



scottish  
refugee  
council

Scottish Refugee Council  
Annual Report 2006

**21 years** working with refugees in Scotland



# our 21st year

Our 21st year has been a challenging time for those of us committed to ensuring that people fleeing persecution receive the protection they are entitled to. We work in an area that regularly changes and this year was no exception. A new Home Secretary was appointed who began his tenure by describing the Home Office as “not fit for purpose” and launched an immediate review. Early outcomes from this have included a new immigration bill announced in the Queen’s speech with a promise of more legislation to come.

This uncertainty has not stopped Scottish Refugee Council from continuing to deliver a wide range of high-quality services and support to refugees across Scotland. Our ongoing daily contact with people seeking asylum gives us a unique insight into the issues that most concern them, informs our research agenda and gives credibility to our arguments for change. Research published this year on services for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, public attitudes to asylum and a snapshot survey into destitution in Glasgow have been widely disseminated and reported, and continue to influence policy makers and politicians.

We joined with Save the Children and our sister refugee councils in England and Wales to campaign against the continued use of detention of children whose parents have sought asylum in the UK. Thousands of Scots joined the campaign and we remain hopeful that this morally untenable practice will be scrapped.

We have continued to advocate for more humane ways to deal with the difficult issue of removals, as the practice of early morning raids continues to cause unnecessary distress and fear for families who have been refused asylum.

In May we were honoured to organise the bi-annual general meeting of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) in Glasgow. European legislation continues to have a growing impact on asylum and refugee policy in the UK and it is important that we are able to contribute to and benefit from the combined resources of the 80 member organisations that are members of ECRE. A fair, humane and just asylum system is something we know is possible but will only be achieved with the support of like-minded individuals and organisations in Scotland, the UK, Europe and the rest of the international community. I am confident Scottish Refugee Council will continue to play its part in this important endeavour.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Professor David Walsh, Chair

## about Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Council provides help and advice to those who have fled persecution in their homeland and now seek refuge in Scotland. We are a membership organisation that works independently and in partnership with others to provide support to refugees from their arrival to settlement and integration into Scottish society.

We campaign to ensure that the British government meets its international, legal and humanitarian obligations and to raise awareness of refugee issues.



“ I am a member of the refugee women’s organisation, Karibu and the Women’s Strategy Group. The Scottish Refugee Council has supported me a lot in both these roles. Our aim is to help women integrate in the Scottish culture, raising voices for those without a voice.

