



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



‘When I first came to Hackney Migrant Centre, I was staying with friends, I had to keep up with my debt, with my work and my two young children.

I was really struggling. I needed help at that time because I was at breaking point and I had nowhere to go. A friend referred me to Hackney Migrant Centre and I’m so happy I went.

When I came to the centre, it was like my problem was not just my problem alone, it felt like we were in it together and it gave me a sense of belonging and I had hope, that word, I had hope.

HMC Visitor



CURRENT STAFF MEMBERS



Daf Viney
Director of Services



Sue Marris
Director of Operations



Ida Jarsve
Fundraiser



Sarah Emm
Finance Officer



Mark Dunn
Destitution Casework
Coordinator



Lauren Stewart
Caseworker for Migrant
Families and Young People



Anna Mulcahy
Access to Justice
Worker



Sarah Hull
Volunteer Coordinator

WHAT WE DO

Hackney Migrant Centre was established in 2008 by local people and community organisations, in recognition of the need for professional advice and support for migrants in Hackney and surrounding areas, irrespective of their status. Our service specialises in supporting migrants who have few other sources of support and those with complex cases, including victims of trafficking and human rights abuses; survivors of gender-based violence; undocumented people; refused asylum seekers; and those who are homeless or facing destitution.

The charity's objects are:

1. To relieve the needs of migrants, especially those whose immigration status is precarious, irregular and/or temporary, through the provision of legal and other advice and advocacy.
2. To relieve financial hardship and destitution among migrants, especially those whose immigration status is precarious, irregular and/or temporary, through the provision of legal and other advice, advocacy and support.
3. To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of migrants, especially those whose immigration status is precarious, irregular and/or temporary, by providing advice and advocacy to assist them to access health and other relevant services.

4. To advance the education of the public in general about issues relating to migrants, especially those whose immigration status is precarious, irregular and/or temporary.

For 11 months of 2019-20 we continued our successful model of running a weekly drop-in:

- When visitors arrive at the weekly drop-in session our team of volunteers collects information to identify what advice they are seeking, and then professional advisers provide initial immigration advice or welfare advice and health advocacy as appropriate. Many visitors see more than one adviser. Volunteers provide a welcoming atmosphere and a delicious lunch and also carry out many other tasks to provide support such as applying for cash grants for individuals in poverty or helping fill out forms.
- Beyond the initial advice at the drop-in, our in-house welfare advisers provide longer-term casework in response to the increasing complexity of issues facing visitors. They secure housing support for destitute individuals and families including those with No Recourse to Public Funds or who have undocumented status, alongside welfare support, health advocacy and emergency poverty relief. Through partnerships with immigration advisers we offer free, specialist immigration advice. We also facilitate referrals to external legal representatives. In addition, we provide support to apply for Exceptional Case Funding to obtain legal aid for those who are eligible and not able to pay privately for representation to regularise their immigration status.

As you will read in this report, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 our service has been delivered through telephone appointments, rather than face-to-face. Staff, volunteers and advisers work remotely to provide immigration and welfare advice. Furthermore, due to the depth of vulnerability and destitution visitors are facing during the pandemic we set up an additional service delivering food, cleaning products, supermarket vouchers and other essentials to visitors to support them through this crisis.

We anticipate that our restructured service will have to continue in this way for several months.



‘In an era when political disenfranchisement is endemic and political action often feels immensely futile, Hackney Migrant Centre remains open as an avenue for collective resistance.

HMC work is inherently political, rooted in trying to challenge deeply embedded and intertwined oppressions based on race, class, gender/sexuality, and immigration status. Yet, HMC is also a place of joy; from the shared jollof at the drop-in centre to the COVID-era weekly support calls of the Collective Care Team, there is radical power in creating space for celebration and fostering connection.

Within an institutional system which is built and designed to alienate us, HMC responds by showing the transformative potential of an ethics built upon showing care and sharing joy.’

HMC Volunteer

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND TRUSTEES RAYAH FELDMAN

This overview should really be about our work from April 2019 to March 2020. However, faced with so cataclysmic an event as Covid-19, much of it would be obsolete without a focus on how the pandemic has affected the world of migrants and the work of Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC).

