

Welcome the stranger

Then shall the king say to those on his right:
Come, you blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom that has been prepared for you
from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat;
I was thirsty, and you gave me drink;
I was a stranger, and you took me to your homes;

I was naked, and you clothed me;
I was sick, and you visited me;
I was in prison, and you came to me.

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Introduction

Most people move to other countries both by choice, although for some it is a necessity.

They often need support to settle into a new place and feel at home in a new community.

The Newcomer Development Project has been developed by Father Hudson's Care and Caritas Archdiocese of Birmingham. The project aims to support individuals and groups to 'Welcome the Stranger' in their own neighbourhoods.

You, like us, have been inspired by the words of Jesus to 'Welcome the Stranger' in whatever way is needed. We aim to guide individuals to provide welcome to newcomers in their area. This project aims to provide you with the information to take the first steps to set up activities to support people as they make a life in a new place. There are also links to external agencies that can provide additional information and support.

Pope Francis has called on all of us to protect migrant workers, those who are exiles and seeking asylum or who are victims of trafficking. He said that, "defending their inalienable rights, ensuring their fundamental freedoms and respecting their dignity are duties from which no one can be exempted." He has urged us to prioritise the personal safety and dignity of every human person.

However you choose to provide a welcome to newcomers to your area, whether it is, talking, being positive about diversity and different cultures, fundraising, volunteering for an existing organisation, or setting up a new group or activity, you could make a big difference to people when they need it most. Although not all newcomers need assistance, for many newcomer projects can provide a warm welcome for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and can be an essential part of integrating with a new community. Refugee, migrant or asylum seeker are labels that are applied to a person to define their right to remain in the UK. Here is some information about the different statuses that people can have.

Useful Definitions

The Refugee Resource Centre For Churches offers the following definitions:

Migrant – someone who has moved from one place to another, usually another country. That may be for any reason, often work or 'a better life'.

Asylum Seeker – someone who has claimed asylum in a country that has signed up to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and is awaiting a decision. (The UK is a signatory, as are the vast majority of UN member states.)

Refugee – someone whose asylum claim has been accepted and who has been granted leave to remain in the country.

‘Failed’ (or refused) asylum seeker – someone whose claim has been rejected. They have no recourse to public funds and are liable to be removed from the country.

Let us remember that a bogus asylum-seeker is not equivalent to a criminal; and that an unsuccessful asylum application is not equivalent to a bogus one -
Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations

When working with vulnerable people it is essential to remain open and impartial. Making judgements about a person's case or personal circumstances will negatively affect their relationship. We have found that the key to a successful project is creating space for people of different nationalities, cultures and faiths to come together to provide help and support for each other.

To learn more about refugees visit Refugee Action's [Facts about Refugees](#) website.



The work of Father Hudson's Care

Father Hudson's Care supports those in need through community-focused projects to improve the lives of everyone in our community.

Father Hudson's Care was formed in 1902 as the *Birmingham Diocesan Rescue Society for the protection of homeless and friendless Catholic children* by Father George Hudson. His work to benefit vulnerable children has developed over time to support anyone in need.

We work with communities to identify local needs and use our extensive experience to work with others to provide a local solution. At our base in Coleshill, Birmingham, this includes providing residential care for older people, people with dementia, and people with complex care needs. We also provide day activities and additional in-home support for those in need in the community. Around the Archdiocese we have worked with communities and other partners to develop projects that meet the needs of that community. Over time we have developed a special commitment to 'Welcoming the stranger', and many of our community groups support refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.

Our collaborative community projects that have been able to use this knowledge and experience to benefit their participants include:

- **Brushstrokes** provides holistic care to people in Sandwell, west Birmingham and the surrounding areas. Their work is primarily with refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants through general and specialist advice, English language classes, community activities, practical support with food and baby equipment, and support into employment
- **Fatima House** in central Birmingham is a residential project for up to nine female asylum seekers who are destitute.
- **Sophia House** in south Birmingham supports female refugees and migrants at risk of homelessness.



- **Tabor House** Provides a place to sleep and ongoing support to homeless people, including vulnerable migrants in Birmingham.

We also partner and support independent charities and community projects including:

- **Hope** which provides holistic support to vulnerable people in the Heath Town area of Wolverhampton with dedicated English language support for newcomers.
- **St Chad's Sanctuary** in the heart of Birmingham supports asylum seekers and refugees through the provision of clothes, food, welfare information and English classes.
- **BRaid** is a project in Oxford, developed by the Blackfriars Community, that supports a refugee family through the Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme.

Why we do it

Our work is inspired by the gospel of Christ and more than one hundred years of Catholic social teaching. Father Hudson's seeks to create places of welcome, support and care for those whose dignity as children of God must be recognised.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are at the core of what we do. We strive to promote the human dignity of all and support people to be part of their local community. We are there to support people as they seek justice and fair treatment.

We also take great encouragement from Pope Francis's vision of a Church that is driven by a mission to reach out to those who are suffering. In the Bible, Jesus asks us to be there for all people when they are in need, as by welcoming the stranger we welcome Him into our lives.

The work of charities like Father Hudson's Care is vitally important to the people we help. Reports have suggested that as a faith-based charity we are more likely to persevere with challenging causes, more resilient to change and more able to engage with hard to reach and vulnerable groups in society. Importantly for our beneficiaries, faith-based charities are more able to deliver culturally appropriate services to their clients.

Matthew 25:35-40

³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (NRSV)

How can I help?

Schools and Youth Groups

Schools can play an important role in supporting newcomers to an area. This also helps pupils learn the value and need for tolerance and caring for their neighbours.

Schools and youth groups play an essential part in helping children become the 'Good Samaritan' in their own lives as well as helping them discover the joy and benefits of helping others, even beyond their own friendship circle.

Some of the activities that schools have taken part include:

Supporting the Good Shepherd or Walk a Mile Appeals. These appeals support the varied work of Father Hudson's Care, in turn supporting our work with asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. Materials are available on the Father Hudson's website to support teachers as they work with children to encourage them to help others.



Big Sleep Out: Help children gain an understanding of what is like to sleep out under the stars. Although this maybe a fun experience for children in groups it helps them to think of others who do not have the support of their parents and loved ones and don't have somewhere warm to go in the morning.



Talks and awareness raising: Help children to understand the choices made by refugees and asylum seekers as they flee their home countries. Give a talk about refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants and then start an activity or discussion to help students gain an understanding of life for refugee and migrant children. The [UNHCR](#) and [Amnesty International](#) websites contain activities that can support this work.

Collections: Regular collections of food, toys and games, warm clothes or toiletries help support and sustain “Welcome” projects throughout the year. One-off seasonal collections can provide a much-needed boost to supplies during busy periods. They also encourage children to think about what they would like to receive in a collection like this. Speak to your local food bank or resources centre to find out what they need and when.

Youth Advocacy: UNICEF supports children to speak on issues that are important to them. They have created a [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#) to support groups to develop a structured response to issues that are concerning them now, allowing them to identify solutions to problems with people that can affect real change.

Become a School of Sanctuary: Schools of Sanctuary are a place of welcome for people looking for a place of safety. Schools also support all students to be welcoming and value the whole community. Visit their [website](#) for more details.

Offer community ESOL classes: Learning English is key to integration. Offering community English classes to people outside schools hours will support those in your community that cannot access support during the day. [Brushstrokes](#) has developed New Beginnings, a teaching resource for those working with beginner ESOL students.

Paddy's story

Lessons learned in childhood can have a long-term benefit, but sometimes they can inspire someone immediately. After learning about the work of Father Hudson's Care at an assembly in school, 11-year-old Paddy decided he wanted to help.

He organised a football game between year 5 and year 6 boys in his school, which proved to be an exciting match. He also made and sold cakes, sweets and drinks in aid of Father Hudson's Care. Although he received the support of the school, his Headteacher and his family, it was all Paddy's idea and he managed the arrangements himself, including persuading his older brother to act as referee.

Having enjoyed the challenge so much, Paddy is already planning his next fundraising adventure selling tote bags in aid of Father Hudson's Care.



Safeguarding

When working with children or vulnerable adults it is essential to have a good safeguarding policy and practice to protect those who may be vulnerable. There is guidance to write a policy on the [NCVO website](#). Please contact your parish or school has a safeguarding officer who can assist you to access training and advice as you develop your project..

How can I help?

Universities

Universities welcome a diverse range of people with equally diverse skills and knowledge. Many of the students and staff also have the time, enthusiasm and desire to help people in their new city.

