



Supporting Refugees and Asylum seekers

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



Barnet Refugee Service

(working name New Citizens' Gateway)

Monday - Friday 9 am - 5 pm

9th Floor, Hyde House,

The Hyde,

London,

NW9 6LH

Telephone: 020 8905 9002

Email: info@ncgateway.org.uk

Charity Number: 1107965

Co Ltd by Guarantee: 5243595



@NCGateway



@NCGateway



@NewCitizensGateway

Principal funding sources 2023-2024

- Barnet Integrated Care Boards (ICB)
- Barnet Council
- BBC Children in Children In Need
- Brent Council
- The Violence Reduction Unit (GLA)
- The John Lyons Charity
- City Bridge Foundation
- The Mercers Foundation
- Betty Messenger Foundation
- The Henry Smith Charity



Index

Foreword From the Chair	1
Message from CEO	2
A Heartfelt Thank You to Conor Doyle	3
Organisational Chart	4
Staff and Sessional Workers 2023-24	5
Our History	6
About New Citizens' Gateway	6
Vision and Mission	6
Our Values	6
Our Ambitions	7
Our Clients	7
Our Charity's Objectives	7
Clients Satisfaction Survey 2023-24	8
Where Our Clients Come From	8
Enquiry Areas	8
Our Achievements at a Glance	9
Admin Team	10
Advice, Information and Guidance Team	11
Outreach Service	12
Legal Housing Advice Clinics	12
Partnership with Migrant Help	12
Case Studies 1 & 2	13
Bilingual Counselling Service	14
Ukrainian Mental Health Support in Barnet	15
Ukrainian Mental Health Support in Brent	16
IAPT Psycho-educational Workshops	16
Case Study 3	17
NCG Youth Wellbeing Project	18
Weekly Social Club	19
ESOL for Young People	19
NCG Football Club	20
Launch of Youth Volunteering and Leadership Project	21
Partnership with Chickenshed and NCG Drama Group	21
Youth Excursions and School Break Activities	22-23
Educational Workshops	24
Mosaic Room Young Collective	24
Outreach	24
Youth Evaluation Survey	25
Youth Counselling Service	26
A Tribute to Parham Kazemi	27
Health and Wellbeing	28
Cooking Project.....	29
Gardening Project	30-31
ESOL Classes	32
Trinity Accredited ESOL	33
Mums and Tots' Group	33
Destitution and Social Support	34-35
Donations	36
Supporting Health Professionals	37
Case Study 4	38
Food Quality Improvement Campaign	39
Campaign for Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers	40
Training for Professionals	41
Family Reunion Support	41
Educational Sessions and Outing	42
Partnership with Police	42
Jasmine Women's Group.....	43
Yoga Sessions	44
Refugee Week celebration	45
International Woman's Day	45
End of Year Party	46
London Legal Walk (2024)	46
Volunteering Project	47-48
Volunteers' Party (2023)	49
List of Volunteers 2023-24	50
BRS Statement of Financial Activities	51
Partners and Collaborators 2023-24	52

Foreword From the Chair



Michael Young
Chair

Welcome to New Citizens' Gateway Annual Report for 2023-2024.

It has been another year of delivering real impact for asylum seekers and refugees in London. New Citizens' Gateway (NCG) provided services to over **6,500** individuals over those 12 months; moreover, the people receiving our services rated them highly - all together, **84%** of clients expressed **satisfaction with the quality and usefulness of the service** they participated in. That's a real achievement - all possible because of the dedication of the NCG team and volunteers.

And that dedication and impact came among another challenging year. The biggest cause that drives people to flee their homes and seek safety is violent conflict. Sadly, the last 12 months have been some of the most violent in over thirty years: across the world, one in seven people have suffered from political violence. Global refugee numbers leapt to their highest ever - **43.4 million** people. Here at home, asylum seekers and refugees continued to struggle with a system that is under-resourced and can be stacked against them. Sadly, we have also recently seen a burst of political violence targeting refugees, among some of our most vulnerable, on our streets.

NCG is a genuine bright spot among what can sometimes seem a pretty grim picture. It's worth noting that we work through a distinct model, one which is rooted in the understanding that people live whole lives. We call it the **'holistic' model** - NCG meets the people we work with where they are and seeks to offer services that can address a whole range of issues and challenges they may face. That can include legal and other advice, bilingual counselling, youth wellbeing, English classes, mother/child groups, women's groups, yoga and access to gardening on our allotment. **The diversity and breadth of our services match the rich diversity of our clients.**