**Annie, Chair of refugee community organisation Karibu** ”

# providing a quality service

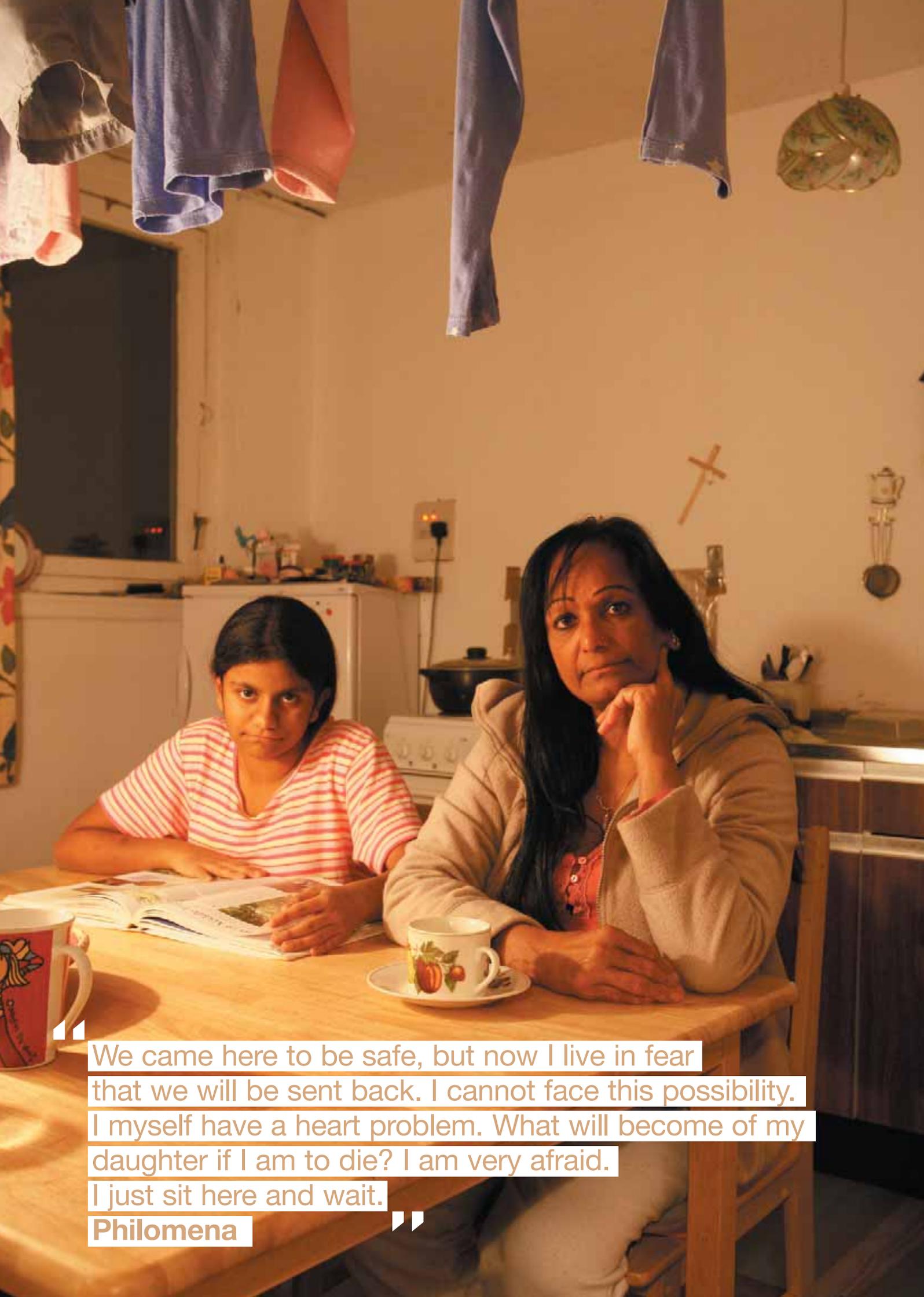
Our One Stop Service guides people through the complexities of the asylum system and offers expert information on a wide range of issues including accessing legal services, medical care and financial support. We also help people with more routine tasks such as form-filling, a task made more difficult when English is not a first language. During the last year, we dealt with over 18,000 requests for advice and support.

With many people now at the end of the asylum process and living without any means of support we have had some success in helping people access the limited and conditional assistance - commonly known as hard-case or Section 4 support – but this continues to be a very challenging and difficult area of advice work.

In partnership with the YMCA, we run the Scottish Induction Service to provide temporary accommodation and support for newly-arrived asylum seekers. We ensure people have access to good legal representation and medical care, and provide orientation briefings covering rights and responsibilities and an explanation of how the asylum process works. In the last year, we have also organised regular pregnancy and eye care clinics and British Red Cross Tracing and Messaging sessions.

Following a consultation with service users, in September we re-launched the Women's Group, with longer and more suitable opening hours. The group offers a safe and relaxed place for refugee women to get help, support and advice. We continue to test ways to ensure women can access our service. This year we ran two women-only advice mornings, staffed entirely by female workers and interpreters. We also help the development of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group, which aims to ensure that refugee women's voices are heard and services meet their needs.

As part of our commitment to continuing improvement in quality of service all staff providing asylum advice have been trained, assessed and registered by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and many staff have also been accredited through the housing advice quality scheme, Homepoint.