University societies provide new students with the support they need when they come to a new town and a new environment. There is also the tradition of student societies supporting others in need.

Universities and their societies and students can help and support newcomers as part of their time in a new place. Here are some ways to help:

Supporting the Christmas or Lenten Alms Appeal. This appeal supports the varied work of Father Hudson's Care, in turn supporting our work with asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. In addition to supporting our existing work this also allows us to develop new projects to meet the needs of people in our communities.

Raise money: Run, ride or bake to raise money for people in need. Support existing projects to maintain their essential services for potentially vulnerable people, as well as supporting new work to respond to rising demands or new issues as they arise. For more information visit the [Father Hudson's Care fundraising website](#).

Volunteer: Although many students will not be available year-round, they can provide the valuable resource of time during the academic year and at home during the holidays. There are an ever expanding number of volunteer roles available to suit availability, experience and interest, with many providing excellent work experience for students in their area of interest or across a variety of roles. If you would like to support refugees, asylum seekers or vulnerable migrants in your area you can contact your local refugee charity and ask if they need volunteers or search [do-it.org](#) for volunteering opportunities near you.



Collections: Regular collections of food, toys and games, warm clothes or toiletries help support and sustain welcome projects throughout the year. One-off seasonal collections can provide a much-needed boost to supplies during busy periods. These collections prevent the hunger and hardship linked to deprivation. Speak to your local food bank or resources centre to find out what they need.

Universities of Sanctuary: Become a [University of Sanctuary](#), welcoming young people as they take the next steps in their education. This project also supports students who face barriers to higher education through sanctuary scholarships and providing support to those who face barriers. Later guides can support you in creating a Place of Welcome or befriending initiative.

There are also programs that allow you to share your existing skills with refugees, for example English language support through programmes like [paper airplanes](#).

Mursal and Danyal's stories

Originally from Afghanistan and now a British citizen, Mursal is a second year Wolverhampton University student studying Education Studies. As part of her studies, she had to complete a work placement and chose to do this at Brushstrokes. She said, "The internship opportunity I had with Brushstrokes was a great chance for my learning and professional development. I would like to thank all members of staff at Brushstrokes for their guidance and support whilst on my placement. Every member of staff made me feel part of the team and provided me with many opportunities to develop my knowledge with my best interests at heart which I am appreciative for."



Mursal has joined Danyal at Brushstrokes. Danyal is a third year Aston University Student studying Business Computing and IT. Danyal has an extensive volunteering history and he sought to make his skills and experience useful at Brushstrokes. He said, "Working at Brushstrokes has allowed me to meet some wonderful people who are very welcoming to everyone... Thank you to everyone at Brushstrokes for such a warm and pleasant welcome."

How can I help?

Parish and Community Groups

Groups provide friendship and support to their members and many groups are looking for opportunities to share their care and support with others.

The dedicated support of a group of people with the shared aim of welcoming and supporting new arrivals to the area can make a real difference to a project's work.

There are many ways that church and community groups can support local projects to welcome newcomers to their area. Here are a selection of the most popular options:

Supporting the Lenten Alms Appeal. This appeal supports the varied work of Father Hudson's Care, in turn supporting our work with asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. In addition to supporting our existing work this also allows us to develop new projects to meet the needs of people in our communities.

Fundraise: Run, ride or bake to raise money for people in need. Support existing projects to maintain their essential services for potentially vulnerable people, as well as supporting new work to respond to rising demands or new issues as they arise. Many groups run a Christmas raffle or donate the proceeds from an annual event to the charity of their choice. For more information visit the [Father Hudson's Care fundraising website](#).

One-off or Regular Collections: Regular collections of food, toys and games, warm clothes or toiletries help support and sustain welcome projects throughout the year. One-off seasonal collections can provide a much-needed boost to supplies during busy periods. These collections prevent hunger and hardship linked to deprivation. Speak to your local food bank or resources centre to find out what they need. If you build a relationship with your local charity they will be able to keep you up to date with the most in-demand items. Speak to your local food bank or resources centre to find out what they need and when.



Share my Skills: For those who can knit, crochet or sew, why not put those skills to use making blankets and baby clothes for those in need of warm items to get them through the winter weather. Alternatively, get creative and make items to sell for charity.

Volunteer: There are an ever expanding number of volunteer roles available to suit availability, experience and interest with many providing excellent opportunities to meet people and share your knowledge and experience. If you would like to support refugees, asylum seekers or vulnerable migrants in your area you can contact your local refugee charity and ask if they need volunteers, or search do-it.org for volunteering opportunities near you.

Start your own Project: If you have identified a gap in services in your area that you would like to fill there is more information to support you in these guides. Alternatively if you need more support you can contact your local CAVA who will be able to give you in-depth advice, or please contact Father Hudson's Care for more information on the Newcomer Development Project on 01675 434 000 or enquiries@fatherhudsons.org.uk



Safeguarding

When working with children or vulnerable adults it is essential to have a good safeguarding policy and practice to protect those who may be vulnerable. There is guidance to write a policy on the [NCVO website](http://ncvo.org.uk). Please contact your parish or school has a safeguarding officer who can assist you to access training and advice as you develop your project.

The story of Kingsbury Mothers Union

Kingsbury Mothers Union have been inspired to use their skills to support people in need. The dedicated knitters in Kingsbury produce a range of items for others, including warm blankets, baby blankets, baby clothes, toys, glasses cases and twiddle muffs (a knitted double thickness muff with buttons, ribbons, lace and pompoms attached, twiddle muffs are designed for people with dementia to help keep people's hands occupied). These gifts make a big difference to people in need, sharing not just warmth but the care that goes into making each item.

Case Study: Brushstrokes

Brushstrokes in Smethwick supports the most vulnerable people across Sandwell and the neighbouring areas.

Primarily this support is for asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. Through its large team of dedicated and experienced staff Brushstrokes provides frontline services to those in need. Additionally they use their knowledge and experience to influence national strategy, making a long term change for beneficiaries

The team at Brushstrokes provides holistic support for their clients. This means that people can access as many services as possible under one roof and from a trusted provider. Our direct services include:

- Outreach, Advice and Information Service – on welfare, housing, education, health, accessing services and signposting. We provide accredited OISC immigration advice level 3.
- Resources – food, clothing, household and essential baby equipment.
 - Teaching English to speakers of other languages, (ESOL) – accredited language support.
 - Employment support – including high level English support to acquire conversion qualifications for health professionals (e.g. IELTS).
 - Refugee Pathway – supporting refugees during the transition from asylum to refugee status.
 - Community cohesion activities – days out, social opportunities and the community café, which is a designated Place of Welcome.



These services have supported thousands of people and their families over the last 20 years and Brushstrokes will continue to be the support that people need into the future. If you would like more information about Brushstrokes, to become a volunteer or to make a donation then visit www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk, call 0121 565 2234, or email info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk.

Case study: Hope Community

Hope Community works with people in the Heath Town estate of Wolverhampton. Hope seeks to be holistic, nurturing, respectful and responsive in its integrated services.

The aim of the project is to build an integrated community, reduce social isolation, raise aspirations and strengthen family relationships. With activities guided by the needs of the community, this project has been supporting people for more than 30 years. As an independent charity they look to continue responding to the needs of the community into the future.

Heath Town is a diverse community that became more diverse by welcoming asylum seekers and refugees in the early 2000's. The area also is affected by long-term unemployment and gang membership. To combat these challenges and respond to the needs of the community Hope offers English classes, separate activities for Boys and Girls Groups as well as a group for younger children. There is also a women's group and a lunch group for older people to reduce the risk of isolation.



Delivered by a dedicated team of staff and award winning volunteers, Hope is committed to supporting people in need.

If you would like to Support Hope Project please visit the [Hope Community Project](#) or call 01902 556645 or email enquiries@hope-cp.org.uk.

How to give a talk about asylum seekers, refugees, migrants

Share your passion for supporting people in need with others. Use your knowledge and experience to share facts and stories to inspire people to take action.

A presentation can be used to engage people with a subject that they had not considered before, or to share new information about an area of interest.

Planning

- Think about your audience; check with organisers are there any special needs. For example, people who have hearing difficulties find it easier if you look forward rather than down or move around.
- Find out details such as who the presentation is for. What they want to learn about? Where is it being held? Are they expecting a PowerPoint presentation? what facilities do they have available? How long do they want you to speak for? Will someone be introducing you? What information do they need?
- Find a friend or colleague to practice on. This can help to iron out any problems and help you feel comfortable with an audience. You can also get an accurate idea of how long the presentation is, have time to learn what style of presentation works for you and how you use your notes.