Before Covid-19 our frontline work took place at our Wednesday drop-in where migrant visitors arrived each week to get advice and enjoy lunch with volunteers and each other. The drop-in also included yoga and, at times, an art project for people waiting for their advice, and a play area for families attending. Meanwhile our busy and always welcoming kitchen team concocted delicious meals from largely unpredictable donated food.

At the heart of the drop-in were the volunteers welcoming our visitors and carrying out needs assessments to identify the most appropriate advice and support we could give. Although our work extended far beyond the weekly drop-in, it is the drop-in that embodied our ethos of holistic support and solidarity.

Enter Covid-19, and a week before the government announced a total lockdown, our staff decided that, in the interests of safety for visitors, volunteers and advisers, we had to close the drop-in. It was, for everyone concerned, a heart-breaking decision. But it was immediately apparent that we needed new ways to address problems the pandemic threw up for both existing and potential new visitors.

It was clear that many migrants would face homelessness and destitution as a result of lockdown, especially those with No Recourse to Public Funds. This group includes people with legal entitlement to work as well as undocumented migrants with no entitlements at all. But numerous precarious and

low-paid workers, of whom a high proportion are migrants, saw their jobs disappear with no provision from furlough or state benefits. Many migrants became at risk of losing their livelihoods and their homes. Others became stuck in overcrowded accommodation with no hope of social distancing.

In the harshest possible circumstances, hostile environment policies were leaving the most vulnerable migrants with an almost complete lack of even minimal protections. Migrants' rights organisations campaigned for, among other things, provision of safe accommodation for all, suspension of NHS charging with no data sharing with the Home Office and a public information campaign to ensure safe access to healthcare for migrants during the pandemic. As yet, to our knowledge, the government has provided no information about Covid-19 in community languages.

Our response at HMC was swift and efficient, led by our Director of Services, Daf Viney, and our incredibly committed team of staff and office-based interns. All of them had to work from home when the official lockdown began and only occasionally returned to our office. Within three weeks of closing the drop-in, Daf and the staff had designed and set up a Remote Advice Service. This has enabled a small team of volunteers to continue to assess the needs of approximately 10 people each week who are guaranteed appointments with immigration or welfare advisers if these are needed.

In addition, a new Collective Care Team was set up with extraordinary energy and imagination. This enabled our most vulnerable existing visitors and some new ones to receive food packages and shopping, as well as regular

check-up calls from a team of volunteers, often cycling through Hackney and beyond with their parcels.

Both Collective Care and Remote Advice are still continuing. We have fundraised successfully to provide material support to destitute individuals and families, and from a high of 65 households supported, we are still assisting 50, and feel that we need to continue this service for some time to come.

We have also carried on our campaigns for free school meals for children currently excluded because of their parents' immigration status, and to end the charging of migrants for NHS hospital care. These discriminatory and stigmatising policies only serve to further impoverish migrant individuals and families. A partial U-turn by the government on providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds followed court action and campaigning in which our lead campaigner Nadia Chalabi played a key role.

In 2019, we moved temporarily from our long-term home at St. Mary's Church, Stoke Newington because of refurbishment, to premises at St. Mark's Church in Dalston. Sadly Anna Rudd left us after brilliant work as Destitution Support Coordinator, working with very vulnerable individuals and families. We were pleased to appoint Anna Mulcahy as our Exceptional Case Funding Project Worker enabling us to apply in-house for legal aid for our visitors. We have also been delighted to welcome a regular volunteer, Elizabeth Kolawale-Johnson, to our board of trustees.

For me as Chair, and for all the trustees, the creativity and dedication of our staff and volunteers have been inspiring. We offer huge thanks to our 50 or more volunteers for their

enormous contribution at the drop-in, either with visitors or in the kitchen, or their contribution to helping with follow up work at the office. But in order for our work to continue we also depend on the support of both grant-giving foundations and community supporters in Hackney and beyond. As part of our community fundraising our Secretary, Rosemary Sales, initiated a hugely successful Hackney Legal Walk. We are immensely grateful to everyone involved in or supporting our work for your solidarity and commitment.

