

Dignified support at times of urgent need



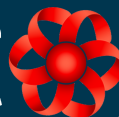
Annual Report and Accounts 2024 - 2025

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Refugee support



Refugee support



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Introduction

We all need safety, community and a sense of belonging.

While local and national contexts may vary, the challenges faced by those we support are deeply human and common to us all. On top of that, people seeking sanctuary face structural injustices, cruel migration policies and widespread discrimination. In short, Refugee Support Europe's work has never been tougher and never been more necessary.

Whether in Cyprus or the UK, many arrive at our doors exhausted, isolated and with nowhere else to turn. Slow and confusing asylum procedures combined with an increasingly hostile environment continue to push many into poverty, homelessness and precarity. The very systems in place to protect fundamental rights seem instead designed to break people.

This year saw a rise in misdirected anger and targeted violence towards racialised and marginalised people. Following years of scapegoating rhetoric by governments across countries and continents, the violence in the UK in summer 2024 marked a deeply alarming escalation. Meanwhile, Trump's re-election, the continued genocide of Palestinians as well as largely forgotten wars in countries like Sudan, highlighted the global importance of our work while making it ever-more challenging.

RSE's ultimate goal is a world where our support is not needed – yet, with each passing year, this becomes harder to imagine. One of our Bournemouth members summarised the profound impact of our work against the stark reality of the current context: "Being at the Dignity Centre, it does start to make you feel human again. We are a problem in this country, something that needs to be managed. But at the Centre we are seen as people."

In a year where hope has felt far away, we have found it time and time again at our Dignity Centres. Everyone involved – whether member, staff, volunteer, local resident, partner or donor – is treated as a stakeholder in shaping stronger, more connected communities. This is what solidarity means to us: standing shoulder to shoulder, recognising our shared humanity and rejecting the idea that one group 'saves' another. We will continue to push back against hatred and division, to push for a fair and compassionate asylum system, and, most importantly, to show up for our members – and each other.

Thank you for standing with us.

Rachel Ellis, Chief Executive

Andrew Tasker, Chair of Trustees

Our Mission & Vision

We envision a world where communities welcome people with dignity, solidarity and compassion. Our central mission is to co-create a future where our support is no longer needed because society has embraced a culture of inclusion and care.

RSE provides practical support for displaced people, fosters solidarity and advocates for systemic change. Since 2016, we have been bridging the critical gap between arrival and settlement through our dignified, choice-based system, offering essential goods in welcoming community spaces. Our advocacy is shaped by our on-the-ground work, demonstrating that a different kind of welcome is possible – one built on dignity, solidarity and community.



Our Projects

Dignity Centres remain the cornerstone of our work and the first pillar of how we support people seeking sanctuary. In 2024–25 we closed our Moldova project whilst continuing to expand and develop our Dignity Centres in Bournemouth, UK and Nicosia, Cyprus. Each responds to local realities in its own way, but all follow the same overarching approach anchored in our values and long-standing practices of care. Despite an increasingly challenging funding landscape and limited resources, our Dignity Centres continue to demonstrate the huge impact and benefits of an alternative welcome for members, volunteers and the local community alike.

Material support remains an integral part of what we do, both in terms of providing the essential items themselves and as a means to offering something much more; an alternative welcome for people with nowhere else to go. Every week, hundreds of people rely on our choice-based Dignity Markets for food, hygiene items and clothes. This year also underlined the growing importance of our Helpdesks, which provide practical, reliable support for people navigating new and unfamiliar systems, understanding their rights and accessing the services they need to build stability and take the next step. We are often the only organisation offering this support with an open-door policy.

In both the UK and Cyprus, our Centres show that an alternative welcome is possible. They demonstrate the mutual benefits that emerge when people are met with solidarity, consistency and respect, and when communities are supported to connect and co-create a sense of belonging.





The Nicosia Dignity Centre, Cyprus

In May 2024, after a brief closure to develop a more sustainable funding model, we reopened the Cyprus Dignity Centre in central Nicosia. Throughout the year the Centre supported members through our Dignity Market, providing food and hygiene products via our points-based 'free shop' system. Alongside material items, our Helpdesk assisted people to register for social support and the right to work, understand complex procedures, prepare their CVs and navigate referrals to specialist services. In addition, we ran a weekly barber service for new members.