As noted, NCG relies on its **volunteers**, who work alongside our great team across our holistic model - a massive thank-you is due to them. Some **72** volunteers contributed so many hours to helping clients that **their contribution is equivalent to two full-time staff**. This includes asylum seeker and refugee volunteers; their voluntary work not only directly helps others but brings them positive impact. A remarkable **100% of refugee volunteers** reported that they not only gained valuable work experience but that this also heightened their **sense of belonging** and helped them feel more confident in navigating life here. Finally, three others to thank. First, many thanks to Conor Doyle, who served as a trustee and then Chair of the NCG Board for six years - stepping back at the start of 2024. He continues to work as a volunteer and is a hard act to follow! Second, thanks to Nazee Akbari, our C.E.O, and the whole NCG team - their commitment and energy goes above and beyond. Third, a heartfelt thanks to all our donors, and especially to the **London Borough of Barnet**, for their steadfast support to our vital mission.

Mike Young Chair

Message From the CEO



Nazee Akbari
CEO

As we reflect on the past year, it is crucial to acknowledge the ongoing challenges refugees and asylum seekers face, both globally and here in the UK. In England, those fleeing conflict, persecution, and unimaginable hardship continue to encounter systemic barriers—ranging from, housing instability, access to healthcare, language barrier, and mental health issues to the long and often harrowing asylum processes and legal uncertainty. The global refugee crisis shows no signs of declining, with millions displaced worldwide, and our work has never been more vital.

Since 2005, New Citizens' Gateway has remained committed to supporting refugees and asylum seekers, **helping them rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. Our holistic model of support** ensures that we address their needs comprehensively—whether through **housing support, mental health services, language courses, psycho-social activities or integration programs**. These essential services offer the foundation for individuals and families to regain control of their lives, find community, and begin to heal.

This work would not be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers. Your passion and commitment ensure that we can provide the necessary care and advocacy for those in need. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our **funders and donors**, whose generosity sustains our mission. Special thanks to those who fundraised for us during special occasions, and to the many community groups—faith groups, schools, and others—who have rallied behind our cause. Your belief in our work makes all the difference.

Additionally, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our **Trustees** for their committed support and guidance. A special note of gratitude goes to Conor Doyle, our Chairperson, who guided me with compassion and strength for the past five years. Conor stepped down in January 2024, and his impact on NCG has been profound. Thank you, Conor, for your incredible dedication and for steering us through some of our most challenging times.

As we move forward, we reaffirm our commitment to standing by refugees and asylum seekers, advocating for their rights, and providing the critical services they need to rebuild their lives.

With the support of our new Chairperson, Mike Young, our talented staff, devoted volunteers, and generous funders, we will continue to grow, adapt, and make a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

Nazee Akbari, CEO



**Together, we will
face the challenges
ahead and ensure
that every person
seeking refuge has
the opportunity to
thrive!**

A Heartfelt Thank You to Conor Doyle



Conor Doyle

After **six years as a trustee**, including **five remarkable years as Chair**, we extend our deepest gratitude to Conor Doyle for his exceptional leadership and service to New Citizens Gateway. His guidance was key as we expanded and evolved into a medium-sized charity, and his **impact on our growth and development** cannot be overstated.

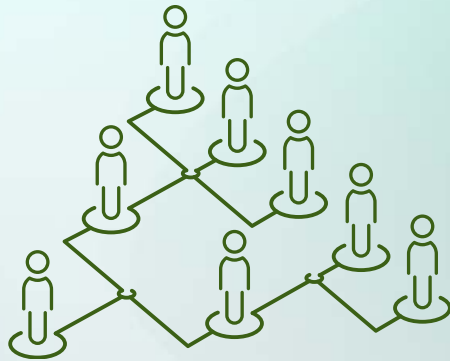
Conor's dedication to fostering robust systems and accountability has set us up for future success. His invaluable support, both to the organisation and to me as CEO, has been a cornerstone of our progress. Though he has stepped down as Chair, we are fortunate to continue benefiting from his expertise as he remains a committed volunteer.

Thank you, Conor, for your tireless efforts, vision, and ongoing support. Your contributions have left an indelible mark on NCG, and we are forever grateful.