Current Trustees

Rayah Feldman (Chair)
Mark Palframan (Vice Chair)
Rosemary Sales (Secretary)
Roy Hiscock (Treasurer)
Elizabeth Kolawole-Johnson
Hannah McConnachie
Kathy Meade
Hannah Ward



OUR YEAR IN FIGURES APRIL 2019 TO MARCH 2020

Our visitors

Last year we saw 703 visitors from 70 different countries. 84% identified as Black (African, Caribbean or British) and 11% as Asian, Arab or Middle Eastern¹. The majority had dependents.

- Over 70% of our visitors had No Recourse to Public Funds, either as a condition on their leave to remain or because they did not have current valid immigration status.
 - 45% were people who had overstayed visas or were undocumented. They might be eligible for leave for a wide range of reasons, including the length of time they have already lived in the UK, the fact of having British children, or having compelling reasons not to return to their country of origin.
 - 12% sought advice after their applications for asylum had been refused, but they were unable to return to their countries of origin, mostly because they consider themselves still at risk.
 - 8% had leave to remain, as refugees or for long-term settlement, but were finding it hard to navigate the complex housing and welfare benefit systems or wanted advice on how to become a British citizen.
- 14% had Limited Leave to Remain on the current 10-year route to settlement which means they have to extend their leave three times before gaining permanent settlement. Most of these visitors had No Recourse to Public Funds so were unable to access housing and welfare benefits.
 - 10% were asylum seekers, often socially isolated and living in inadequate accommodation with no income, and who require advocacy to access asylum support.
 - A further 2% were EU citizens, fearful about their immigration status after Brexit.

¹ The remaining 5% identified as mixed, white or 'other'.

IMPACT

We held 44 drop-in sessions during the year.

Immigration and welfare advice:

- 381 people received specialist immigration advice
- 172 people received welfare and housing advice
- 62 people received health advice and advocacy

We also supported visitors by:

- Assisting them to complete 150 NHS HC1 forms to claim help with health costs
- Giving out 267 foodbank vouchers
- Giving out over 370 small Hardship Fund payments to cover immediate needs, usually £20 per person
- Successfully applying on their behalf for over 300 individual grants worth £46,749 from external organisations; to enable them to cover basic necessities
- Completing a range of other support and advocacy tasks on visitors' behalf including writing support letters, referrals to community mental health services, supporting evidence gathering, applying for travel passes, asking schools to provide free school meals, and much more.

Our caseworkers and advisers helped:

- 101 individuals get legal representation to progress their immigration cases
- Nearly 40 people to regularise their status
- 50 people who were homeless into interim and emergency accommodation
- 58 people into longer term, safe accommodation

‘Everyone at Hackney Migrant Centre is so welcoming. It’s really great to see that the HMC team are working with their hearts. Often you meet people who are just working with their brains, trying to focus on the job, but the HMC team really have compassion and that’s what really what stands out.’

HMC Visitor

PROJECTS

National Lottery Community Fund project:

Moving out of Hardship

Lauren Stewart

Caseworker for Young People and Families

The Moving out of Hardship project, funded by a five-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, started in 2016. It is a joint project between Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC), Haringey Migrant Support Centre (HMSC) and Coram Children's Legal Centre (CCLC), designed to assist vulnerable migrant families and young people aged 30 and under with insecure immigration status to access the advice needed to improve their situation. The project came about in response to the increasing destitution and hardship being seen among this visitor group by both HMC and HMSC. There are very few services available which cater to this group. Four years on, the numbers of irregular migrants and those facing destitution because of the hostile environment are at crisis levels.

The grant funds the Caseworker for Migrant Families and Young People post and an equivalent post at HMSC. It also funds Immigration Advisers from CCLC to deliver immigration advice at both centres, enabling visitors to access specialist immigration, housing and benefits advice in one place at either HMC or HMSC. The inter-dependence of immigration, housing and benefits issues is extensive and being able to tackle both at the same time is very effective. This project is innovative in bringing them together.

