



Annual Report 2021

SSR's team growth in 2021.

The vital funding secured from the lottery has enabled us to employ our Office Manager, Emma Hughes on a full time contract. In addition to managing the day to day running of the office, Emma also manages the volunteer co-ordination.



Deborah Phillips joined the team in June 2021 as office support. With a background of banking and more recently third sector experience, Debs has proved to be a vital member of the SSR team taking the lead on the organisations funding.

Robert Douglas our volunteer director has taken on the role of Project Support Manager. Robs primary role is to oversee the role out of the Schools of Sanctuary and the City of Sanctuary projects. Rob has been successfully appointed chair of governors at two local schools, one primary and one secondary. Rob also sits on the board of governors at another local primary school.



Trustee, Nour Morjan is now a published author. Through links made with a volunteer to SSR, Nour has written an empowering poetry book which is available through Victoria Press publishing house.

<https://www.victorinapress.com/product/i-am-the-power-you-undermine-by-nour-morjan/>

SSR have applied to employ two younger people via the governments kick starter scheme. These are exciting and varied roles which are designed to give a young person a step up into employment.

We have employed two new part-time people to work in the HAF holiday clubs that are run in conjunction with Shropshire Youth Association (SYA). One of those employed is Hasan, a young Syrian chap from one of the families. Currently studying plumbing at college, Hasan has been a great addition to our team on a voluntary basis and as part of the HAF groups.



SSR has also been fortunate to have the help of many volunteers this year, including Noah Capleton and Rufus Dean.

Noah is currently studying Geography at the university of Manchester. Noah has a keen interest in refugees and migrants and focused his studies on 'Refugee Integration in Shropshire' as part of his A-Level coursework.

Rufus a recent post graduate of the university of Keele volunteered throughout the summer with office duties.



Kariman Yakhoul, our Family Welfare Officer continues to provide a vital link between the families and education services. Kariman also provides support via interpretation and translation.

Nashwa Haraz continues to be our reliable interpreter and family support worker. Nashwa will be getting more involved with SSR projects in 2022.



Resettlement.

The covid pandemic has all but seen the halt of resettlement. However in 2021 Shropshire Council has pledged to resettle five families through various resettlement schemes and it is thought that the same applies to Telford and Wrekin.

Despite the pandemic, SSR welcomed a new family to the county at the beginning of September. This is the first time SSR have been responsible for the resettlement in year one. In conjunction with Shropshire Councils resettlement officer, Jacki Cairney the family were welcomed into a fully furnished house. A new laptop awaited them, an extensive selection of clothes and welcome hampers of Shropshire goods were provided. SSR have organised a local volunteer to be on hand and one of the families, who have been here for several years, and lives locally is helping them settle in.



The older cohorts of families are getting on well now. Most are working, we are working on helping those who are struggling to attain their goals and ambitions where we can.

Most families have gained their driving licences, including many ladies.

A couple of our volunteers have braved sitting with them and given them much needed driving practice and accompanied them to the test centre.



Donations

With the heart-breaking news emerging from Afghanistan we were overwhelmed and inundated with peoples kind donations of goods, financial contributions and people wanting to volunteer their time.

SSR response to the Afghanistan crisis.

1500

Phone calls, emails and social media messages.

We saw our closed Facebook page traffic increase to over 2.6k members.

Bags of donations received and processed by our volunteers

over
2000

8

Articles in the media via BBC Radio Shropshire, Shropshire Star/Chronicle and TV coverage on Midlands Today.

Collection points set up around Shropshire, all reaching capacity within two weeks of the news breaking. These included schools, churches, a mosque, village groups, community groups and individuals.

10

Local organisations offered help and facilities including:
Morris Property
United Reformed Church
Veolia
Wenlock Water
Shropshire Council
Storage King

6

Local volunteers pitched in and helped sort donations

over
70



Afghanistan Response

As the huge amount of donations were sorted our focus turned to how they would be distributed to those most in need.

Due to the nationwide shortage of affordable homes the recently arrived Afghan nationals are being temporarily housed in hotels around the country.