Show that you care

Show your enthusiasm and that you care; this will help people stay engaged with what you are saying. This can include your body language. Be welcoming and warm and look at the group you are presenting to. Try and avoid turning your back to the audience.

Think about the key message

Try to keep to a maximum of 5 key points—people can't take in more than this.

Presentations

- Keep it to ten slides, and a maximum of 20 minutes (this can allow people to ask questions at the end).
- Try and avoid writing everything that you want to say on a slide. People will read ahead and not listen to what you are saying. Keep slides to some key points and pictures that won't detract from what you are saying and then explain them to your audience.

There is a template of a presentation available on our website.

Questions

Allow time for questions at the end of your presentation, this will enable people to delve further into areas they are interested in. When you test the presentation, ask if there are any obvious questions that you or your friends would like to know the answer to.

Plan a strategy to respond to questions that you don't know the answer to. For example, take someone's contact details and say you will find out and let them know.

Margot and Lucy deliver a range of talks and assemblies across the Archdiocese, speaking to schools and parish groups for Father Hudson's Care. Through their work they are able to see how people are inspired by their faith to take action to help others.

The part of their work they enjoy the most is seeing how people respond to their message. For example, speaking to children who remember a previous assembly or learning how a fundraiser was inspired by their words to take action.



Or, if you are emailing out the presentation, add the answer to the email.

Handouts

If you are giving people a handout, plan when and how you will do this. You could ask a friend to hand them out as people arrive or as they leave.

Also, try and factor in the cost of printing the handout or consider emailing the details to people to reduce unnecessary printing.

How to set up a Friendship Group

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants arriving in England are often without their usual support networks. New friendships are essential to helping people settle in to their new home.

A Friendship Group invites newcomers to form wider social circles in their new home, building their ability to respond to challenging situations.

Friendship Groups enable people of different faiths and cultures to come together over a shared activity, breaking down barriers to friendship. Newcomers can meet others with a common interests to build genuine friendships.

An idea

- Look at what activities are already available in your area and contact these groups. They may be able to share their experiences and advice. Additionally, they may be able to pass on information from their participants about any additional need for groups. For example, is there any interest in a women's group or one that meets after school or work?
- Identify Parish Leaders who may be interested in your group or seek the support of your local SVP or other parish and community groups.
- Identify any costs, this can include room hire, refreshments, volunteer travel expenses etc. and consider how these costs will be covered.
- Think about the participants that you are targeting, activities they might be interested in, and when they will be available. For example, those with children will have limited availability at the beginning and end of the day or are looking for activities that include children.
- Invite people based on the activity that you are organising. If you are setting up a group include everyone—we lead busy lives, but even if someone can't make it, it's great to be included. Speaking at Mass, advertising in a Parish Newsletter, Email, text, card invitations or posters in the community can help get the word out. Let people know whether children are welcome.
- Contact other organisations who can refer people to your group who may be interested.

- Involve parishioners - ask for help with hosting, help with transport, baking, serving coffee, looking after money, answering the door and welcoming; much easier and more fun with a team.

Practicalities and Problems

Organising a group like this can take time and effort. It is important to have a team leader who will supervise the volunteers as well as making sure that training is up to date and that they are following the rules in place to protect all the group participants. Online training for volunteers is available to members of the [Befrienders Network](#).

It can take a while for a group to establish, particularly when some participants cannot attend every week. Give it time and bring some friends to create a friendly atmosphere when people reach out to your group. However, a friendship group is about creating friendships not investigating problems that participants may or may not have. If an issue arises, make sure that participants are signposted to the most suitable service for them as soon as possible. There is more information in our guide, [How to set up a Place of Welcome](#) and in [How to overcome language barriers](#).

Safeguarding

When working with children or vulnerable adults it is essential to have good safeguarding policy and practice to protect those who may be vulnerable. There is guidance to write a policy on the [NCVO website](#). Please contact your parish or school has a safeguarding officer who can assist you to access training and advice as you develop your project.

Fundraising

Making a group free is a good way to make sure that no-one is excluded, however there are costs that need to be considered when running a group. You can raise money for these in a variety of ways. For more information on fundraising please see our [How to raise funds for my project](#) guide.

Resources

[The Befriending Network](#)—Provides more detailed information and guides on setting up, promoting and sustaining a service.

The story of Mrs B. in her own words

'I really got complete and admirable support that makes me feel like I'm worth living as human being with dignity. Physically: I got the support of food, clothes for myself and the little one and all the necessary moral support throughout my pregnancy. I got the house to live in for more than a year through Brushstrokes. Mentally: I was offered counselling to cope with my horrible and painful past incidents which left me so torn apart and persuade me to leave my country. Socially: I was so fortunate to be invited to one of the group for sewing with the intention of helping me interact with people and at the same time learning something new so to be occupied in mind. I was also allowed to be one of the volunteers to serve people with food and clothes. I really do not know how to outline everything because it was on-going support with so much love and care.' Mrs B

How to set up a one-to-one befriending initiative

Developing new friendships improves both mental and physical wellbeing.

One-to-one befriending provides the opportunity to form more in-depth friendship. They are useful for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who need to create new support networks in a new area.

One-to-one befriending involves a volunteer contacting a client regularly by telephone, email or letter, or meeting in person. This form of befriending creates a higher level of engagement but requires more volunteers with a higher level of training. In addition to this, it requires a higher level of supervision and, depending on the form of communication, more technology may be involved.

An idea

- Look at what activities are already available in your area and contact refugee and migrant support groups that are offering similar activities. They may be able to share their experiences and advice. Additionally, they may be able to pass on information from their participants about the need.
- Identify Parish Leaders who may be interested in your group or seek the support of your local SVP or other parish and community groups.
- Identify any costs; this can include office hire, IT equipment or software, volunteer travel expenses, etc.
- Think about the participants that you are targeting, activities they might be interested in and when they will be available. For example, those that have children will have limited availability at the beginning and end of the school day. Some newcomers may also have a limited income available to travel or take part in activities.
- Speaking at Mass, advertising in a Parish Newsletter, Email, text, card invitations or posters in the community can help get the word out.
- Contact other organisations who can refer refugees, asylum seekers or migrants to your group.
- Involve parishioners - seek support from parishioners beyond the befriending role, some may have experience supervising staff or working with volunteers.

Practicalities and Problems

It is important to have a team leader who will supervise the volunteers as well as making sure that training is up to date and at an appropriate level, and that they are following the rules in place to protect all the group participants. Online training for volunteers is available to members of the [Befrienders Network](#).

As volunteers are meeting potentially vulnerable people, speak to your local safeguarding officer as soon as possible to seek advice and gain access to training. Each volunteer may need to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked.

Individuals need to be assessed when they first approach the service to ensure that both the service and the befriender can meet their needs.

In most cases Befrienders do not have access to each other's contact details, calls and emails are arranged through a third party.

- Meet with the head of relevant organisations e.g. primary schools, ESOL groups and local community groups. Be aware that some activities, particularly in schools, may be planned more than six months in advance.
- Discuss the frequency of correspondence, as well as possible visits to charities and organisations. At this point also discuss how letters will be sent to and received by groups and schools. Consider at this point if anyone will need additional support to write letters due to English language levels, confidence writing in English, or a disability.
- At this meeting provide one group with a list of names to enable the first letter to be sent.
- Evaluate regularly with partner organisations and address issues.

Safeguarding

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Fundraising

Making a group free is a good way to make sure that no-one is excluded, however, there are costs that need to be considered when running a group. You can raise money for these in a variety of ways. For more information on fundraising please see our [How to raise funds for my project guide](#).

Resources

[The Befriending Network](#)—Provides more detailed information and guides on setting up, promoting and sustaining a service as well as other organisations that are available across the country.

How to set up a Place of Welcome

Places of Welcome were established in 2012 to provide a network of welcoming places across the UK. This scheme has now expanded across the country to provide a welcoming place to all those who feel isolated.

People can feel isolated for a variety of reasons, usually based on a change in circumstance. This can include moving to a new area, unemployment or retirement, ill health or a change in family circumstances, such as a bereavement or having a child.

Any organisation can operate a Place of Welcome. There are 5 criteria that must be met:

- **Place:** It must be held in an accessible and hospitable building open at the same time every week.
- **People:** It must be open to everyone regardless of their circumstance or situation, and staffed by volunteers.
- **Presence:** It is a place where people actively listen to one another.
- **Provision:** The activity must offer free refreshments (at least a cup of tea and a biscuit) and basic local information.
- **Participation:** Every person will bring talents, experiences and skills that they may be willing to share locally.