The project has three strands:

1. Crisis response work to address immediate survival issues such as hunger, destitution, homelessness and lack of access to services. This involves helping beneficiaries obtain food bank vouchers, making small hardship payments and applying for larger grants. On first contact visitors receive initial welfare and immigration advice, and where necessary, are referred to emergency accommodation immediately. Other help can include applying for free school meals and making referrals for mental health support if appropriate.
2. Overcoming the causes of hardship through specialist immigration and welfare advice. Following initial crisis assistance, families and young people taken on by the project obtain housing and welfare advice from in-house caseworkers or are referred to external advisers to obtain Section 17² (housing and financial) support from social services, and other assistance including lifting No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) conditions on immigration leave. They will normally also receive immigration advice either from CCLC or from external advisers after applications have been made for legal aid through Exceptional Case Funding. 281 families and single young people received follow up services last year.
3. Policy and influencing work provides input into key policy developments which can affect this particularly marginalised group of migrants. The evidence of casework from the project shows clearly that the issues faced by the group supported reflect broad policy areas of growing concern. The project has contributed evidence to the free school meals campaign as well as ongoing research and activity to challenge NHS charges for migrants.

² Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of "children in need" in their area. This includes the provision of housing and financial support to destitute families with children and may be the only means of state assistance to families with NRPF.



Drawing on data from this project CCLC has made submissions to various government/statutory inquiries, including to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (on immigration fees), the Ministry of Justice (on Exceptional Case Funding), the Home Office (regarding the new Immigration Bill), and the Law Commission (on simplifying the Immigration Rules). Both HMC and HMSC, with the support of other lawyers, used the evidence from this project to challenge the discriminatory practice of various local authorities.

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty about when it will be safe to reopen the physical drop-in, the project has continued to be successful in delivering its objective of assisting people in

crisis by providing immediate destitution support, one-to-one advice, and follow-up casework.

Case studies³

Florence

Hackney Migrant Centre local authority challenge

Florence first visited Hackney Migrant Centre in October 2016 when she was homeless with her husband and three children. HMC's caseworker made a Child In Need referral to the social services department of Florence's local authority who initially accommodated her. However, following the completion of their assessment they claimed that the family were 'not destitute' despite having no home and no income. The family were forced out of their accommodation and began sleeping on buses and in A&E departments. Despite HMC's best efforts and a court case, they were found to be 'not destitute' on three further occasions.

Eventually, following the involvement of an excellent community care solicitor, the family won an appeal which meant that they were provided with accommodation. The appeal also found that the local authority's decisions were not only unlawful, but irrational. The solicitor's firm pursued the local authority for damages, as the family's human rights had been breached and Florence and her family were awarded around £30,000 in damages. Florence donated some of this award to HMC's hardship fund to support others who were facing destitution as she had been.

Olivia

Olivia is a single mother with twin teenage children, a son and daughter aged 14. She had Limited Leave to Remain with NRPF. They first came to HMC in January 2020, after they had been sleeping on a friend's living room floor for three months. Olivia had been asked to leave that day and the family had nowhere to sleep that evening. Olivia had lost her job as a result of health problems and was subsequently evicted for non-payment of rent.

Since losing her job, Olivia had been surviving on informal hand-outs from friends and church members. The family often didn't have enough food. Olivia's son was diagnosed with autism at an early age, and the uncertainty and confined living space was affecting his mood and behaviour. Olivia's health has been severely impacted by her circumstances. She had been prescribed anti-depressants by her GP but was struggling to pay for the prescription.

When Olivia visited the drop-in, she was told that she could apply to have the NRPf condition on her leave lifted and was referred to a specialist service for this. Our volunteers helped her apply for a certificate for free prescriptions, and she was given a hardship payment and a foodbank voucher. We also applied for a cash grant for the family.

A housing adviser made an urgent referral to social services for Section 17 support, requesting interim support for the family. Olivia went to social services the same afternoon, and the family were provided with temporary accommodation that evening. They moved to a self-contained 3-bedroom flat the following week, with cash subsistence payments. Extra pastoral support was put in place for Olivia's son and the family continued to receive emotional support and regular phone calls from HMC's Collective Care Team over the course of the pandemic.