“ We came here to be safe, but now I live in fear that we will be sent back. I cannot face this possibility. I myself have a heart problem. What will become of my daughter if I am to die? I am very afraid. I just sit here and wait. ”

**Philomena**

# advocating for fairness

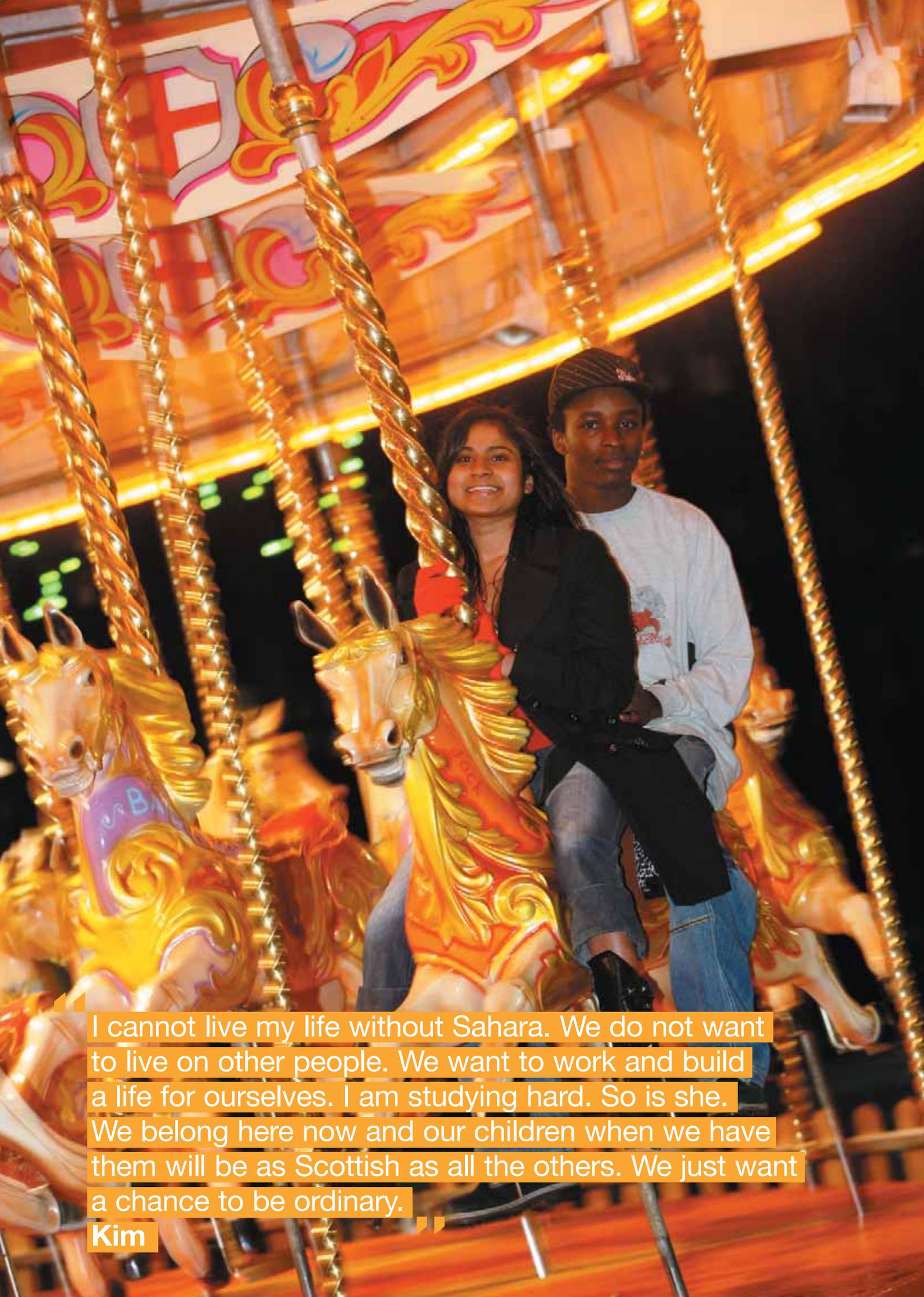
Scottish Refugee Council is committed to ensuring that refugees receive fair treatment in Scotland. This year we have advocated in over 50 different networks at local, Scottish, UK and European levels, including at the Home Office's Stakeholder Group for the New Asylum Model, (or NAM, the government's proposed change to the current asylum process), and the Cross-Party Group of MSPs at the Scottish Parliament.