Each Place of Welcome is required to have a co-ordinator to manage the weekly event and connect with the area co-ordinator. They are also responsible for managing the volunteers and the signposting information.

A full list of Places of Welcome is available online on a dedicated website.

If this is something you think that you can do. You can register either a new or existing group at the [Place of Welcome](#) website.



A new parish group

- Identify Parish Leaders who may be interested in your group or seek the support of your local SVP or other parish and community groups.
- Pick a venue—for larger meetings a parish hall may be ideal but smaller meeting rooms may meet your needs.
- Identify any costs, this can include room hire, refreshments, volunteer travel expenses etc. before you start.

In advance

- Invite everyone - even those that cannot attend may be able to share the information with others. Speaking at Mass, advertising in a Parish Newsletter, Email, text messages, or posters in the community can help get the word out. Examples of this are available on our website.
- Contact other organisations who can refer people to your who may be interested e.g. GPs and health clinics, local charities and council offices.
- Involve parishioners - Ask for help with hosting, help with transport, baking, serving coffee, looking after money, answering the door and welcoming; this will make running an event easier and more fun.

On the Day

- Arrive early so that you can set up and be relaxed and prepared when people arrive.
- Speak to volunteers and participants and find out when they would like to meet next. You may not be able to meet everyone's needs, but asking people when they are available can mean they are more likely to attend.
- Allow time in your room booking to clear up any furniture or cups and plates.

Safeguarding

When working with children or vulnerable adults it is essential to have good safeguarding policy and practice to protect those who may be vulnerable. There is guidance to write a policy on the [NCVO website](#). Please contact your parish or school has a safeguarding officer who can assist you to access training and advice as you develop your project.

Fundraising

Making a group free is a good way to make sure that no-one is excluded, however there are costs that need to be considered when running a group. You can raise money for these in a variety of ways. For more information on fundraising please see our [How to raise funds for my project guide](#).



How to make baby packs

Brushstrokes created a Baby Pack which contains essential mother-and-baby items which mothers-to-be can take with them into hospital before the baby's birth and for use in the first three months of the baby's life.

The items contained in a baby pack were identified by maternity health specialists and charities with experience of supporting vulnerable family groups. The aim is to improve the physical and emotional health of mothers-to-be and their babies by offering the gift of baby essentials in the spirit of friendship and solidarity.

The Baby Packs work not just by providing mothers-to-be with items that they need. They also connect them with the information, support and health services they need to ensure both their wellbeing and that of their child.

Any individual or group can make up a Baby Pack, however only new items are provided in the baby pack. New items help to prevent the risk of infection to babies and also make the mothers feel pride in the gifts they have been given. You can create a list and allow people to sign up to buy certain items or share your list online through an Amazon wishlist.

Knitted baby items including cardigans and blankets are always received with much delight from individual home knitters and knitting groups.

Essential items for the baby

- Baby sleep suits
- Vests
- Nappies
- Muslin cloths
- Towels
- Cardigans and warm outer garments
- Baby clothes
- Hats and mittens
- Baby sheets and blankets
- Baby toiletries
- Baby bottle

Essential Items for the mother

- Large strong bags for the baby pack items which can be used during the mothers stay in hospital
- Toiletries and sanitary products
- Towels

Optional items

- Health information approved by health professionals
- Good wishes messages from the donors to mother and baby
- Baby toy

Distributing Baby Packs

Baby Packs can be shared with mothers in need known to the parish through groups like the Union of Catholic Mothers or the St Vincent de Paul Society. However the best results come from packs that come with additional support to access services.

Groups can contact local organisations that may be able to hand out the packs including Father Hudson's Care and their community projects, hospital chaplains and maternity services, children's centres and community groups and charities supporting vulnerable people.



The Baby Pack items improve the physical health of the baby and reduce the risk of neonatal mortality.

Safeguarding

When working with children or vulnerable adults it is essential to have good safeguarding policy and practice to protect those who may be vulnerable. There is guidance to write a policy on the [NCVO website](#). Please contact your parish or school has a safeguarding officer who can assist you to access training and advice as you develop your project.

“Being able to provide a bag of essentials to expecting mums is a wonderful thing & helps them to feel so much more prepared for a stay in hospital. You are providing a much needed service to our women, thank you.”

Health Visitor

There is an ongoing need for projects like this. This form of support would be a wonderful project for people who would like to make a long term difference to their community.

The Baby Packs have been shown to bring joy to mothers as well as reducing stress and anxiety. They have also been shown to be a positive engagement opportunity, reducing isolation and increasing opportunities for additional support.

“Receiving a baby pack made me feel more comfortable & relaxed. I didn't have to worry myself about clothes for my baby anymore.”

Anonymous

“It helped me a lot as I had just a few clothes for him. After that day I could change his clothes without worrying.”

Anonymous

How to recruit and retain volunteers

Volunteers are essential to any group. It is important to match the right people to the right role, to encourage them to stay for the long term.

Volunteers are giving their time, knowledge and experience to your project. Volunteers are key to a projects success. Even small projects rely on volunteers to ensure that activities can take place regularly and to a high standard. In return volunteers also gain from giving their time. They develop new skills and friendships as well as undertaking an interesting task that can help them develop new interests and expand their existing skills.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers can take time, but is invaluable. Taking the time to ensure that you are recruiting the right volunteers to the roles you need can make life easier in the future. Volunteers like to feel the work they do is valued and needed, so understanding the role they are being asked to undertake and how often this will be needed is crucial to recruiting the right volunteers. Ensuring that volunteers achieve their full potential is key to retaining volunteers. This can include finding training opportunities such as Food Hygiene training or supporting people to learn new skills. Many local community and voluntary action groups can support you to access free or low cost training.

Planning ahead

It is important to plan ahead as there are many things that will make recruiting and retaining volunteers easier.

- What do you want your volunteers to do? Volunteers can bring a wealth of knowledge and experience but they still like to know what is expected of them and what they are committing to. Lay out a **Role Description**, there is a template on the website as a guide.
- Will your volunteers be working with children or vulnerable adults? If they are, it is essential that they are properly vetted and supervised. For more information about this visit the [NCVO website](#). In addition to this, each Parish has a trained Parish Safeguarding Representative who holds additional information about training, safeguarding clearances and recruitment.

- Are you going to pay expenses? Paying expenses is considered good practice. However you need to plan for this cost to the charity.
- What is the recruitment process going to be? If you are setting up a group you could organise an open day to recruit volunteers and speak to several people in one day. Another option if your group is running would be to invite people to join the group for an afternoon to see your work in action.

Recruitment

- Tell people what you are doing, the difference that you hope to make. Inspire them to join your work.
- Word of mouth is an excellent tool for recruiting volunteers. Prepare some materials that people can pass on to their friends and relatives.
- Ask your Parish Priest if you can speak at Mass or at some of the Parish Groups that may be interested in supporting your idea. Alternatively, if you prefer, add some information to the Parish Newsletter or create a poster.
- Contact your local Volunteer Centre or use the do-it.org website as this will open up your group to more people that are interested in volunteering.
- Respond to expressions of interest quickly as potential volunteers could find new opportunities.

At Brushstrokes many of their volunteers have previously been clients. This is Bani's story:

'Brushstrokes has helped me in the past in many different ways such as helping me with my immigration status. I cannot thank them enough for all the support they have given me over the past seven years. As a thank you I wanted to give Brushstrokes something back when I got my Leave to Remain after 18 years of being in the UK. I volunteered at Brushstrokes so that I could help other people that are going through different issues in their lives too. I started as an Administration Volunteer in February 2018 and I really enjoyed meeting and helping other people. I am pleased to say that I have been rewarded for my hard work as a volunteer and now have a paid job on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am till 1pm as Brushstrokes Receptionist. Brushstrokes always has lots of opportunities to help support and build self-confidence and you can always volunteer your help too. Thank you,

Bani'

Applications and interviews

- Keep the process simple. You will need to hold some information on your volunteers such as contact details, relevant skills and experience and anything that can impact.
- Hold informal interviews so that the volunteer can learn more about what you are

planning and you can learn about their skills and motivations. Try to ask the same questions for each role and keep a record of the interview.