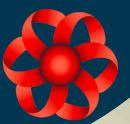
The need for this work remains acute. Cyprus has consistently recorded the highest number of asylum applications per capita in the EU. In 2024 there were 8,664 applications, and more than 20,000 people were waiting for their first-instance decision – all on an island with a total population of around 1.2 million. At the same time, most people seeking asylum live in the community rather than reception centres, often in extremely poor conditions and with limited access to housing, healthcare and legal support.¹

In addition to the daily running of Dignity Centre services, we continue to mobilise during emergencies. In summer 2024, dozens of people seeking asylum, including children, were stranded for weeks in the buffer zone between the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish-occupied north, enduring extreme heat and little sanitation. Just steps from the Green Line, our team prepared 50 hygiene bags to contribute to the coordinated response led by UNHCR Cyprus and UNFICYP.

In September, we strengthened our partnership with LDS, who generously contributed to funding the market, making a tangible difference to the lives of members who are newly arrived in Cyprus and without access other support. And in October, we were joined by the wonderful team at Caravan of Humanity, who brought a huge container of high-quality donated goods, along with a generous donation and even some joyful clown performances for children and families.

As the asylum landscape in Cyprus continues to shift, the need for a consistent, rights-focused space in the heart of Nicosia is clearer than ever. The funding landscape is becoming ever-more challenging and a growing number of partner NGOs are being forced to close or reduce their service offerings. It is essential that we continue to provide this lifeline for people facing uncertainty, isolation and increasingly limited access to essential services.

¹ AIDA Country Report on Cyprus – Update on 2024



The Chişinău Dignity Centre, Moldova

In June 2024 we formally closed our Dignity Centre in Chişinău after a two-year journey that began soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Between March 2022 and May 2024 the Centre supported over 100,000 people with food and hygiene items as thousands of displaced Ukrainians arrived and vulnerable local families faced mounting economic hardship.

As Ukrainian refugees became more established and supported in Moldova, it became clear that our emergency support was no longer where the greatest need lay. The most acute hardship had shifted towards local Moldovan communities living in poverty, beyond the specific mandate of our project. Staying true to our values of dignity, solidarity and community, we made a deliberate decision to step back at the right moment. Closing the project allowed us to avoid creating cycles of dependency and to hand over to trusted local organisations better placed to meet evolving local needs.

All furniture and equipment from the Centre was donated to Moldova for Peace's 'Moldova Film' food distribution point. Our intention is that closing the Chişinău Dignity Centre leaves a legacy of dignity and local empowerment, and creates space for others to lead while we focus where our model is most urgently needed.





The Bournemouth Dignity Centre, UK

In November 2024 we celebrated the first anniversary of our Bournemouth Dignity Centre, which is thriving and busier than ever. We provide an integrated support offer no one else locally is delivering: clothing and hygiene items in our choice-based Dignity Market, plus our expansive Helpdesk covering support navigating the asylum, housing and homelessness support, applying for Universal Credit, opening a bank account, family reunion, food bank referrals, careers advice and job search, education and training, healthcare access and more.

We also run a welcoming coffee corner with hot drinks, fruit and snacks; WiFi, laptops and charging points; books, board games and table tennis, all in a relaxing community space. Alongside this we have a dedicated Homelessness Support offering breakfast and hot drinks, washing facilities and a resting space plus Emergency Packs of warm, waterproof clothing and accessories.

We work closely with Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council and a wide network of local partners to ensure people can access the support they need, while avoiding overlaps in service offerings. We're also supported by an expanding team of volunteers, many with lived experience of migration or who are former members, whose insight and leadership strengthen the shared sense of community at the heart of our work.

In August, racist riots and anti-migrant violence swept across parts of the UK, reaching Bournemouth and creating real fear and division. Yet even amid the intimidation, we were deeply heartened by the outpouring of solidarity from communities up and down the country. This response reinforced exactly why our work matters — and why our focus on dignity and community is so essential. Against this backdrop, it was heartening and hugely impactful to receive the support of local grant-giving organisations including the Talbot Village Trust and Dorset Community Foundation.

With rhetoric and policy around migration becoming increasingly hostile, the need in Bournemouth has only intensified. People seeking sanctuary continue to experience prolonged uncertainty, isolation and homelessness – and the need for our presence is, sadly, growing.

Our Impact



Our Impact: April 2024 - March 2025

Supporting people seeking sanctuary in Cyprus and the UK



Dignity Centre Nicosia

82,355 food & hygiene
items distributed



2,748 Helpdesk
requests attended

294 visits to our
community barber service



Dignity Centre Bournemouth

8,302 clothing & hygiene
items distributed



3,620 Helpdesk
requests attended

6,865 visits to our
Coffee Corner



All this was achieved with a small team of just 3 full-time and 3 part-time staff across the entire organisation.

Stories from our Members

The most meaningful insights into our work come from the people we support. Their experiences show what dignity-first support looks like in practice.