In April 2020, the family's NRPf condition was lifted. An HMC caseworker referred Olivia for help in applying for Universal Credit and advised on how to apply for housing support with the council, working with Olivia to submit the required evidence.

The family now receive Universal Credit and have long-term suitable accommodation. Our caseworker successfully applied for additional furniture and white goods for them.

Exceptional Case Funding project

Anna Mulcahy

Access to Justice Worker

In September 2019, the Access to Justice Team at Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) launched a new in-house legal aid project. Since then we have assisted 30 people to secure legal aid funding and legal representation to resolve their immigration status. We are grateful to London Legal Support Trust for a grant enabling us to develop the project.

The overwhelming majority of people who access free immigration advice through our weekly advice service are destitute and unable to afford private legal representation. The complexities of the immigration system mean that it is difficult, if not impossible, to make an application with a realistic chance of success without the support of an immigration lawyer. For anyone with additional vulnerabilities, such as poor health or those experiencing homelessness, the obstacles are even greater.

In 2012, the government excluded most immigration cases from the scope of legal aid. As a result of these cuts, people who are unable to pay for private representation, now need to demonstrate 'exceptional' reasons why they need legal representation by making an 'Exceptional Case Funding' (ECF) application. These applications require extensive evidence and an understanding of immigration law. They regularly run to over 50 pages in length. This process is inaccessible to many people, particularly those who are experiencing additional vulnerabilities. This includes most of the people who seek advice at HMC.

As a result of these barriers to accessing legal help, many people are unable to regularise their immigration status, sometimes for years, despite being eligible for leave to remain. We regularly see people who have been forced to accrue huge debts to access private legal representation despite being eligible for legal aid.

Our ECF Project assists people to make the complex application for legal aid funding and to secure a solicitor, free of charge, to help them make an immigration application and regularise their status. However, the demand for assistance hugely exceeds the capacity of our volunteer-run project.

Our project also provides important data on the impact of the changes to legal aid provision on vulnerable migrants. Since its launch, we have collaborated with organisations campaigning for changes to the ECF scheme with a view to supporting systematic change to legal aid to achieve better access to justice for people with irregular immigration status in the UK. In this way, the new project has been able to directly support individuals, as well as contributing to efforts to improve the system as a whole. Access to legal aid is a crucial part of the process of ensuring people with irregular immigration status have access to the support they need to resolve their situation and overcome the systems that force them into destitution and exploitation.

Case studies

Marie

Marie is 45 years old and has spent over 20 years in the UK. She fled her home country at a young age to escape gang violence after her father was murdered. She was forced to leave behind her young children. Since she arrived in the UK, she suffered severe and long-term domestic violence and harassment at the hands of her ex-partner. At one point, Marie attempted to report her ex-partner to the police as she was scared for her life.

However, she feared she would be deported if she testified because of her lack of status and withdrew the charges.

As a result of having precarious immigration status, Marie has not been able to escape the violence and threats from her ex-partner for almost a decade. This has left her severely traumatised and suicidal. We assisted her to successfully apply for legal aid funding and have now secured a lawyer to progress her application to regularise her status.

Paulette

Paulette is a single mother of baby twins. Her twins have British nationality, as their father, from whom Paulette is separated, is a British citizen. As the sole carer of British children, Paulette is entitled to make an application to regularise her immigration status under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, she was destitute and thus unable to afford legal representation to complete the application and so had no valid immigration status in the UK. We made a successful application for legal aid and found her a solicitor. This ensured she could obtain the legal support she needed without going into debt.

Rose

Rose was supported by the Access to Justice Team to secure legal aid funding in order to apply for her teenage daughter to join her in the UK. Rose fled her country to escape poverty but left her young daughter in the care of her mother, as she could not afford to support her in the UK. She has now regularised her immigration status and works on a market stall. Meanwhile, however, Rose's mother passed away and left Rose's daughter homeless and with no one to care for her. Applying for family reunion is exceptionally complex and requires people to prove that they are the primary carer of their child, despite the geographical separation. The application requires a huge amount of evidence, so an experienced lawyer is essential. Rose was extremely concerned about the safety of her daughter living unaccompanied in a hostel. The ECF Project prioritised her application so the process of reuniting the family could begin very quickly.