In May we organised the European Council on Refugees and Exiles conference. Leaders of the main non-governmental refugee agencies from across Europe met in Glasgow to plan ways to use our collective strength, knowledge and experience to influence the European policy agenda. We also launched "The Way Forward" – a pamphlet which offers clear, constructive suggestions on improving all aspects of EU refugee and asylum policy.

We have submitted evidence to over 20 consultations and inquiries, on issues as diverse as the treatment of asylum seekers, poverty, detention and the removal of families whose asylum claims have been rejected. We produced a survey on destitution amongst asylum seekers, commissioned research into attitudes towards asylum seekers, and published a report on the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. We were very pleased when one of our recommendations, that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children should be eligible for the Educational Maintenance Allowance, was introduced by the Scottish Executive this summer.

**"Scottish Refugee Council has deployed a sophisticated approach, ranging from formal submissions to off-the-record discussions, in order to achieve a climate in which positive change is possible."**

**Independent evaluation of Scottish Refugee Council's policy  
& communications work, November 2006**



I cannot live my life without Sahara. We do not want to live on other people. We want to work and build a life for ourselves. I am studying hard. So is she. We belong here now and our children when we have them will be as Scottish as all the others. We just want a chance to be ordinary.

**Kim**

# warm welcome

In June we launched *Warm Welcome? Understanding public attitudes to asylum seekers in Scotland*, a report by the Institute of Public Policy Research. The research findings provide a good basis for developing and targeting our awareness-raising work. A good example is the development of a new programme of work in schools, in partnership with the International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) and Glasgow City Council's Asylum Support Project, to encourage and support teachers to address asylum and refugee issues in the classroom.

Following the success of our 2004 film *Voice Seekers* we worked closely with a group of refugees to produce a new film, *Asylum Realities*. Launched during Refugee Week, the film has been very popular with requests coming in from schools and voluntary organisations across the UK.

This year we worked in partnership with *the big step*, to develop *Welcome* - an essential guide for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, which provides information on children's rights and entitlements, the asylum process and a range of social activities. The guide was developed and designed by a group of young people with direct experience of arriving alone, and a copy has been offered to every unaccompanied asylum-seeking child in Scotland.

As a further development in this area and to bridge the gap identified in our research we have begun building a new specialist service for separated children. The aim is to ensure that this group of children not only receive the welfare care and support they need but that their asylum claims are properly considered.





I have been here for almost five years and any problems I've had I always go to Scottish Refugee Council – especially for housing. I am very happy with their advice. Now I am looking for a job to support my family.

**Mr A. Mohammed**

# sharing knowledge

Our events programme keeps our members, partner agencies and service providers updated on key policy developments. In March, policy makers and front-line staff discussed the implications of our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children research. Our September conference on the New Asylum Model attracted huge interest and a number of key concerns with the legal system in Scotland were identified.

Throughout the year we have continued to expand our training calendar with 350 people from over 90 agencies attending our courses. Along with our renowned *Introduction to Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers* course we have developed and run new courses on working with interpreters, asylum policy, housing and welfare rights and the needs of refugee women. As part of our continuing collaboration with the Office of the Immigration Commissioner (OISC), we ran a series of their courses for people giving asylum and immigration advice.

In partnership with UNHCR we have established a Research Network to allow the ever-growing number of researchers in refugee issues to link up and share findings. Since the network launched on our website in the autumn more than 30 Scottish academics have joined.

**“The delivery from the trainers was excellent. It was both informal and flexible, leaving the delegates able to ask questions and debate points. It was also clear, concise, well-documented and professional.”**

**Trainee on *Introduction to Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees* training course**





“ I feel that being a journalist means honesty in conveying the right message about people and this is what I have been denied to do in my country, and this is what I’m hoping to fulfill in this country if I am given a chance.

Raied ”

# positive messages

We have continued to work closely with the media to get positive, balanced and accurate coverage of refugee and asylum issues.

We helped many refugees tell their story to the media and 45 of the 93 interviews we arranged were given by refugees. We support this through our media training programme and ongoing one-to-one support.