After arriving in Cyprus, Aziz struggled to afford food. "A friend told me about the Dignity Centre. I hoped they could help, but I didn't believe anyone would." When he first registered, the Centre was already supporting 200 people and couldn't help him that day. "I had to wait, and I was worried. But after a week, they told me to come back. That was a very good day for me." Since then, the Centre has become a crucial part of his life. "I've been able to get food, which helps me save money for rent. I even got a haircut!" More than that, Aziz has found a community. "At first, I felt completely alone. But when I came to the Centre, I met others from Sudan. We help each other, and that's really good."*

"Everything I was looking for, I found at the Dignity Centre. The Centre is so important for people like me. Many of us have been through a lot – Libya, Calais, Dunkirk. People arrive here with trauma. If the Centre wasn't here, I don't want to think what it would be like." - Samuel

**Name changed to protect privacy*



Messages from our Members

Thank you so much for your kind message. I truly appreciate all the support and care your team provides to people. You are doing such meaningful and beautiful work. ✓

I also wish, Inshallah, to become like your team in the future — someone who helps others with kindness, patience, and a sincere heart. Your example inspires me deeply, and I hope one day I can also serve people and make a positive difference in their lives, just like you do.

12:21

Thank you
for
everything
"Jamal → Palestine
"Tamara

The meaning for me lies in the sincerity of intention and not in the amount of giving. I am grateful to you and to the entire team and I wish them a very, very, very, very happy life and that they have good people in their lives like them. You are very kind and nice.

17:48

Hello. You messaged my husband this morning and we registered on the labor office website. Thank you very much for your kindness and attention to me and my family. 🌹

12:55

When I come here, I always feel happy with you, you are good. I wish you always success in your beautiful humanitarian efforts.



I sincerely thank you from the bottom of my heart for your effort and support in preparing and correcting my work documents. Your kindness and professionalism mean a lot to me. I truly appreciate your help and will never forget it.

With respect and gratitude,

13:57

A Message of Gratitude and Appreciation to Dignity Center

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and deep gratitude to Dignity Center for their unwavering support and care for vulnerable people in need. I am personally one of the individuals who has directly benefited from their compassion and assistance, and I have experienced a real and positive change in my life because of it.

Dignity Center is not just a place to visit – it is a home of hope, a place where one feels valued, respected, and supported. The help they offer – whether it is emotional, financial, social, or skill-based – truly reflects their commitment to human dignity and well-being.

I sincerely commend their tireless efforts and the way they stand beside those whose voices are often unheard. To the team at Dignity Center, I say: Thank you. May God reward you abundantly and continue to bless the vital work you do for the community.

13:45

Thank so much dignity center 12:27

Sukye

Thank so much dignity center

We love dignity center 🤗🤗 12:27



BUT WHAT CAN I DO? I'M JUST ONE PERSON...

Advocacy and Coalitions

In May, we spoke out against the UK government's Rwanda Bill – legislation that undermined the right to asylum and risked causing profound harm. We joined civil society organisations across the country in saying clearly: not in our name. Our CEO, Rachel Ellis, also contributed to the national conversation in a BBC radio interview, emphasising the real-world consequences for the people we support.

In July, to coincide with the first plenary of the newly elected European Parliament, we joined almost 100 human rights and humanitarian organisations calling on EU leadership to take a firm stance to maintain the right to asylum and the rule of law. In signing the joint statement, we reiterated our belief that dignity must be at the centre of all asylum systems, not eroded at moments of political pressure.

We also continued to call for safe routes to protection. As part of the United Against Inhumanity coalition, we highlighted the devastating human cost of Europe's deterrence-led approach, including avoidable deaths in the Mediterranean and the Channel. Drawing on what we witness daily in our Dignity Centres, our messaging stressed that dignity must begin long before people reach our doors: with legal, workable pathways to safety that prevent dangerous crossings, exploitation and prolonged instability.

In early 2025, we joined the Together With Refugees Campaign Organising Network, deepening our long-standing partnership with this broad coalition working for a fair, well-managed and compassionate asylum system. In Bournemouth, we hosted a special Valentine's Day event, encouraging community members to write love letters to their MP asking for a fair, well-managed and compassionate asylum system.

These advocacy efforts are a natural extension of our work on the ground. Every day we see the consequences of policies that fail people seeking safety, and the possibilities that emerge when dignity is upheld instead.



Outreach and Events

The past year has been a vibrant, community-driven period of fundraising and solidarity - translating to both financial impact and deeper public engagement with our mission.