‘When I spoke to one of our visitors last week, he said he was super happy and grateful for his shopping voucher. He had been able to buy his daughter a cake for her birthday as a surprise and he said this had made a huge difference for him.

He said he couldn’t get over the amazing work of HMC, “you have never met me in person, yet you still provide me with so much kindness and support”. He said he really appreciates the weekly phone calls, as he is staying on his own and it’s comforting to know that someone cares about his wellbeing and wants to have a chat with him.’

HMC Volunteer



CAMPAIGNS

Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) is a small organisation primarily focused on provision of advice and support; however, we are fortunate that two volunteers, Nadia Chalabi and Mamie Joyce, worked tirelessly on campaigns during the year.

Free school meals advocacy

Nadia Chalabi

Over the past year HMC continued to advocate for children from struggling families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) to receive free school meals by writing to schools explaining the children's families' financial situation. Before April 2020, all children from families with NRPF, and undocumented children, were excluded from government funded free school meals. This meant that we had to ask schools to pay for meals from their own budgets, which some sadly could not afford to do.

Free school meals save families around £400 per year per child, and they give children the freedom to eat at school without impacting their family's financial situation. During the year we advocated for 52 children and at least 80% of them received free school meals or vouchers over the summer.

We have been calling for free school meals for all children who need them regardless of immigration status since North East London Migrant Action (NELMA) launched a campaign for this in 2018. Campaigners and solicitors continue to work towards this goal and we have been proud to be a part of this work. We have contributed to MPs' briefings, multiple articles, factsheets and have spoken at meetings to raise awareness around the impact of NRPF and the importance of free school meals.

At the start of lockdown, HMC published its report 'Children with No Recourse to Public Funds: The need for free school meals'.⁴ This report gives an account of HMC's free school meals advocacy since August 2018. It shows how the NRPF condition on visas leaves many families in destitution and calls for an end to NRPF and for a free school meals system that reaches every child who needs this support.

Since April there has been a temporary extension of free school meals to some families with NRPF. This is an encouraging first step that must go further. Some families with NRPF and families with no immigration status continue to be excluded. We argue that free school meals must be available to all low-income families with NRPF and the Home Office must not be involved in any eligibility checking process for free school meals.

Healthcare advocacy

Mamie Joyce

Healthcare access continues to be a highly political issue, especially since the introduction of increasingly restrictive NHS charging policies since 2015. These include the introduction of a surcharge on all migrants from outside the EU without Indefinite Leave to Remain and charges for hospital care. During the year the cost of this Immigration Health Surcharge rose from £200 a year to £400 a year.

HMC is seeing a steady flow of visitors faced with large debts as a result of accessing NHS hospital care. To mitigate the harmful effects of NHS charging regulations, over the last year HMC has:

- Directly assisted over 25 visitors by writing to hospitals, helping with NHS access, signposting to external organisations, negotiating repayment plans, challenging wrongful charges and offering ongoing telephone and email support

- Referred 13 visitors to specialist solicitors for in-depth advice; of these 8 cases have been allocated for legal challenges
- Addressed over £136,000 worth of debt; of this over £21,000 has already been cancelled, waived, or reduced
- Informed visitors of their rights and entitlements in healthcare settings so as to prevent any delay or deterrence in receiving care
- Collated data, case summaries and personal testimony to create an evidence-base of harm caused by charging regulations

As a frontline service, HMC is well placed to document the individual stories of those directly impacted by charging policy. By listening to those with lived experience and collaborating with organisations and campaign groups such as Medact, DocsNotCops, PatientsNotPassports and Migrants' Organise, the aim is to develop resources and support networks that help empower those affected and better assist those wanting to advocate for themselves, now and in future.

Local, national, and international healthcare policy developments are also discussed at regular meetings in order to establish working links between relevant press, other grassroots and charity organisations, helping to create greater momentum, and awareness of the wider campaign.