- When appointing volunteers ask for references, usually two.
- Health checks are only needed for roles that are physically demanding and should not be used to exclude people unnecessarily.
- DBS checks are needed if people are possibly going to be working one-on-one with vulnerable adults or children. If you need help assessing if you need to include DBS checks, speak to your Parish Safeguarding Representative.
- You can decline a volunteer if they are not a good fit, for example they are not regularly available at the time you need them. Let a volunteer know why you can't take them on now and, if possible, point them towards more suitable vacancies, for example evening work volunteering roles with other organisations.
- Hold an induction with your volunteers, show them where they will be working and where the items they need will be stored. It is important to introduce them to colleagues as well as any group members.



Retaining Volunteers

It is also important to retain volunteers once you have recruited them.

- Get to know your volunteers and the reasons that they have chosen to volunteer. If someone would like to develop new skills ask if they would like assist with organising the group. Other volunteers may be interested in meeting new people and so would enjoy serving drinks or welcoming guests.
- Listen to feedback from volunteers as they may hear interesting and valuable information from participants.
- Recognise your volunteers and say thank you. This can include a volunteers' Christmas Party or event or for volunteers that go above and beyond the call of duty during Volunteer Week in the first week of June.

Resources

[National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (NCVO) hold a lot of resources for setting up an organisation.

[Archdiocese of Birmingham Safeguarding](#) holds all the Safeguarding contact information.

Case Study: Sophia House

Sophia House provides more than a place to stay for female refugees and their infant children; it provides a supportive, stable home.

Once they have been granted refugee status, people only have 28 days to move out of supported accommodation. This means that they have to navigate an unfamiliar housing system, apply for benefits and find a suitable place in 28 days or risk homelessness.

Single female refugees are particularly vulnerable to a system that is not designed to support them. Sophia House provides shared accommodation and support to women for 12 months as they adapt to life in the UK. They receive support to apply for work or education and training as they engage with society and move on from the trauma of displacement.

Sophia House is a partnership project in south Birmingham. The project is supported by Father Hudson's Care, the parishes of Our Lady and St Brigid and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, and sisters from the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd.



Parishioners were very supportive of this project and helped to furnish the house ready for the new tenants over a summer. This demonstrates the difference that people can make to a small project like this, which will make a big difference to those that it supports.

Sophia House opened in September 2018 and has been home to four women in the first year who were referred by partners.

If you would like to Support Sophia House please visit the [Father Hudson's Care website](#) or contact Teresa Clements the Newcomer Development Worker on [07464-497417](tel:07464-497417) or email sophiahouse@fatherhudsons.org.uk.

How to support people with accommodation needs

Finding suitable, safe accommodation can be one of the key challenges for new arrivals to the UK.

With the hostile environment requiring increasing amounts of paperwork and ongoing pressures on social housing, it can be very difficult for new arrivals to find a home.

There can be different reasons that people need support with accommodation. Even people who have lived in the UK for some time can experience difficulties navigating a system that may be unlike the one they knew before. Asylum seekers identified as having no recourse to public funds do not have access to accommodation and do not have the ability to rent in the private sector. Refugees, on being granted leave to remain, have 30 days to claim benefits and secure housing in the private sector, leaving many of them on the brink of homelessness or in unsuitable temporary accommodation. Migrants can also face challenges with some landlords reluctant to rent to foreign nationals due to fears over the tightening responsibilities of landlords and fears that a changing political situation will affect the length of tenancies.

Hosting

Some charities work with volunteers to provide accommodation for refused asylum seekers who are destitute. These are people whose claim for asylum has been refused but this has been appealed. They are unable to work and not eligible for any support from the government and so are often homeless. Hosting means people allow someone to stay in their home. There are several charities that support this work including [Room for Refugees](#), [Refugees at Home](#) and [NACCOM](#) (the No Accommodation Network).

Vacant Properties

Two of our projects were developed in vacant parish buildings. Fatima House and Sophia House both now provide accommodation to women in the vulnerable women at risk of homelessness in properties that were no longer used by the parish. If you have access to a house and wish to become a philanthropic landlord, you can rent suitable housing to a charity at low or no cost to support people in need. For more information locally please contact Jo Watters at [Father Hudson's Care](#) or [Hope Project](#).

Advice and support

Many projects provide advice and support to asylum seekers as they seek to navigate the housing system. Brushstrokes provides individuals with advice, and volunteers support people to access housing, understand their rights and responsibilities as well as acting as an intermediary in tenancy disputes. Additionally they work with landlords to dispel myths that have built up in association with renting to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Brushstrokes provides practical support to people in need including food, clothes, and household items. These projects need donations of money and time to ensure they can continue to support people in need. Contact your local charity to see if there are items that they urgently need.

Sponsorship

Parishes and communities can join together to sponsor a family through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Community sponsors support a refugee family on their arrival in the UK by providing safe and suitable accommodation for a minimum of two years including their utilities. Groups must meet their families as they arrive in the UK and provide financial assistance as they are supported to access appropriate benefits, medical care, education. Families are also supported to learn English both formally and through informal conversations in their new community. Each family will have different needs to assimilate into their new environment. For example some people will need additional support with IT, help to access mental health support or specialist services for victims of torture. There are national organisations who can support this work. Please contact Jo Watters at [Father Hudson's Care](#) for information about support in your area.

When Mrs A, a widow from Iran, arrived in the UK with her three children she had no knowledge of English. The family was referred to Brushstrokes by the local authority when they were granted refugee status, and their entitlement to Asylum Support ceased. The family of four was housed in temporary hotel accommodation, sharing one room with no cooking facilities or washing machine.

Whilst the local authority met the housing need, no one had identified that the family were without any means of financial support. Due to her lack of English and knowledge of the housing and benefits system, Mrs A had been unable to raise concerns about what she and her children were to live on. Brushstrokes provided Mrs A with food parcels, clothes, travel money, short term financial support. She also received advice and support to apply for benefits and respond to administrative delays that had left her without support for several months. During this time Brushstrokes advocated on her behalf with the Housing Department, Social Services and the Department of Work and Pensions to resolve this issue. The family stayed in three hotels before they were moved into permanent accommodation. We supported her to secure furniture, ensure all the relevant benefits applications were made and enable her to access college to improve her English. Without our support this vulnerable family of one lone adult and three children would have had no food or means to obtain it for over 8 weeks. We continue to offer the family support whilst they settle into their new life.

Case Study: Fatima House

Fatima House provides accommodation and support to destitute female asylum seekers.

Fatima House was established in 2015 at the height of the refugee crisis. A parish priest felt the presbytery was too large for his needs and he offered the house to the diocese to house asylum seekers. Less than a year later the project welcomed the first refugees to their new home.

Father Hudson's developed Fatima House in partnership with the Columban Missionaries Britain, St Anne's Parish, the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Archdiocese of Birmingham. They currently support nine women at a time in the heart of Birmingham providing them with a home and a chance to move on with their lives. Fatima House supports Female Asylum seekers who face additional risks of violence and gender-based violence, especially if their application for asylum is refused.

Women are referred to Fatima House by local specialist agencies. During their stay they receive specialist support in the welcoming and nurturing environment created by Mauricio Silva and Nathalie Marytsch. They are supported by a team of volunteers who provide friendship and support to access essential services. The projects supporters provide essential items including toiletries and clothes and the each person is provided with a weekly allowance to buy personal items. Natalie said, "I feel privileged to have the opportunity to share my life with these women. Each one has taught me in different ways and through diverse experiences about resilience and survival but above all about Faith."



So far the project has supported 27 women when they needed help the most and this would not have been possible without the community support.

If you would like to lend your support to Fatima House, please visit the [Father Hudson's Care website](#) or contact Christy Acton on 01675 434 000 or christyacton@fatherhudsons.org.uk.

Case Study: BRaid

BRaid, or Blackfriars Refugee Aid, was established by the congregation of The Blackfriars Dominican Priory in Oxford. The congregation are sponsoring a family through the vulnerable persons resettlement scheme.

Many members of the Priory and their congregation wanted to do more to help refugees in need. Together they have the skills and experience to support a family of refugees.

The group worked with Father Hudson's Care, a registered charity, and drew experience and knowledge from the congregation. This support included people who work in education as a health visitor, benefits expert, and two Arabic speaking students who were able to act as interpreters. An ESOL teacher in the parish was able to negotiate free places for the parents at their language school. The group also built essential relationships with experienced refugee and asylum seeker specialists in Oxford to get additional support for the family.



Once accommodation was sourced for two years, with the support of a major local landlord, the property was fully furnished by people from the parish. The group were matched with a family who were welcomed to Oxford in January 2018. Once the family had settled into the area, they were invited to join the congregation for a Halal Easter Lunch.