Our team attended the Brunswick Festival in Brighton and the Greenbelt Festival in Kettering. These events offered the chance to bring our message of dignity, solidarity and community into new spaces, connect with like-minded people, and build relationships with both volunteers and donors.

In supporter-led events, our small but determined team took part in the South Coast Ultra Challenge in September, a multi-distance challenge on the stunning South Downs Way, raising over £1,000 for our work — and setting the stage for next year's participation in Ultras across the country.

In November, our flagship annual fundraiser, Dignify 2024, was an unforgettable night featuring live music from The Breaks, Lovelady and My Fine Companions, plus performances by Blingo: Hip Hop Bingo and DJ Rob Mello. The event raised an incredible £83,000! Special thanks to our Trustee, Eve Linieres, Ambassador, Philippa Brown, and the entire Dignify Committee.

In the philanthropic sphere, our match-fund campaigns continue to demonstrate broad support for our model. In 2024, we ran not one but two Big Give campaigns – one during Refugee Week in June and one just before Christmas – raising a combined total of almost £45,000.

Then, in early 2025, we were honoured to be selected as a chosen charity for the Increase the Peace Festival in Bournemouth, a community-led day bringing together residents, grassroots groups and people with lived experience of migration. It was a heartening show of local support for our work.

These events and campaigns gave our finances a much-needed boost while increasing awareness of our work. In an unprecedentedly challenging fundraising environment, every donation makes a real difference.





Our Volunteer Community

Volunteers are at the heart of our operations and their stories show that even a single act of solidarity can have far-reaching impact, changing lives and communities.

Take the story of Sandy, who volunteered at the Chişinău Dignity Centre:

"My experience volunteering with Refugee Support Europe at the Dignity Centre is one I will never forget. I quickly realised that the rewards far outweighed the physical work — the smiles and gratitude from people choosing the items they needed, and the joy of children discovering the play area. We also formed lasting friendships with our fellow volunteers. Sharing a common purpose helped us bond quickly, and during our four weeks at the Centre my husband David and I met many wonderful, caring people. It was a special experience that will stay with us for a lifetime."

In Cyprus, the power of volunteering was captured by Callum, whose story reiterates how individuals can make a meaningful difference:

"I know that the scale of these problems can be overwhelming ... But I've seen firsthand how individual drops of kindness and solidarity can create ripples, then waves, that create real and lasting change."

Our global volunteer network is now more than 1,800 strong, with people from over 40 countries. This year our volunteers have helped us deepen that network, strengthen peer leadership and embody our values-led approach to transform lives while building sustainable, community-led models of welcome.



Our Ambassadors

In January 2025, we relaunched our Ambassador Programme, inviting long-term supporters and volunteers to help reshape the narrative around displacement and show that small, collective actions can drive monumental change.

Taking a strengths-based approach, the programme offers opportunities for Ambassadors to join us in one of three categories:

Fundraising Champions: Trailblazers who transform their passion into tangible support and help to sustain our Dignity Centres through creative campaigns, events and community engagement.

Assets: Skilled supporters who bring unique skills and expertise, on an ad hoc basis, to enhance our impact, from photography to translation, HR, IT, volunteer interviewing and much more.

Advocates: Storytellers and changemakers who champion our mission and values, whether speaking at public events, hosting workshops or using social media to spread the word.





Our Team

RSE remains proudly volunteer powered, ensuring exceptional value for money and allowing funds to be channelled directly to our projects. The entire international operation is staffed by just three full-time and three part-time team members.

The Back Office function is fully remote, with no office costs or overheads. This year also saw a honing and strengthening of our volunteer Board of Trustees, each of whom have a dedicated remit and responsibility.

In Cyprus, our Field Director, Paula, provides steady, hands-on leadership at the Nicosia Dignity Centre. Alongside overseeing the day-to-day running of the project, Paula plays a central role in shaping how our work is delivered — embedding dignity into our processes, strengthening operational efficiency, and ensuring our impact reporting is both rigorous and transparent. Her oversight, experience and attention to detail are critical to the projects' effectiveness and accountability.

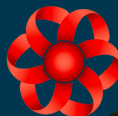
In the field, each Dignity Centre has a full-time Coordinator, and we are working hard to secure funding to bring in full-time additional Coordinators to keep up with growing demand. In July 2024, we were delighted to welcome Zoe Keeping as Coordinator of the Bournemouth Dignity Centre.

Since joining the team, Zoe has guided the Centre through a period of unprecedented growth, responding with agility and care to the urgent and continually evolving needs of our members. Under her coordination, services have expanded and adapted to ensure the Centre remains responsive, welcoming and effective at a time of increasing demand. In September, Zoe was joined by part-time Coordinator, Caroline Beale Johnson, strengthening the team's capacity and helping to ensure the continuity and consistency of service delivery.