Our visitors' varied and complex personal experiences continue to inform external campaigns by highlighting, at a human level, how restricting access to healthcare often leads to poorer individual and public health outcomes and are counter to the broader international aim of achieving universal healthcare.

'HMC is not about charity, it is about offering a space for community, connection and solidarity. It is about recognising our shared humanity whilst trying to resist institutional structures that systematically try to strip that humanity away.'

HMC Volunteer



FUTURE PLANS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the difficulties presented by Covid-19 restrictions we are committed to continuing to provide immigration, housing and welfare advice to migrants, regardless of immigration status, nationality or current place of residence.

Moving into 2020-21 and beyond, we are developing our staff capacity to strengthen our ability to address the many injustices presented by the hostile environment and by the pandemic.

- Volunteer Coordinator. A new part-time post responsible for recruitment, induction, support and week-by-week management of our volunteers. We recognise that the large number of highly committed volunteers at Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) is one of our fundamental resources and we want to ensure they receive the ongoing support and training they deserve.
- Destitution Casework Coordinator. In response to the increasing complexity of casework and the depth of crisis facing people we support, we have increased this role to full-time. This will allow an increase in casework capacity and more time to supervise the volunteer Destitution Support Team who provide follow up casework.
- Collective Care Team Coordinator. Given the increased vulnerability and destitution of many migrants during the Covid-19 pandemic, our Collective Care Team

emergency response is highly likely to continue for the foreseeable future, coordinated by our new Coordinator.

- Access to Justice Worker. To continue the success of the Exceptional Casework Funding project (see above) we have created this new permanent role. The postholder will provide casework support to people who have had initial immigration advice provided at HMC's weekly advice session, supervise the volunteer Access to Justice Team, and support the housing and destitution caseworkers at HMC on immigration and other issues.

We are considering how to develop our service model.

- Service delivery. At the drop-in, we are able to provide a welcoming environment with hot meals, a children's play area and opportunities for social contact. We hope to return to this model soon, but it is likely we will have to continue delivering our service remotely for some time. While when we can return safely to face-to-face provision is not known, we aim to integrate what we are learning from delivering the remote advice service and may make adjustments based on this. For example, we may consider retaining the option of booking appointments in advance and continue to utilise digital tools for sharing information. We have found this makes our services more accessible for some people who are unable to visit a drop-in due to, for example, travel issues or having to queue very early in the morning. Conversely we recognise that a drop-in is more accessible for other people, for example due to issues around digital literacy or language barriers. However, due to circumstances beyond our control we may have to keep our drop-in on hold for the foreseeable future.
- Visitor and volunteer involvement. We plan to better integrate the vital knowledge of visitors, particularly

their direct, personal experience of the hostile environment, into the development of our services. Sessions with visitors will be facilitated by the Volunteer Coordinator to support them to move into volunteer roles and contribute more actively to our service development. We have consulted with existing volunteers to identify further training and support needs and are responding to these to help volunteers get the most from their experience with us.

‘The food, the support, the help with lots of things. You don’t have to wait to see an adviser another day. It is worth waiting all day so that you can see an adviser the same day.’

HMC Visitor

FINANCIAL POSITION

Hackney Migrant Centre has a generous pool of individual, corporate and community funders, but the nature of this income is usually that of one-off grants and donations rather than long-term, secured funding. Having our Fundraiser in post from the summer of 2019 has meant we have been able to apply for more grants and work towards more stable income streams.

The trustees have decided to designate funds of £80,000 for the drop-in and advice service in the 2020-21 financial year, to give some stability, allowing our income generation strategy to include fundraising to develop staff capacity.

Our free reserves at 31 March 2020 are £102,691, which equates to nearly four months’ worth of costs. This meets our reserves policy, which is to keep at least three months’ worth of costs in reserve in order to maintain the service should we have an unexpected drop in funding.

Continuing Operations

None of the charity’s activities were acquired or discontinued during the year.

