



bristol hospitality network

BHN Summer Newsletter 2023

Dear Supporter,

It's been a long time since you heard from us. We may have been silent but we've definitely been busy!

In December 2022, after 13 years at the helm, BHN Director Rachel Bee moved on to concentrate on family life and welcome a new addition to her family. We wish her and her family good luck for the future.

My name is [Mijanou Blech](#), and I am the new Director of BHN. My background is in the voluntary and charitable sector, where I ran small charities and large departments in bigger public sector organisations. I am passionate about social justice and ensuring that underrepresented voices are heard loud and clear and have agency over their destinies and futures.

I want to start by thanking you for your ongoing support. Many of you volunteer with us, campaign alongside us and donate to us regularly.

Your support means that our members can live with dignity and survive the hardships of the UK asylum system.

At BHN, we know we have a lot to do given the current hostile environment created by this government towards asylum seekers and refugees, so I am delighted to be joining the team.

BHN stands together in solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees and we invite you to continue to support us in countering the hateful narrative fuelled by ignorance and misinformation from our government.

I look forward to working with you to end the destitution of asylum seekers and refugees and to bring awareness of the humanity and gift they bring to the UK.

With many thanks,

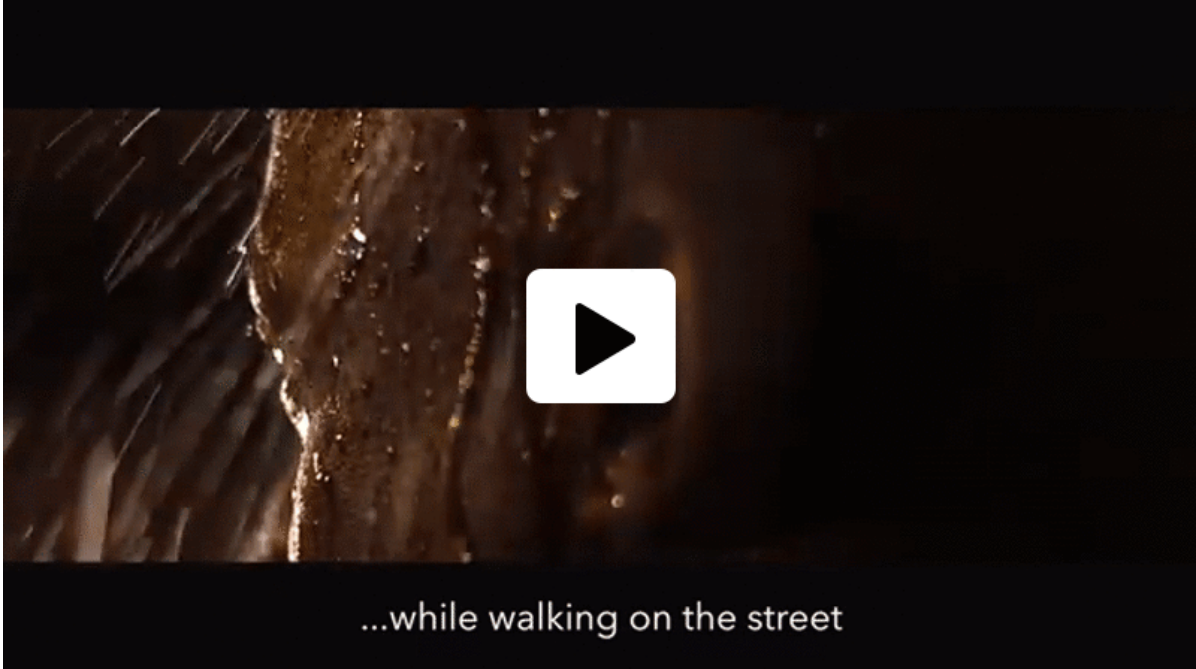
Mijanou

Our Impact 2022/23		
We housed 28 people that's 6,993 nights of accommodation	We had 688 face to face advice meetings with 108 people	Our Welcome Centre delivered 50 drop in sessions for 375 individuals
We gave out £38,000 in solidarity payments	We provided over 3,500 hot meals	We delivered 120 English classes to 47 individuals

"You helped me when other people say they can't help. You try and you keep trying for me even when it's hard and other people say no, not possible. That's the difference."

BHN Member

Below is a short film made with one of our members about the impact of destitution.



New Developments

Most our work is with refused asylum seekers made destitute and homeless by the system when their claims are rejected. We are, however, increasingly welcoming asylum seekers waiting in Home Office hotels for their initial interviews at our weekly drop-in centre. We have also seen an upsurge in women with children coming to the centre.

- **We are on track to become registered with the Home Office (OISC)** to increase the level of legal advice we can give to our members. This is a significant move for us and critical for asylum seekers. Legal Aid to support asylum claims is becoming more difficult to find, with many people now having to pay for private solicitors, which often leads to financial debt.
- **We are becoming member led**, putting our members at the heart of developing BHN's future services. We already have a 3-year member-led strategy, created by members.
- **Moveable Feast** — we are developing our catering social enterprise to support skills and employment development for our members. If you or your company wish to enquire about our event-catering services, please contact bibiana@bhn.org.uk. By booking us for your event, you will not only be supporting our members to develop new skills but also funding our development.

How to support BHN

We know times are tough for everyone so we really appreciate your support in whatever form it takes.

Volunteer your time and expertise

We always need volunteers and expertise to help us deliver our services, and we'd love to hear from you! If you think you have time to give, please contact helen@bhn.org.uk.

We need general volunteers, catering volunteers, English/ESOL teachers, and support with Comms and Social Media.

Your continuing support will help to provide a welcoming space for those stuck in hotels day after day. Our welcome centre plays a crucial role in supporting the health and wellbeing of our members, providing a space to socialise, hot meals, classes, leisure activities, and advice and support.

Donate or fundraise for us

And if you can, any financial support you can give will enable us to keep asylum seekers from destitution and homelessness when they have been refused asylum. The money we raised from public donations goes directly to asylum seekers in the form of destitution payments, travel and food costs.

How you can contribute:

- Fundraise for us putting on your own event using the fundraising platform [Local Giving](#)
- Donate as a one off or regularly through [Local Giving](#)
- Get together with friends and colleagues to pledge money for the [Big Give](#). This money will be matched by a sponsor, doubling the value of your donation.
- And of course you can book a [Moveable Feast](#) for your next event or celebration.

Please help us to spread the word.

Before you go, I want to introduce you to Nabil, one of our amazing members.



Nabil's story

He may be only 25, but Nabil has already lived 3 different lives.

Meet Nabil



Thank you!

Mijanou

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