The inaugural Refugee Week Scottish Media Awards were held in June. Winners in both print and broadcast categories, chosen from an impressive number of entries, were decided by a panel of refugees.

Once again Refugee Week was a great success with over 70 events taking place throughout Scotland, including 21 community celebrations, professional touring theatre shows and exhibitions in major galleries. This year's programme had the additional backing of Scottish Executive's One Scotland Campaign, promoting Refugee Week on billboards across the country.

Our arts and cultural development work includes a variety of projects which aim to bring refugees and established communities together. The creative writing project *The Kitchen* brought together over 250 people in four locations across Scotland and we plan to publish a book of stories and recipes in early 2007.

“In terms of media coverage the organisation can be said to punch above its weight. Without the operation of its media and communications work, misunderstanding of asylum, immigration and refugee issues would be considerably greater.” **Independent Evaluation of Scottish Refugee Council's policy & communications work, November 2006**



“ I did not realise when I came here that Scottish people knew nothing about us. I thought it was the job of the government to explain why people seek asylum, but they had not. It is vital that Scotland knows what we are and why we had to flee our homes, we must give them the opportunity to understand us.

**Ahlam starring in** ””  
**The Flats at The Tron Theatre**

# supporting communities

Our ground-breaking Framework for Dialogue strategy supports groups of refugees and local community activists, bringing them together to work on issues of mutual concern.

Across Glasgow these groups are working to promote integration, combat racism and establish sustainable community relationships. This year a number of neighbourhood detention support groups were established in Glasgow to enable communities to advocate effectively for those who have been detained. Our research into public attitudes showed that our approach to integration work - establishing structures that allow refugees to participate in the communities they live in - is making a difference.

We provide support to the Refugee Policy Forum (RPF), a group made up of representatives from Refugee Community Organisations and local neighbourhood groups, to develop a strong refugee voice on asylum and integration issues across Scotland. In April, with our help, the RPF held a policy conference attended by 75 refugees which allowed senior Home Office and UNHCR speakers to gain a clear understanding of the main issues and concerns faced by people experiencing the impact of government policies. The RPF continues to have regular contact with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on policies which affect them.

The RPF submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights resulted in an invitation for a representative from the group to travel to Westminster and give evidence to the inquiry, along with our Chief Executive, an example of supporting refugees to speak for themselves at the highest level, which has already had an impact.

**“After these two sessions, my eyes have been opened to much detail that I ought to have known, but did not.” Baroness Stern in the House of Lords commenting on the oral evidence supplied in the inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights into the Treatment of Asylum Seekers**



When I received leave to remain the Sunrise team was excellent. They did lots for me. They helped me find housing, get a national insurance number, access child tax credit and work out my council tax.

**Saideh**

# moving on with life

Our Sunrise team, as part of a UK-wide Home Office pilot programme, provides support to those who have recently received refugee status. Our caseworkers act as advocates, assisting in essential 'move-on' advice, such as finding accommodation and getting a job. This year over 150 people benefited from this service.

The Housing and Welfare team has provided over 1500 consultations across Scotland on a range of issues, from general housing queries to complex cases including homelessness, racial harassment, fuel poverty and relocating to another area. We have commissioned research in partnership with Access Apna Ghar Housing Association, investigating refugees' relationship with their housing providers.

Our Family Reunion service has expanded its casework to support more refugees seeking reunification with separated family members. In partnership with Red Cross and UNHCR we have improved links with the Home Office and embassies across the world and successfully reunited 23 people with their families here in Scotland.

Our Education and Employment team assists refugees to access employment and study opportunities and to secure recognition for their existing qualifications. This year we have established contact with a range of employers and encouraged them to utilise the skilled workforce from the refugee community.

In the last year we have continued to concentrate on making volunteering at Scottish Refugee Council more accessible to refugees and asylum seekers and have embarked on a major recruitment-drive to fill over 25 voluntary positions ranging from advocacy to administration.



Krocawear  
Vintage Family Sports Collection

AA

# future challenges



Our biggest challenge is to make sure that the efforts of European governments to deter and control irregular migration do not prevent refugees from reaching safety. Our work in the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) is crucial to ensuring that refugees can continue to access protection in Europe in accordance with international law.