We built links with two hotels in Telford and one hotel in Wolverhampton. SSR supported them by delivering clothes, toys, toiletries and baby equipment. SSR purchased two sewing machines for the Telford hotels to allow the ladies to fashion their own traditional garments.

In addition, the families already resettled in Shropshire were given the opportunity to pick out items for themselves.

Many other local organisations have benefited from the donations we've received including Little Stars Baby Bank, Baby Stop Support Group, ShareAid, Roden Dogs Home and many more individuals.



Activities

Throughout 2021 SSR have held a number of activities for the families, the children and volunteers.

32

activities & events were held throughout 2021.

22

children on average attended each activity held

These included a weekly youth group, the summer and winter HAF holiday groups held in conjunction with SYA, a ladies picnic, a BBQ for our volunteers, an afternoon of boxing with Joe Lockley of Brightstar Boxing Academy, an animation workshop with Carol Isaacs and many more.



Funding

As always, SSR are eternally grateful for the support and funding that we have received throughout the year.

2021 saw the end of our large contract with Shropshire Council. We are now negotiating a family by family payment structure for future resettlement.

The National Lottery Community Fund is our main funder. In addition to this we've been very fortunate to receive several smaller grants and substantial donations from the local Rotary clubs, The Quakers, Community Resource, The Shropshire Humanists, Ludlow Humanists, Ludlow Baptists Church, The Leigh Trust, The Wynn Foundation, The Passionists, Hugh Symons, and The Shropshire Masons.

2021 saw the launch of our online donation platform via Peoples Fundraising. A great facility to allow people to make one off donations or monthly contributions. This method of giving is becoming more and more popular and has enabled SSR to reach new audiences.

Our primary focus for 2022 will be securing future funding to ensure our services can carry on.



Volunteers



23

New volunteers in 2021

31

Active volunteers over the course of 2021
*not including donation sorting volunteers

34

People who have benefited from a volunteer
*not including donation sorting volunteers

Throughout the year, our volunteer base has grown steadily despite the pandemic.

Much support was moved online and then gradually it has become back to face-to-face which of course is much more preferable for the families.

Our dedicated volunteers have shown through their flexibility, time and patience the rewarding, genuine friendships and irreplaceable support that has developed between themselves and the families.

With their own relatives thousands of miles away, our families have been extremely grateful for the support, concern and practical help that our volunteers have been able to offer.

Training & Education

Training continues to be at the forefront of SSR. I'm now a Shropshire Safeguarding Partnership trainer and we look forward to putting training on for our volunteers and families.

Other training that the SSR team we have completed includes.....

Safeguarding
Domestic abuse
Understanding trauma
Exploitation
Delivered raising awareness in safeguarding
Impact of Covid on BAME community
Bid writing course with SCC
City Of Sanctuary Midlands
Asylum Matters
Mental health and well-being conference
Get grants tender training
CoS training
First aid
IICSA sexual abuse in ethnic minorities
HAF Training

English support:

SSR are extremely grateful for the two paid English teachers that we have on the team, Ginny and Avis.

The combination of online classes as well as 1:1 and face-to-face support for the individuals needing it has meant that many of our families have come on in strides with their English.

We continue to adapt our program according to need and appetite and of course available budget.

City of Sanctuary & Schools of Sanctuary

2021 was a big year for City Of Sanctuary movement in Shropshire.

Counsellor Kate Halliday kindly brought the motion to Shewsbury Town council and then Shropshire Council for both to work towards becoming councils and town councils of sanctuary.

Both motions were passed unanimously and we look forward to helping them to achieve the accreditation.



Robert has forged ahead with his new role and has helped many schools on the way with achieving the schools of sanctuary accreditation. In total we are engaging with nine schools working on this across the county.



<https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/>

<https://cityofsanctuary.org/>

Partnerships

The Shropshire Cycle Hub

We are proud to be associated with the SCH, an, inspiring charity that focuses on increasing and supporting active travel in Shropshire. Thanks to the referral service, many refugees and asylum seekers have received free bikes over this year.

