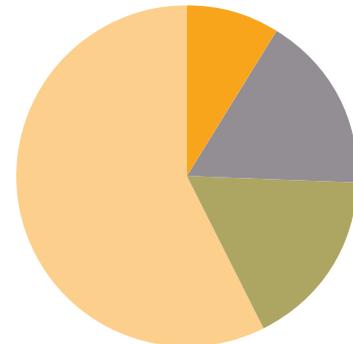
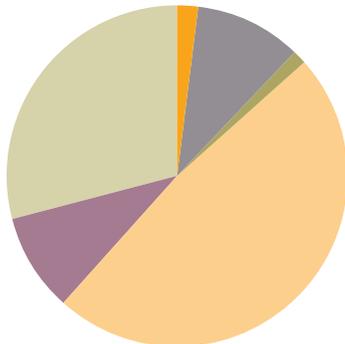
These figures show the number of applications to NASS for support, processed by RAP between April 2003 and March 2004.

Family Status	Number of Applications	Total People	%
Couple (no children)	56	112	3
Family	286	1034	25
Minor	37	37	1
Single 25 or over	1365	1365	34
Single Parent	263	677	17
Single under 25	823	823	20
Total	2830	4048	100



Length of stay with RAP

1 week or less	54	9%
1 to 2 weeks	103	17%
2 to 4 weeks	104	17%
More than 4 weeks	352	57%



Finance

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2003

(incorporating the income and expenditure statement)

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2003 £	Total 2002 £
Incoming resources				
Government and other public authorities:				
Home Office	12,972,467	(39,951)	12,932,5016	5,791,085
London Boroughs Grants	58,040	–	58,040	53,040
Community Fund	76,786	–	76,786	21,794
Other income:				
Trust funding	62,510	–	62,510	21,020
Donations	4,500	3,602	8,102	6,595
Interest receivable	8,296	31,427	39,723	26,811
Total incoming resources	13,182,599	(4,922)	13,177,677	5,920,345
Resources expended				
Activities in furtherance of objects:				
Emergency Payments Fund	10,821,240	–	10,821,240	3,856,068
Refugee arrivals service	2,295,452	127,994	2,423,446	1,851,380
Planning and development project	41,843	36,690	78,533	90,443
Volunteer befriending scheme	66,818	18,380	85,198	59,265
Young separated refugees project	38,940	–	38,940	17,055
Management and administration	50,805	–	50,805	38,109
Total resources expended	13,315,100	183,062	13,498,162	5,912,320
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources	(132,501)	(187,984)	(320,485)	8,025
Opening fund balances at 1 April	393,184	339,076	732,260	724,235
Closing fund balances at 31 March	260,683	151,092	411,775	732,260

Trustees' statement

The summarised accounts set out here have been extracted from the full annual accounts prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985, which were approved by the Trustees on 30 January 2004. The full annual accounts have been audited and the auditors' opinion was unqualified. The accounts have been delivered to the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission.

Dr Girma Ejere, Chair of the Board of Trustees, 17 February 2004

Further information

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the full annual accounts, the auditors' report on these accounts and the Trustees' annual report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from the Finance Manager, Refugee Arrivals Project, 41b Cross Lances Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 2AD, telephone 020 8607 6934.

Our thanks go to our funders and donors, including City Parochial Foundation; Community Fund; Diana Princess of Wales Fund; Home Office (Refugee Integration); Lloyds TSB Foundation; London Boroughs Grants; NASS; Pilgrim Trust.

Balance sheet at 31 March 2003

	2003 £	2002 £
Fixed assets		
Office equipment	150,500	161,309
Current assets		
Debtors and prepayments	291,094	160,489
Bank and cash in hand	2,047,329	1,433,555
Total current assets	2,338,423	1,594,044
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2,077,148	1,023,093
Net current assets	261,275	570,951
Net assets/Total assets less current liabilities	411,775	732,260
Capital and reserves		
Unrestricted funds:		
General Fund	592	177,767
Designated Fixed Assets Fund	150,500	161,309
Restricted funds	260,683	393,184
	411,775	732,260

Planning ahead

We value highly the security provided by the government grants we receive, and we will seek to maintain this important source of funding. We are also mindful that a healthy agency has diverse sources of income, and we are working hard to increase the number of trusts and other funders who support our work.

Our activities rely on funding over a period of several years to ensure the progressive development of humane and efficient services for new asylum seekers and refugees. By gathering unrestricted reserves, we can commit ourselves to long-term development and protect our work against financial fluctuations.

Independent auditors' statement to the Trustees of Refugee Arrivals Project

We have examined the summarised accounts set out here, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and auditors

The summarised accounts are the responsibility of the Trustees. Our responsibility is to report our opinion on the consistency of the summarised accounts with the full annual report and financial statements. We also read the other information contained within the annual review and summary accounts and consider the implications for our statement if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised accounts.

Basis of opinion

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements of Refugee Arrivals Project for the year ended 31 March 2003.

Gotham Erskine, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, 17 February 2004

refugee arrivals project

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Company registered in London, number: 2620083
Registered charity number: 1013556

Patrons: Lord Hylton, Richard Allan MP

Board of Trustees 2003/4

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Sarah Nansukusa (Vice-Chair)	Uganda Community Relief Association
Paddy Ross (Treasurer)	Individual member
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Refugee Action
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Tamil Refugee Action Group
Uganda Community Relief Association

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The British Red Cross Society
United Nations High Commission for Refugees
Amnesty International

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