Total Recognised Gains and Losses

The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the above movement in funds for the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

HACKNEY MIGRANT CENTRE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Income					
Grants, donations and legacies	167,786	-	263,279	431,065	402,709
Other income	4,253	-	-	4,253	1,059
TOTAL INCOME	172,039	-	263,279	435,318	403,768
Expenditure					
Cost of raising funds	24,619	-	-	24,619	993
Expenditure on charitable activities:					
Drop-in Centre	97,293	30,002	53,500	180,795	184,605
Moving out of Hardship Project	-	-	104,438	104,438	95,494
Grants for Individuals	-	-	56,138	56,138	48,727
Hardship Fund	2,000	-	6,619	8,619	8,448
Exceptional Case Funding Project	-	-	369	369	-
Campaigns	184	-	-	184	-
Covid-19 and Collective Care Team	-	-	-	48	48
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	124,096	(30,002)	221,112	375,210	338,267
Transfer from unrestricted to restricted funds	(80,000)	80,000	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)	(32,057)	49,998	42,167	60,108	65,501
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>					
Total funds brought forward	134,748	35,007	55,320	225,075	159,574
Total funds carried forward	102,691	85,005	97,487	285,183	225,075

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

Advisers

Coram Children's Legal Centre / Doctors of the World / Hackney Community Law Centre / Islington Law Centre / Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants / Kathy Meade / Lambeth Law Centre / Lou Crisfield of Miles & Partners LLP / Praxis / Project 17 / Stéphane Gentili of Gentili Stark solicitors Ltd / Together with Migrant Children / Wendy Pettifer

Community supporters

Hackney Borough of Sanctuary / Homefinders / Location Location / Morris Folk Choir / NTS Radio, Dalston / O.K.K collective / Risen Christ with All Souls Church / Rosemary Works School / Stoke Newington Relief in Need Charity / Stoke Newington Quaker Meeting / The Cause / Turning Earth Ceramics

Funders

A B Charitable Trust / Charles S French Charitable Trust / Dentons Charitable Trust / Hackney Parochial Charities / Leach Fourteenth Trust / London Catalyst Samaritan Grant / London Churches Refugee Fund / London Legal Support Trust / Margaret Hayman Charitable Trust / MSN Fund / Robert Gavron Charitable Trust / Sisters of the Holy Cross / Society of the Holy Child Jesus / Souter Charitable Trust / South Hackney Parochial Charity / Southall Trust / The Allen & Overy Foundation / The Blue Moon Trust / The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington / The Mbili Charitable Trust / The National Lottery Community Fund / Trust for London Trustee Distribution Fund / Tudor Trust / West Hackney Parochial Charity / And those funders who wish to remain anonymous

Gifts of food to the drop-in

Growing Communities / Jaines & Son Fishmonger / Londis (Mayank for deliveries) / Nandos - Canary Wharf / Spence Bakery / Stoke Newington Greengrocer / Whole Foods Stoke Newington

Grants to vulnerable individuals

Catholic Women's League / Hackney Parochial Charities / Heinz, Anna and Carol Kroch Foundation / Mary Strand Trust / Sheila Hind Trust

Donations of goods or services

Beauty Banks / Bloody Good Period / Brockley Market / Eddie Ruffett / Jojo Maman Bébé / Joseph Harry Ltd / Little Village / Lonely Planet / Pret a Manger / Shane's Bar / Stud Farm / The Butchery / Toby Allen

We'd also like to thank

St Mark's Church

Maternity Action, City and No.5 pro bono project, KIND, Docs not Cops, Medact.

For sessions at the drop-in: Abi Nolan from Supply Yoga for early morning yoga, and Katie Miller and Emily Hollingsbee from the Draw On project for art sessions.

The many individuals who raised funds by running marathons and half-marathons or by joining us on our first annual fundraising walk.

Those who donated to our Christmas appeal or our Covid-19 appeal or who made generous donations during the year, including from the several anonymous people we are unable to thank personally.

Finally, we'd like to thank all of our many volunteers, who generously donate their time so that HMC can continue to support so many people.

For more information about
Hackney Migrant Centre,
please contact us on:

T: 07504 332 706

W: www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk

E: info@hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk

Registered charity: 1122363

Company number: 6426744

Office address:

Old Fire Station,
61 Leswin Road,
London N16 7NX



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