



BHN Spring Newsletter 2021

Updates from BHN's two Directors!

Lizzie - "We have LOADS to update you on so grab a cup of tea and start reading!"

Activity since Autumn 2020 - BHN has housed 37 members since lockdown began, with 26 currently accommodated in our men's house and host network, and many more on the waiting list. We continue to provide £20 per week for these members, alongside food referrals where they are still needed.

A special thank you to Helen Kidan, our Member Volunteer Coordinator, whose job has completely changed due to the C19 pandemic. Since the drop-in closed, Helen has been focusing on the welfare of our members, carrying out endless phone calls, facilitating vaccinations, enrolling members on courses including an English language course at [International House](#) (funded by [Trinity College](#)). You can read more about Helen's work and the members she has been helping below.

Thank you Helen and thanks to all our staff and volunteers for continuing to work hard and adapt so effectively to the changing needs of our members. You are all an inspiration!

It has been a difficult winter for our members. Although we were able to accommodate 11 more asylum seekers as part of our Host Expansion Project, the winter months have been lonely and often triggered past trauma. A special

thank you to our staff and volunteers who have gone above and beyond supporting certain members' physical and mental health issues during this time and we look forward with hope as to when we can all meet up again.

On April 12th, we returned to Easton Family Centre to use the office and setup 1:1 meetings with members, either to discuss their case, manage accommodation changes or simply see how they are doing. We were operating in this way until the third lockdown in January this year, so we are pleased to be back as it has proven to be so vital in progressing asylum claims and supporting members with specific needs.

In other news, I will be staying on as Development Director for two days a week from May onwards, with Rachael returning as Operations Director for 2.5 days. Furthermore, I am expecting a baby, which is due mid-June, and so as soon as I transition to this new role in May I will be off on maternity leave in June! This means we are recruiting for my replacement in the form of a **Fundraising Manager**. Click [here](#) for information about the role and how to apply, or read the advert below."

Lizzie King



Rachael Bee and her husband Peter with 14 month old Daniel.

Rachael - "I'm so pleased to be back to work at BHN and really look forward to reconnecting with all our amazing members, volunteers, trustees and staff. It's been a hard year for us all but we hope that things are looking a bit brighter for the year to come.

BHN has been working so hard over this pandemic and it's a testament to our community spirit and the wonderful BHN family that we've been able to carry on our core work of hosting destitute asylum seekers among all these challenges, even expanding our host network this year! We want to rebuild our community life as we are allowed to do so and hope you will join us again in offering hospitality at BHN's amazing Welcome Centre when we can. We can't wait until we can have feasts again and a packed centre, but this still feels a long way off right now!

A big thank you to all our wonderful supporters who kept us afloat through the huge challenge of the pandemic. We are a resilient community and we need each other's strength as we find a new way forward after Covid-19. Looking forward to seeing many of you soon."

Interview with Helen Kidan, Member Volunteer Coordinator at BHN (by Lizzie Briggs)

How has your role changed since the pandemic?

"Due to the drop-in stopping, I no longer focus on supporting Member Volunteers. Instead I now support Laura in her work with the Hosting Network. I have had to be a lot more flexible in supporting all staff with their roles where the need is greatest. This has meant I have learnt a lot about other areas of work across BHN."

How have members been over the winter months?

"I've seen more incidents of depression and there's a real need for members to have someone to talk to, either to meet practical needs or just to chat. The winter and the third lockdown made it really difficult for members to get out and about, so a lot of people have been stuck inside and are really lonely. I have tried to encourage them to get outside and go for walks, but they don't always feel like it. I have referred a number of our members to [Wesport](#), who provide tennis lessons and sports coach training to refugees, asylum seekers and individuals from disadvantaged communities."

"Regarding asylum claims, members have been feeling really frustrated with the slowness of their asylum cases due to the pandemic, as there aren't many solicitors processing this work, and those who are, are inundated."

Has members' needs changed over the course of the pandemic?

"The need for food parcels for some of our members hasn't gone away. We have newly partnered with [91 Ways](#), which our members LOVE because they deliver halal meat! They are also doing extra deliveries to our men's hostel. [FareShare](#) continues to be a fantastic partner, as has [Community Care Package](#) and [Aid Box Community](#) (who provide clothes and household items). The latter has been useful where members have needed blankets, radiators, hot water bottles, jumpers, winter coats and shoes."

"Digital fatigue became apparent quite quickly for our members – they didn't want to engage with BHN via video call, because they are already doing this with family and friends back home. Phone calls work much better when it comes to connecting with members. Every time I speak to a member, their first question is always: 'when is the Welcome Centre going to re-open?'. We are all looking forward to that day!"

Thanks Helen for taking the time to share yours and our member's experiences!



Held In Common Podcast: Stories from the People of Bristol

Polly Tisdall / The Network Bristol

Held In Common is a podcast that celebrates the stories that are held in our communities, in our common knowledge, in our folk histories and in our everyday. It seeks to bring together diverse voices and to celebrate all that we have, and hold, in common. This second series focuses on Home Truths: stories from Bristol residents about the positive actions they are taking to create secure homes for themselves and others - pandemic or no pandemic. Held In Common is made up of recordings contributed by Bristol residents via phone call, Zoom and WhatsApp voice note. It is important to us that as many people as possible are able to contribute. Occasionally this may affect sound quality but we think that's a sacrifice worth making!

Click on the image to listen to the podcast

INTERESTED IN HOSTING?

Then head over to [our blog](#) for an interview with current host Mike Orme, where you'll find out just how much he has enjoyed hosting over this past year.



Job Vacancy at BHN: Fundraising Manager

Fundraising Manager (Maternity Cover)

Salary: £28,000 - £30,000pa (pro-rata), dependent on experience

Location: Bristol office (Easton) and home

Contract: Fixed-term, temporary contract (anticipated 13 months from May 2021)

Hours: 2 days per week (15 hours)

Pension: Defined contribution pension scheme (NEST) with 4% employer contribution

We are looking for a Fundraising Manager to join our team as a temporary maternity cover. The positions key responsibilities will be fundraising from trusts and foundations and individuals, but we will also require the post holder to contribute to BHN's communications, develop other income streams, contribute to fundraising financial management and line-manage the Office and Finance Manager.

The successful candidate will have at demonstrable experience of sourcing and bid-writing to trusts and foundations, as well as experience in fundraising from individual donors. To this end, they will have strong written and verbal communication skills and

an ability to quickly assimilate new information and tell it in a compelling and creative way.

If you want to informally discuss this position, do email Lizzie Briggs at lizzieb@bhn.org.uk.

Closing date: Midnight 18th April 2021.

[Apply Here](#)



Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP): COVID Collaboration and Call to Action

Date/Time: Thursday, 29 April, 2021 - 09:30 to 11:00

Location: Online

Cost: Free

Organised/hosted by: Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership and Voscur

BRASP is a new partnership made up of 16 organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol.

This event will:

- Introduce Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership members, aims and vision
- Demonstrate the impact of our combined efforts in an official launch of BRASP Covid Collaboration Evaluation Report. We have all learned a lot from each other over the past 12 months and believe this collaboration is unique in its vision, intention and capability – something of which Bristol can be incredibly proud.

- Call on all the WECA and Bristol Mayoral candidates to support our list of 'Asks' in the support of displaced people in the city and surrounding areas ahead of the elections on May 5th.

We hope you can join us for the event and on our onward journey as we continue to make Bristol a true City of Sanctuary. Please use the hashtag #BRASP2021 if you want to talk about this event on social media. [Click here](#) to book your place.

For those celebrating Ramadan, Eid Mubarak!



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