Special thanks to our wonderful team of volunteer Ambassador Assets, who are instrumental in everything from volunteer interviews to content creation and IT support.



2024-25 Annual Accounts: Financial Report for the Board

Refugee
support 



Financial year ending 31st March 2025

Author: Bea Shrewsbury (Trustee Treasurer)

We finished the financial year with a cash surplus over the year for the first time since 2021-22. This is particularly thanks to an uptick in grants and the success of events and campaigns such as Dignify and the Big Give.

Our overall turnover has decreased by 25% over the last year due to the closing of the Ukraine project in Moldova, which had been well supported by grants and donations.

Despite starting the year with confidence, the cashflow forecast continues to show a reducing balance. As needs grow, our financial situation remains extremely precarious and we must continue to work hard to secure income to maintain operations, month to month.

“ —

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Profit and Loss

Refugee Support Europe CIO For the year ended 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
Income		
Corporate Donations (not linked to a fundraiser)	5,590	3,832
Grant Income	160,372	215,773
Gift Aid from HMRC	8,255	20,705
Volunteer and Individual donations (after cost)	25,669	90,104
Non-Financial Donations	9,294	77,666
Fundraising Profit (loss)	37,825	17,880
on-line sales Profit (loss)	359	(261)
Interest Income	1,698	1,370
Local Group Donation	707	7,482
Regular Individuals donations	10,392	18,449
Fundraising Campaign (Big Give and similar) individual	4,044	-
Fundraising Campaign (Big Give and similar) Corporate	28,255	8,561
RSE Fundraising Event Sponsorship Trustee organised events	62,000	11,000
Total Income	354,461	472,561
Cost of Refugee Projects		
Cost of Country Specific Personel	67,648	66,105
Cost of Dignity Centres and Warehousing	56,464	75,784
Cost of Clothing for Refugees	21,314	3,215
Cost of Food Purchased	60,594	263,334
Cost of Misc. Activities for Refugees	9,311	14,700
Cost of Misc. Items for for Refugees	15,872	27,508
Project legal, Accounting and Insurance	3,015	-
Total Cost of Refugee Projects	234,218	450,646
Surplus (Deficit) after Direct Costs	120,243	21,915
Operating Expenses		
Head-Office Staff	57,390	62,605
General Head Office Costs	3,901	11,021
Depreciation	1,232	1,625
Banking Costs	1,249	2,780
Bad Debt (promised but unpaid donations)	-	50
Total Operating Expenses	63,773	78,081
Surplus after all Costs	56,470	(56,166)
Surplus (Deficit) Carried Forward	56,470	(56,166)

Balance Sheet

Refugee Support Europe CIO As at 31 March 2025

	31 MAR 2025	31 MAR 2024
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	739	1,633
Total Fixed Assets	739	1,633
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	209,860	134,623
Prepayments and accrued income	9,698	9,758
Accounts Receivable	-	10,000
Total Current Assets	219,559	154,381
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors including credit card and cash accounts	755	1,801
Salaries and HMRC Payable	1,361	(7,500)
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2,116	(5,699)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	217,443	160,080
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	218,182	161,712
Net Assets	218,182	161,712
Capital and Reserves		
Retained Income account	161,712	217,878
Current Year Earnings	56,470	(56,166)
Total Capital and Reserves	218,182	161,712

Our Valued Partners

Refugee
support



DISASTERS
EMERGENCY
COMMITTEE



Special thanks

We are especially grateful to these generous individuals and organisations who were instrumental in supporting us this year.

Organisations

- Amazon Europe
- Carry the Future
- Caravan of Humanity
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Citibank
- Dorset Community Foundation
- Evan Cornish Foundation
- Ford Family Foundation
- Fox Eadie Charitable Trust
- JP McManus
- London Lites
- LUSH
- Refugees at Home
- Talbot Village Trust
- Talon Outdoor
- Warburg Pincus

Ambassadors and Key Supporters

- Annabel and Russell Merrett
- Andrew Betts
- Dina Nayeri
- Eileen Lunga
- Gerry Clancy
- Gulwali Passarlay
- Gopi Chelliah
- Janet Windeatt
- Jo Davies
- Logan Leasure
- Madeline Holder
- Mark Vrionides
- Paul Hutchings
- Philippa Brown
- Phil Billingham
- Silke Hollander
- Stephan Pretorius





“

—
This is where I finally
feel safe. The Dignity
Centre is the corner-
stone for refugees
here. It creates an
environment that
encourages
resilience.

- Bournemouth Dignity Centre member