Protecting refugees is the duty of the whole international community. In January, with the help of Mrs Bemma Donkoh, UNHCR's representative in the UK, we challenged Scottish local authorities to participate in the government's "Gateway" initiative, a resettlement programme which offers a new life to families who have been living in protracted refugee situations often in refugee camps. The first people will arrive in Scotland under this programme early in 2007. We will work with local authorities, other agencies and local groups to ensure that these refugees are provided with the welcome and support they need to rebuild their lives in Scotland.

The UK government's New Asylum Model is being introduced, changing the way asylum applications are dealt with. On the surface it has much to commend it. It has been developed to address the systemic problems on which we have lobbied successive governments. Its focus on improving the quality of initial decisions and the appointment of a dedicated caseworker for each applicant have the potential to humanise the asylum process and improve accountability. We will be monitoring the new system to ensure that it is fairly implemented and that any teething problems are quickly addressed. We will also continue to advocate for those caught up in the old system, particularly those forced into a desperate twilight existence, denied the right to work yet with no access to welfare support or housing.

In Scotland, the May 2007 parliamentary elections may lead to change, however, we will ensure that the vision for refugee integration contained in the Scottish Executive's new Race Equality Strategy is not lost. During 2006 we contributed to this work substantially and are pleased that refugee issues are firmly embedded in the strategy. We will work with partners in all sections of Scottish society to help turn the vision of a truly inclusive Scotland into reality.

Partnership is key to our work and I would like to thank all those individuals and organisations who have supported us, in particular those refugees who have been prepared to share their stories, ensuring that our advocacy is truly rooted in refugees' experiences. We look forward to continuing these relationships and to building a better future together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Daghlia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Sally Daghlia**, Chief Executive

# Scottish Refugee Council

## Summarised Financial Statements

Income and Expenditure and Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA)  
for the Year Ended 31 March 2006

Incoming resources	2006 £	2005 £
Incoming Resources from generated funds:		
- Voluntary Income	19,979	23,005
- Investment Income	62,222	61,736
Incoming Resources from charitable activities:		
- Grant Income	2,537,641	2,408,027
- Emergency Accommodation	83,142	1,160,176
- Income from training, events and publications	16,298	2,004
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>2,719,282</b>	<b>3,654,948</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Costs of generating funds	4,643	5,104
Charitable Activities:		
-Emergency Accommodation	83,142	1,160,176
-Other activities in furtherance of the charity's objectives	2,523,450	2,304,440
Governance Costs	73,674	71,968
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>2,684,909</b>	<b>3,541,688</b>
Net incoming resources before transfers	34,373	113,260
Transfer between funds	-	-
Surplus	34,373	113,260
Fund balances at 1 April 2005	1,027,184	913,924
Fund balances at 31 March 2006	1,061,557	1,027,184
<b>Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2006</b>	<b>2006 £</b>	<b>2005 £</b>
Tangible Assets	23,429	14,798
Net Current Assets	1,038,128	1,012,386
Total assets less current liabilities	1,061,557	1,027,184
Represented by:		
Funds		
General	778,312	726,457
Designated	200,000	201,200
Restricted	83,245	99,527
	1,061,557	1,027,184

Approved by the Directors on 24 August 2006  
and signed on their behalf by David Walsh (Chair) and David Fraser (Director)

These summarised financial statements are not the statutory financial statements for the Scottish Refugee Council, but a summary of information relating to the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet. The full financial statements from which this summary is derived have been audited by Chiene + Tait whose report is unqualified. Copies of the full accounts, the Report of the Directors and the Auditor's Report can be obtained from Scottish Refugee Council, 5 Cadogan Square, (170 Blythswood Court), Glasgow, G2 7PH.

### **Independent Auditors' Statement to the Members of Scottish Refugee Council**

We have examined the summarised financial statements of Scottish Refugee Council.

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### **Respective responsibilities of Directors and auditors**

The Directors are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with the recommendations of the charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and Directors' Report. We also read the other information contained in the annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

### **Basis of opinion**

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 "The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement" issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Directors' Report of Scottish Refugee Council for the year ended 31 March 2006.