Everyone involved feels that they have benefited from their work on this project. BRaid successfully brought together the skills and experience within a community to help and support those in need. If you would like to learn more about community sponsorship visit www.sponsorrefugees.org or call 020 7043 9881.

How to overcome a language barrier

Integrating into a new community is more difficult for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants when there is a language barrier.

Communicating problems, seeking advice, making friends or even going to the doctors is made more difficult if you are not comfortable speaking English. This can increase the risk of isolation amongst newcomers to a community and makes everyday life harder.

If you are working with people who speak English as a second language there are steps that you can take to help them.

“I am alone in my home but now I have more friends and my English is better.”
Lamis

- Check with individuals to see if you need to make any adjustments. They may be happy that they understand what you are saying even when using complex or specialist language.
- Learn something new. Ask how to pronounce someone's name correctly if you are unsure, to help build a positive relationship or ask them to teach you something like hello or thank you.
- Slow your speech down. Even people with a good knowledge of English can find it difficult to understand someone speaking quickly. Although speaking too slowly or when this is not needed will come across as condescending.
- Using colloquialisms, even common ones, can be confusing, so be prepared to explain them as they come up. Acronyms and slang can also make conversation more difficult.
- Using body language can help give context to what you are saying indicating mood (positive or negative) and the formality of the situation (casual or professional). Make eye contact with people to help form a relationship.
- Be aware of different cultures. What may seem overly formal here may be respectful to someone else.
- Brushstrokes Community Project has developed the New Beginnings teaching resource for volunteers working in the community with beginner ESOL Students. For more information please contact [Brushstrokes Community Project](#).

External Support

Many local authorities offer ESOL classes, particularly aimed at beginners with trained teachers to help people develop their English.

These courses tend to be in community locations and can help people build relationships with others who are experiencing a similar situation. Additionally these courses are often offered free or at reduced cost for those with a low income or who are on benefits. Unfortunately these courses are often oversubscribed and so people may have to join a waiting list to start the course.

Local colleges and organisations also organise ESOL classes and other courses, including courses for children and young people. Some also offer specialist courses supporting people to learn English for work. It is important to check that any qualification offered will be accepted by employers and agencies as they can be expensive.

Local community groups can provide support for people in their own language or just the opportunity to meet and speak to people in their own language. They may also have specialist language support for speakers of their shared language. To find a group in your area you can visit the local Community and Voluntary Action Group in your area or an online search may identify small new groups.

'When I go to parent's day for my son I can understand.'

Dhurime

When N came to England with her husband and he became violent, she found herself in one room in a hostel on her own with two young children and struggling to communicate in English. N had no schooling so was unable to read and write in Urdu, her first language.

For the first few weeks she worked one-to-one with a volunteer to identify and write the alphabet. Later she came to classes at Brushstrokes with extra one-to-one help from a volunteer teacher. Although vulnerable and with low self-esteem, N was determined to learn to read and write in English. She came to class regularly and gradually started to put sounds together to form words. When her youngest child started school, she registered with Sandwell College in West Bromwich where she could now hold her own with other ESOL students.

Fast forward five years and N has passed her driving theory test and is about to take her driving test. She came to work club at Brushstrokes and learnt how to apply for work using the computer. She found herself some work experience in a greengrocers and a shoe shop in order to have some experience on her CV. She registered with an employment agency and currently works as a kitchen assistant in a local school. She is more confident and no longer asks for help to make phone calls. She now has plans to be taking her first ever reading exam in English soon.

How to raise funds for my group

Although many small groups need only limited funds, they still can need to raise money to pay the start up or running costs.

Raising money can be challenging and daunting for people who are new to fundraising.

There are different ways to raise money and you can choose the opportunities that are the best fit for your project.

- Some food banks and charities provide food, tea and coffee to voluntary and community groups for free or at a reduced cost. This has the benefit of preventing waste going to landfill and supporting local groups.
- There are small trusts who may be able to provide funding for small events or pilot projects. Small trust applications are usually shorter and simpler. The reporting requirements for small trusts are usually simpler as well.
- Be sponsored to take part in an activity. If you enjoy a challenge, be sponsored during your next event. For more tips on raising money including ways to share this on social media visit the [online giving page](#) of Father Hudson's Care.
- Organise a quiz night in your parish or plan an event for your group. For other ideas tips on organising an event visit the [Father Hudson's Care website](#).
- Ask for a donation - ask people to make a donation for a tea or coffee in a tin or box to help cover the cost for everybody. This can help in attracting funding from trusts or local companies as they can see how the project will be funded in the future without relying on grants.





- Work with local groups schools and groups to host a fundraising event that can contribute to the costs of the project and raise awareness of your work. Alternatively they may be interested in providing you with gifts in kind instead.

If you choose to apply to trusts for a grant there are many things to consider. It is important to thoroughly research any trust that you would like to apply to. You

can find out how much money they give to organisations, what their application process is and how long it is likely to take. There will also be information about the funding preferences including what types of activity they like to support and the types of beneficiary that they like to support. Finding this out early can save you time applying to a trust that will not support your work.

- Plan ahead and calculate how much you are likely to need—don't ask for too much if you can't spend it.
- Check what the trust funds. Some have a preference for paying salaries and core costs while others prefer to purchase items of equipment – don't waste your time asking them to fund something they have already excluded.
- Most trusts will tell you what they want to know about your group and your application for money. If they haven't given you some guidance you can include:
 - The history of your organisation; do you have a track record of delivering projects or activities?
 - Why your project is needed in your area and how you know this. If you have spoken to local groups or individuals let them know.
 - What your project is and what you hope to achieve. For example, 'we will organise a friendship group that will reach 10 people each week. This will reduce loneliness and isolation in our community.' It is important to be realistic, if this is a new project then you will not expect hundreds of people in the first week.
 - Income and costs. Do you have any other sources of income? How long will they last? What are the costs of running this activity? It is important to be realistic about the costs of running a group including rent, refreshments, publicity, stationary or volunteer expenses.

- What experience do you have? Is one of your volunteers a social media expert? Let people know the experience that your team is bringing to the project.
- Let your enthusiasm show through; you love your project let other people know why you love it.
- Ask someone to proofread it for you, including checking your maths. You don't want to miss out because of a minor error.
- Keep a record of who you are applying to and when. This means that if you are successful you can reapply when the exclusion period is over. You may also want to keep a record of any reporting requirements that the Trust has. This can make it easier to report back at the end of the year.
- Find out if they have any reporting requirements. Most trusts want to know how you spent their money and how it helped people. It is easier to plan how you are going to do this at the beginning than to try and pull this information together at the end of a project. For example, if you have said that you will have 100 people visit your friendship group, ask people to sign in each week and keep the sign in sheets in a safe place. Take photos of events as well so you can show them as well as tell them about your work.
- Remember to say thank you. You can send a letter or say thank you on social media, just remember to include their handle in the tweet.

Suggested Areas of support:

Visit your local volunteer centre—they may have people who can support you to make applications or identify funding sources.

If you would like to organise an event in aid of an existing Father Hudson's Care project please visit our [website](#) to discover the wide range of materials and ideas available for you.



Case Study: Tabor House

Tabor House is Birmingham's permanent homeless shelter. The project provides year round support for homeless men and women.

Guests are provided with a bed for the night, a shower, food, warm clothes, dignity, respect and the hand of friendship.

Guests stay for 28 nights and are assigned a mentor who works with them on a weekly basis for between three and six months. The mentor provides support including mentoring, information and advice tailored to the needs and strengths of each guest. This strengths-based approach, building on people's strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses, and the one-to-one support are together key to encouraging engagement with people who may distrust offers of support.

In addition to mentors, guests are supported by a large team of trained hospitality volunteers each night to create a welcoming environment including a shared evening meal.

Since it opened in September 2017 Tabor House has been supporting people to overcome complex issues and find work and permanent accommodation. Many have also taken the opportunity to reconnect with the families creating a wider network of support for the future.



If you would like more information about Tabor House, please contact Christy Acton, Deputy Community Projects Manager at Father Hudson's Care, on [01675 434064](tel:01675434064) or email christyacton@fatherhudsons.org.uk.

How and where to signpost people

It is essential that you are trained and qualified to provide advice to clients. To help people, you can signpost them to alternative organisations in your area.

Signposting supports the people that you are working with to access the correct information to resolve their problems. Incorrect advice can cause problems for clients in the future. This includes unnecessary delays receiving benefits to problems with their immigration status.