I am proud to be a trustee of this charity and you can expect to see us collaborating in some events throughout the year



International Peace talks and dialogue project

We were proud to offer some of our young people the opportunity to attend a two day course called

'Preparing UK and Serbian Youth to Promote Dialogue for Peace'.

Delivered by Dr Phill Gittins Phd, education director for World Beyond War and Anna Gillions.

We were kindly hosted by Shrewsbury university and funded by KAICIID, the project cumulated in a live online discussion with students from Serbia.

We look forward to further collaborations with Phill and his teams.



This Preparing UK, Serbian and Austrian Youth to Promote Dialogue for Peace has been supported as part of the KAICIID Young Leaders Programme. The views, opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this workshop are strictly those of the individual author, participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Dialogue Centre (IDC) or its Member States.

WHO:
YOUNG PEOPLE (age 18-30) interested in PEACEBUILDING and DIALOGUE

WHAT:
A participatory process of learning and dialogue with three phases:
- Phase 1: SURVEY
- Phase 2: TWO-DAY WORKSHOP
- Phase 3: VIRTUAL GATHERING

WHERE:
- University Centre Shrewsbury
- Shropshire, England

WHEN:
- WORKSHOPS
Thursday, 25th of November, 9.00am - 4.00pm
Friday, 26th of November, 9.00am - 4.00pm
- VIRTUAL GATHERING
Date and time to be confirmed

FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:
Anna Gillions
07579003788
annagillions@gmail.com

Logos for CID, Rotaract, and SHROPSHIRE SUPPORTS REFUGEES are visible.



I was incredibly fortunate to meet Gulwali Passarlay.

Gulwali is a speaker, activist and former refugee from Afghanistan who made the voyage to the UK alone in 2006, aged just 12. He is a published author of *'A Lightless Sky' An Afghan Refugee Boy's Journey of Escape To A New Life in Britain.*

I look forward to building our relationship and look to inviting him to speak at awareness raising events.



Refugee Week

Refugee week in 2021 was again scuppered by Covid-19.

Despite this we still managed to put on a program of awareness raising activities with the help of Niki Holmes our ever enthusiastic creative lead.

Jonathan Day, a local musician performed at the In Good Hands cafe in aid of SSR and the charity For Freedom from Torture, a very worthy cause.

'The Big Walk' in association with the Jo Cox Foundation, took place through the town.

A trip to Soulton Hall to watch the production of Animal Farm was organised.

We also, launched the poetry pamphlet created last year by the collaboration of talented local poets led by the passionate poet Paul Francis. Books are available to buy from us and at events in the future.

All details were published on our dedicated Refugee Week website: www.shropshirerefugeeweek.org

For anyone who would like to get involved in Refugee Week 2022, the theme is *'The Healing Journey'*. A thought provoking theme with plenty of scope for creativity.

A look into what 2022 has to hold...

In 2022 we intend to increase our activities focusing on individuals needs as opposed to the groups needs, as time has gone by the need for group activities has become less and it seems more appropriate to focus on individuals who would like our help.

The families that we have resettled over the last five years really have come on in strides and don't need us anywhere near as much as they used to and infact we are enjoying getting the help from them and engaging with their businesses.

Examples of this is we have worked with two van companies, two caterers, a photographer and employed one youth worker as well as engaged a number of our refugee individuals who have volunteered for us.

We will continue to bring together the mental health and well-being project, and look into starting a charity shop.

We look forward to telling you all about the projects booked in for 2022 including the Cavalier Center (kindly funded by Energize)

Circus without borders, Shrewsbury Town in the community, Shropshire Ethnic Minority Alliance, Telford and Wrekin resettlement team, the Marches anti slavery Partnership, Shropshire cat rescue, Shropshire Alzheimer's society, the Branch project and Shropshire Festivals to name just a few.

We also look forward to increasing our ESOL provision, opportunities to get into meaningful work and helping people to start businesses up and assisting with mental heath issues.

SSR will continue to deliver talks and awareness raising activities, nurturing empathy, celebrating diversity, coordinating offers of support, requests for help and facilitating projects.

Amanda & Team SSR