### **Chiene + Tait**

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors,  
61 Dublin Street, Edinburgh EH3 6NL.

## Directors' Comments

The incoming resources in the year totalled £2,719,282 with an associated expenditure of £2,684,909 resulting in a surplus of £34,373 which equates to 1.3% of turnover.

Income for the year has decreased from £3,654,948 (2004/05) to £2,719,282 (2005/06), a decrease of £935,666 or 26%. This fall is due to Emergency Accommodation being terminated in June 2005. Emergency Accommodation is the direct cost of providing bed and breakfast accommodation for newly arrived asylum seekers, and is exactly matched with expenditure of £83,142 (2005/06) compared with £1,160,176 (2004/05). This has been replaced by the Scottish Induction Service (SIS) which is joint partnership with the YMCA and Scottish Refugee Council, YMCA providing the accommodation for newly arrived asylum seekers. Excluding Emergency Accommodation, income has actually increased in the year by £141,368 which confirms that our programme of work continues to grow and diversify.

Expenditure in 2005/06 totalled £2,684,909 and we are pleased to note that 97% was employed in the direct furtherance of the charity's objectives, the remaining 3% being expended on fundraising and governance costs.

The Directors have agreed that Scottish Refugee Council should aim to set aside sufficient funds in the general fund to cover six months running costs. The level of free reserves (those funds not tied up in fixed assets and designated and restricted funds) the charity will require to sustain its operations for a period of not less than six months, is £1,359,000 at March 2006. The actual free reserves at 31 March 2006 were £754,883, which is £604,117 short of the target figure. The Directors are addressing this shortfall within the overall strategy.

The Directors have continued to set aside funds in designated reserves to cover future developments and research into refugee needs, which will assist in developing services or preparing for changes in funding or legislation in such a volatile sector.

## Board of Directors

Professor David Walsh (Chair)	Hellen Matthews (vice Chair)
Sarah Craig	David Fraser
Eigrrael Salinas Garcia	Mile Gazic
Dr Kay Hampton (until August 2006)	Dr Lewis Howitt
Michael A. Menlowe	Laurie Naumann (until January 2006)
Derek Ogg QC	Judith Robertson
Dr Ann Rosengard	Désiré Ruragaragaza
Edward G Smith	David Walker