Signposting is different to referring a client. A referral means that staff or a volunteer book an appointment and support an initial contact. A referral may include additional information and can rely on a formal relationship between the two organisations. Signposting gives the details of another organisation to a client and allows them to make the initial contact, giving the client control over the type of support that they want and when they would like to access this support. This empowers and enables people to take action.

- It is important to signpost people as soon as possible, giving people time to take the required action.
- You can provide clients with a range of options including different methods of accessing support.
- Be consistent in the information you are providing.
- Allow individuals to decide if and how they will access this new source of information. This can include driving people to an appointment, or giving them access to a computer with the internet.
- Empower your volunteers and provide them with information so they can explain what help partner agencies can give.
- Keep all of your information as up to date as possible.

It is important to make a client aware that they are working with a different agency that monitors their own quality and standards. Some organisations or professionals may charge for their work.

Signposting-

National Information

These national organisations can provide advice and information about local branches or partners.

General

[Citizens Advice](#): offers free, impartial and confidential advice and information on a wide range of topics. They can be contacted through their website, by calling 03444 111444, or through a local Bureau.

Housing

[Shelter](#): offers housing advice and information to those at risk of homelessness or who are experiencing problems with housing. Call 0808 800 4444 weekdays 8.00am—8.00pm and weekends 9.00am—5.00pm.

Debt

[StepChange](#): free advice on debt from a trained team of experts. They are available on 0800 138 1111 weekdays 8.00am—8.00pm and Saturdays 8.00am—4.00pm.

Domestic violence/abuse

[National Domestic Violence Helpline](#): offers women a 24-hour helpline for support and information. The helpline number is 0808 2000 247.

[Men's Advice Line](#): men experiencing domestic violence can contact the advice line on 0808 801 0327 weekdays 9.00am—5.00pm.

Children

[Childline](#): provides a confidential service for vulnerable children under 19 to talk about anything that is worrying them on 0800 1111.

[NSPCC](#): a 24-hour hotline for people who are worried about a child - 0808 800 5000.

Migrants

[Migrant Help](#): has a helpline for people seeking asylum and other issues related to migration - 0808 8000 0630.

[OISC](#): provides a list of people and organisations that are qualified to provide immigration advice in your area.

Mental health

[Mind](#): The Mind Infoline provides information on a range of issues including mental health problems, medication and advocacy - 0300 123 3393 9.00am—6.00pm Mondays to Fridays, except bank holidays.

Older people

[Age UK](#): Advice and support on a wide range of issues facing older people in the UK available daily on 0800 055 6112 between 8.00am—7.00pm.

Tax

[TaxAid](#): support for people on low incomes to resolve their tax issues with HMRC - 0345 120 3779, weekdays 10.00am—12.00noon.

Signposting - Birmingham

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people in the city of Birmingham.

[Asian Resource Centre](#): provides free initial immigration advice, however there may be a charge for follow up work. Advice is available up to OISC Level 3 at twice-weekly drop in sessions.

[ASIRT](#): provides support to asylum seekers and undocumented refugees in Birmingham and the West Midlands. For more information call 0121 213 5893 or email admin@asirt.org.uk.

[Birch Community Hosting Network](#): supports people to host and befriend individuals and families across Birmingham.

[British Red Cross](#): supports people in crisis in the Birmingham and Coventry. Drop-in sessions available in Birmingham on Tuesdays and Fridays between 9.30 and 3.00pm in Camphill Birmingham.

[Citizens Advice Birmingham](#): the Citizens Advice provides free confidential advice on a range of issues as well as specialist debt advice. Telephone Advice is available weekdays between 9.30—4.40 on 03444 771010. Advice by webchat is available at www.adviceguide.org.uk.

[Freedom From Torture](#): support for survivors of torture from across the West Midlands including psychological therapy, family therapy, support groups, and information for voluntary groups and agencies. Referrals can be made on their website.

[Hope Projects](#): Hope projects provides accommodation, money for food, and legal advice for people whose asylum application has been refused. Referral is through partner organisations including the Red Cross.

[Karis](#): offers guidance, advice and befriending as well as support for children and families in Ladywood, Edgbaston and Harborne. You can call 0121 455 7524 or email admin@karisneighbourscheme.org

[Lifeline Options](#): provides legal advice and asylum welfare support to people in the West Midlands, as well as offering referrals to specialist legal advice. There is an online contact form, alternatively their telephone number is 0121 359 5435 or email lifelineoptions@yahoo.co.uk

[Piers Road New Communities Centre Association](#): Piers Road is home to multiple groups that support individual refugee and migrant communities. They offer advice and support on benefits, employment, housing and debt in North West Birmingham. Call 07798 571163 or email piersroadnewcommunities277@gmail.com

[Refugee Action](#): Refugee Action is a national charity that provides advice and support for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and organisations that support them. Based in central Birmingham, they can be called on 0121 201 3070.

[Restore](#): a project working with Birmingham Churches Together that provides befriending and social activities as well as support into work and advocacy. They can be contacted through their website or on 0121 661 4275.

[RSN](#): Tailored support for young refugees and asylum seekers, particularly with education.

[Shelter Birmingham, Sifa Fireside](#): provides a range of help and advice with housing issues.

[St Chad's Sanctuary](#): A place of welcome for asylum seeker and refugees that also offers practical and welfare support as well as English Classes. Open weekdays 9.00am—4.40pm at 72-72 Shadwell Street in Birmingham or call 0121 233 3127.

Ecumenical Groups

[Azadi Trust](#): Provision of housing and relief of destitution, contact by email.

[Birmingham Cathedral](#): daily chaplaincy and signposting, 11.00am—2.30pm.

[Birmingham Central Foodbank](#): three days emergency food in central Birmingham.

[Christ Church Selly Park](#): coffee morning and befriending Friday morning at 10.30am.

[Christ Church Summerfield](#): coffee morning, Tuesdays at 10.00am.

[Journey Metropolitan Community Church](#): Asylum Seeker Support Group.

[Narthex Sparkhill](#): Diverse range of support for local people. By referral.

[Society of St Francis](#): Accommodation for destitute male asylum seekers in Birmingham.

[Yardley Wood Baptist Church](#): Wednesday drop-in 11.00am—3.00pm as a Place of Welcome.

Signposting - Black Country

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people across the West Midlands.

[Brushstrokes](#): provides holistic support to asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants in and around the Sandwell area. The services available include advice and support, English language classes from beginner to IELTS qualification, and practical support. Brushstrokes are open weekdays 9.00am—3.00pm at their Smethwick base or by telephone on 0121 565 2234 or email info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

[Adavu](#): supports the adult victims of modern slavery as they move on from the National Referral Mechanism. People referred receive a comprehensive package of support as they settle into the community and move on with their life.

[ASIRT](#): provides support to asylum seekers and undocumented refugees in Birmingham and the West Midlands. For more information call 0121 213 5893 or email admin@asirt.org.uk.

[Black Country Women's Aid](#): based in Walsall, Black Country Women's Aid support victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, forced marriage and honour based violence, modern slavery and young people affected by these issues.

[Citizens Advice](#): Citizens Advice provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to people across the country. The bureaux are able to provide advice on a range of subjects or provide referrals to specialist organisations. Telephone advice and advice through webchat is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm each weekday. Some Bureau may offer outreach appointments that would be more suitable so please enquire at your nearest main office.

- [Dudley](#): Advice in Dudley and at outreach venues across the borough. Please call 0300 3309 044 for more information.
- [Sandwell](#): Advice is available in Smethwick, West Bromwich, Cradley, Tipton, Oldbury and Wednesbury. Please call 0300 330 9017 for more information.
- [Walsall](#): Advice is available in Walsall and Blakenall. Please call 0300 330 1159 for more information.
- [Wolverhampton](#): Advice is available in Wolverhampton and Bilston. Please call 0344 411 1444 for more information.

[Freedom From Torture](#): support for survivors of torture from across the West Midlands including psychological therapy, family therapy, support groups, and information for voluntary groups and agencies. Referrals can be made on their website and the organisation is based in Birmingham.

[Hope Projects](#): Hope projects provides accommodation, money for food, and legal advice for people whose asylum application has been refused. Referral is through partner organisations including the Red Cross.

Ecumenical Groups

[Halesowen Welcome](#): befriending for refugees and Asylum seekers Mondays, 1.00pm—4.00pm.

[Hope in Action](#): supports housing for refugees in Wolverhampton and Sandwell.

Signposting -

Coventry, Warwickshire & Solihull

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people in your area.