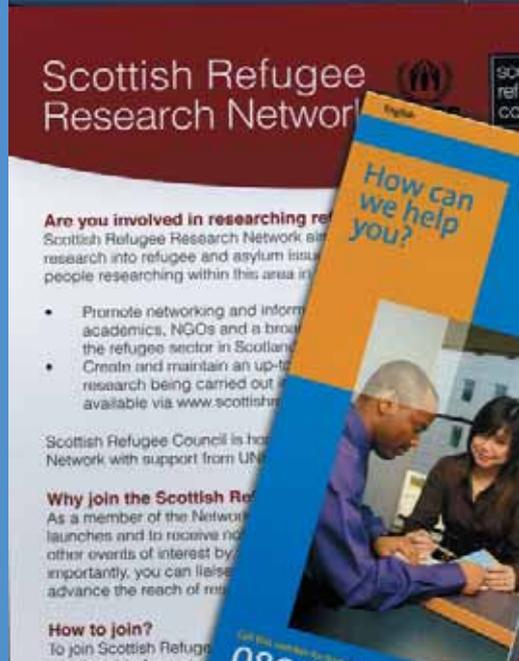
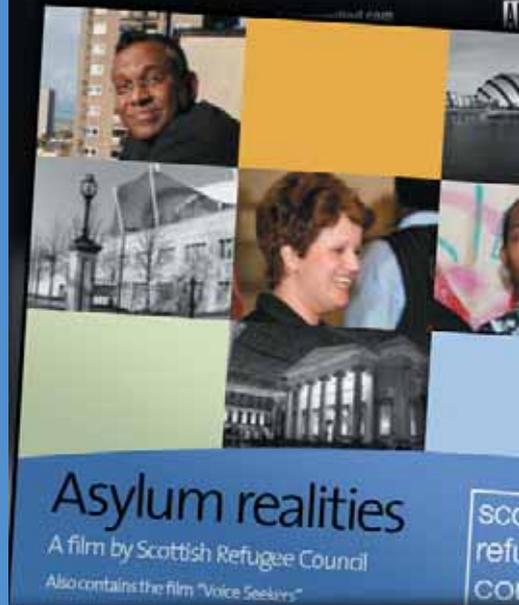
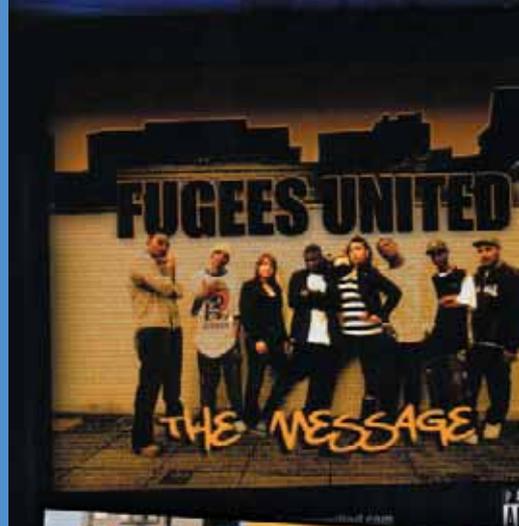
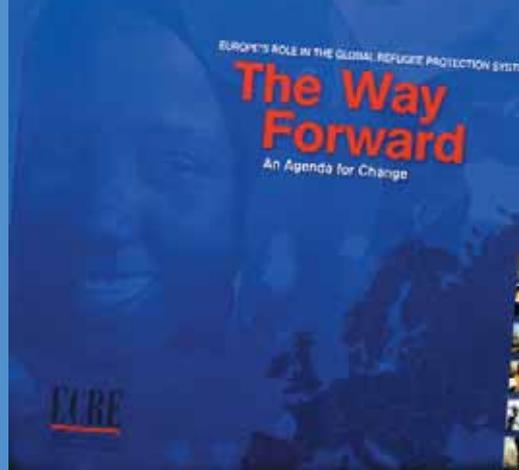
## Patrons

Nelson Mandela  
Lord McCluskey  
Joyce McMillan

We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders for their support during the financial year 2005/06.

Big Lottery  
Cash for Kids  
Darroch Charitable Trust  
East Dunbartonshire Council  
East Lothian Council  
East Renfrewshire Council  
Edinburgh Council  
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation  
Falkirk Council  
Fife Council  
Glasgow Anti Racist Alliance  
Glasgow City Council  
Highland Council  
Home Office  
Lamb, Middleton & McGregor Bequest  
Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland  
Martin Connell Charitable Trust  
Midlothian Council  
North Ayrshire Council  
North Lanarkshire Council  
Oban Charitable Trust  
Renfrewshire Council  
Scottish Arts Council  
Scottish Community Foundation  
Scottish Executive  
South Ayrshire Council  
South Lanarkshire Council  
Stirling Council  
Thomas Coram Research Unit  
UNHCR  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
West Lothian Council

Our work would not be possible without the valuable support and assistance of our funders, members, supporters and volunteers. **Thank you.**





**Scottish Refugee Council**

5 Cadogan Square  
(170 Blythswood Court)  
Glasgow G2 7PH

**Telephone**

0141 248 9799

**Fax**

0141 243 2499

**Services provided in Edinburgh from:**

**St George's West**

58 Shandwick Place  
Edinburgh EH2 4RT

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

58 Dundas Street  
Edinburgh EH3 6QZ

**Freephone number**

for asylum seekers and refugees  
0800 085 6087

**Email**

[info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

**Website**

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

**Charity number**

SC008639

**Front cover image:**

Mr A. Mohammed and his son

**Designed by**

Algiz Ltd.  
[www.algiz.co.uk](http://www.algiz.co.uk)

**Photography by**

Peter Iain Campbell.  
[www.peteriaincampbell.co.uk](http://www.peteriaincampbell.co.uk)