[British Red Cross](#): supports people in crisis in Coventry, including support tracing lost family members. Drop-in sessions available on Fridays from 9.30am and 3.30pm.

[Citizens Advice](#): Citizens Advice provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to people across the country. The bureaux are able to provide advice on a range of subjects or provide referrals to specialist organisations. Telephone advice and advice through webchat is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm each weekday. Some Bureau offer outreach appointments, call your local office.

- [Coventry](#): advice is available in the city centre. Call 024 7622 3284 for more information.
- [North Warwickshire](#): advice is available in Atherstone. For more information call 01827 712852.
- [BRANCAB](#): advice is available in Bedworth and Rugby. Call 024 7649 4393 for more information.
- [South Warwickshire](#) advice is available in Leamington and Stratford. Please call 0300 330 1183,
- [Solihull](#): advice is available in Solihull and Chelmsley Wood. Please call 0300 3309 019 for more information.

[Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre](#): offer a wide range of advice, practical support and opportunities to refugees and migrants living in Coventry. For more information about services you can call 024 7622 7254 or email info@covrefugee.org

[Freedom From Torture](#): support for survivors of torture from across the West Midlands including psychological therapy, family therapy, support groups, and information for voluntary groups and agencies. Referrals can be made on their website and the organisation is based in Birmingham.

[Hope Projects](#): Hope projects provides accommodation, money for food and legal advice for people whose asylum application has been refused. Referral is through partner organisations including the Red Cross.

[Solihull Welcome](#): resources drop-in Wednesdays 11.30am—3.00pm and Fridays 10.00am—2.00pm.

Signposting - Oxfordshire

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people in your county.

[Asylum Welcome](#): provides practical support, immigration advice, English classes and specialist support for child migrants in Oxfordshire, as well as visiting detainees at immigration centres. The telephone centre (01865 722082) is open weekdays 9.30am—4.00pm and the welcome centre is open 9.30am—4.00pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

[Citizens Advice Oxfordshire](#): Citizens Advice provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to people across the country. The bureaux are able to provide advice on a range of subjects or provide referrals to specialist organisations. Telephone advice and advice through webchat is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm each weekday. Some Bureau may offer outreach appointments that would be more suitable so please enquire at your nearest main office.

- [North Oxfordshire and South Northants](#): advice is available Banbury, Bicester, Brackley, Kidlington and Towcester. Call 03444 111 444 for more information.
- [West Oxfordshire](#): advice is available in Witney. Call 0300 3309 049 for more information.
- [Oxfordshire South and Vale](#): advice is available in Abingdon, Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford. Call 0300 3309 042 for more information.
- [Oxford](#): offers advice in central Oxford. Call 03444 111 444 for more information.

[OCVA \(Oxfordshire Community & voluntary Action\)](#): There is a list of local organisations that offer advice and support for refugees and asylum seekers as well as organisations that support them.

[Oxme.info](#): information for children that have recently arrived in Oxfordshire from another country including refugees and asylum seekers.

[Refugee Resource](#): offers specialist services to refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants across Oxfordshire. This includes counselling and psychotherapy, mentoring, women's groups and services for men as well as advice and Advocacy. The office is open 10.00am—4.00pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The referral form is available on their website.

Signposting - Staffordshire

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people in Stoke-on-Trent and across Staffordshire.

[ARCH—North Staffordshire](#) : offers comprehensive support to settle into North Staffordshire with the support of the citizens Advice Bureau. The referral form is available on their website.

[ASHA](#): provides advice and support as well as English classes to asylum seekers and refugees in Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire. The Asha Centre, Unit 7, Cooper Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 4DW.

[Citizens Advice](#): Citizens Advice provide free independent, impartial and confidential advice to people across the country. The bureaux are able to provide advice on a range of subjects or provide referrals to specialist organisations. Telephone advice and advice through webchat is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm each weekday. Some Bureau may offer outreach appointments that would be more suitable so please enquire at your nearest main office. Call 03444 111 444 for more information.

- [South East Staffordshire](#): advice is available Lichfield, Burntwood and Tamworth.
- [South West Staffordshire](#): advice is available in Cannock, Stone, Stafford, Wombourne and Rugeley.
- [Mid Staffordshire](#): advice is available in Tamworth and Burton.
- [Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent](#): advice is available in Hanley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Biddulph and Kidsgrove.

[Freedom From Torture](#): support for survivors of torture from across the West Midlands including psychological therapy, family therapy, support groups, and information for voluntary groups and agencies. Referrals can be made on their website and the organisation is based in Birmingham.

[Sanctus](#): is a drop-in session in Stoke on Trent for refugees and asylum seekers. They offer a listening ear, help and support including practical support, English language classes and a translation service. Additional support is available from a range of partner organisations drop in sessions are 9.30am and 12.30pm Monday at Central Hall, The Strand, Longton and Wednesdays at St Mark's, Shelton. More information is available by phoning 01782 869 241.

Signposting - Worcestershire

Specialist organisations that can provide assistance to people in the county.

[Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees](#): this community group provides practical support, translation help and friendship to Syrian refugees in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

[Citizens Advice](#): Citizens Advice provide independent, free, impartial and confidential advice to people across the country. The bureaux are able to provide advice on a range of subjects or provide referrals to specialist organisations. Telephone advice and advice through webchat is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm each weekday. Some Bureau may offer outreach appointments that would be more suitable so please enquire at your nearest main office.

- [Worcester](#): advice is available in Worcester. Please call 0344 4111 303 for more information.
- [South Worcestershire](#): advice is available in Malvern, Upton Upon Severn, Ledbury, Tenbury Wells, Evesham, Droitwich, Pershore, Ombersley and Broadway. Please call 01684 563611 in Malvern or 01386 712100 in Evesham for more information.
- [Bromsgrove and Redditch](#): advice is available in Bromsgrove, Redditch and the University of Birmingham. Please call 0344 4111 303 for more information.

[Freedom From Torture](#): Support for survivors of torture from across the West Midlands including psychological therapy, family therapy, support groups and information for voluntary groups and agencies. Referrals can be made on their website and the organisation is based in Birmingham.

[Malvern Welcomes](#): The group provides practical help and assistance to refugees in the area, including translation and English language support.

[Refugee Action](#): Refugee Action is a national charity that provides advice and support for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and organisations that support them. Based in central Birmingham, but also working in Worcestershire they can be called on 0121 201 3070.

Annual calendar of key dates

Annual events and awareness days can provide a springboard for your initiative.

These days are spread throughout the year and can be used to promote your group to volunteers and potential service users. As part of a larger event a national organisation may be able to advertise your group to a new audience, provide training or promotional materials for your group, or even provide one-off funding.

Although dates vary each year here are the dates for several events in 2020. There are many other events for you to choose from that can fit with the interests of your group or the audience you are trying to attract.

February

- 20** World Day of Social Justice
- 21** International Mother Language Day

March

- 1** Zero Discrimination Day
- 8** International Women's Day
- 20** International Day of Happiness
- 21** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

May

- 21** World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

June

- 1-7** Volunteers Week
- 6-7** The Big Lunch
- 14-20** Refugee Week: the UK's largest festival celebrating the contribution of refugees and promoting understanding of why people seek sanctuary.
- 20** World Refugee Day

July

- 30** International Day of Friendship
- National Picnic Month

September

- 21** International Day of Peace

October

- 14-20** National Baking Week
- 18** Anti Slavery Day

November

- 1-7** Befriending Week
- 11-15** Anti Bullying Week

December

- 18** International Migrants Day

Case Study: St Chad's Sanctuary

St Chad's Sanctuary offers hospitality and practical support to destitute asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

St Chad's Sanctuary works with the Infant Jesus Sisters, the Salvation Army, the Archdiocese of Birmingham and Father Hudson's Care.

Originally founded by Dr Sr Margaret Walsh in 2010 to meet the needs of Asylum Seekers in central Birmingham, St Chad's Sanctuary has grown and now supports up to 200 people a day.

St Chad's Sanctuary provides clothes, food, welfare information and English classes to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

English is learnt through song and art workshops as well as games and conversation in the café. The relaxed and friendly environment promoting friendship and support. Children are also welcome and during the holidays day trips are arranged to encourage time as a family and meet new people.



Largely volunteer run, St Chad's Sanctuary helps those most in need in the city centre. They provide a range of opportunities for growth and development for their clients and the volunteers and staff that support them.

If you would like more information about St Chad's Sanctuary please visit www.stchadssanctuary.com which has more information about the latest timetable and resources that are particularly needed.