Nazee Akbari, CEO

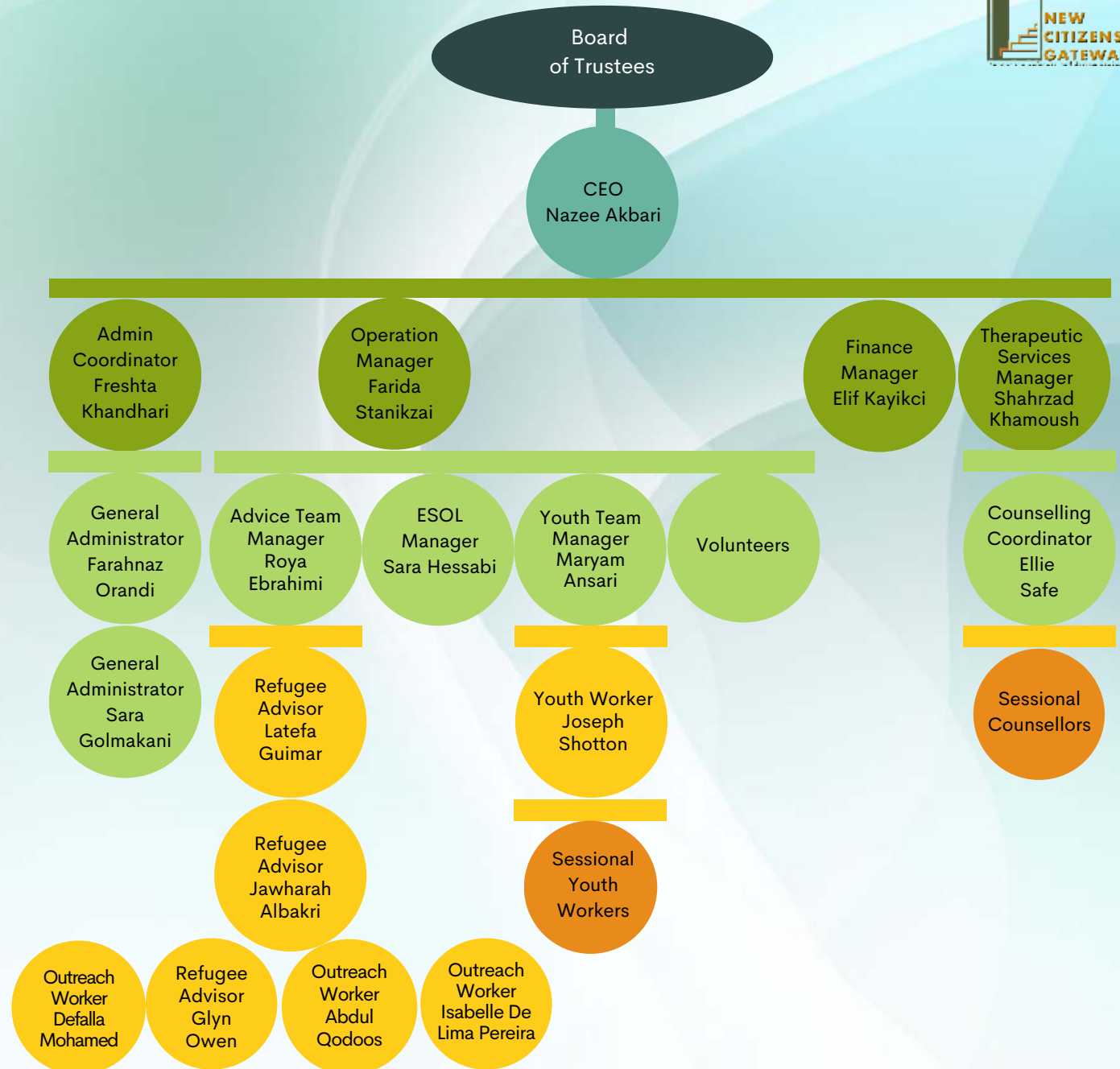


Organisational Chart



Trustees serving in 2023-2024:

- John Conor Doyle - Chair (Stepped Down June 2024)
- Mike Young- Chair (Appointed Jan 2024)
- Geetha Thirusaba-Nathan - Treasurer
- Dr Sanjiv Ahluwalia
- Dr Penny A Trafford
- Esmond S Rosen
- Fanta Sheriff
- Golnar Bokaei (Resigned Oct 2023)
- Tata Issa Sougui (Appointed Dec 2023)
- Sanja Dujmovic Potnar (Appointed Jan 2024)



Staff 2023-24

Nazee Akbari
Chief Executive Officer

Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager

Elif Kayikci
Finance Manager

Shahrzad Khamoush
Therapeutic Service Manager

Ellie Safe
Counselling Coordinator

Freshta Khandahari
Administrator

Farahnaz Orandi
General Administrator

Sara Golmakani
General Administrator

Sara Hessabi
ESOL Manager

Maryam Ansari
Youth Team Manager

Joseph Shotton
Youth Worker

Glyn Owen
Refugee General Advisor

Latefa Guemar
Refugee Advisor

Jawharah Albakri
Refugee Advisor

Abdul Qodoos
Outreach Support Worker

Roya Ebrahimi
Advice & Outreach Team Manager

Isabelle Pereira
Outreach Support Worker

Defalla Mohamed
Outreach Support Worker

Mohammad Fard
Gardening Coordinator

Tanya Novick
Women's Group Coordinator

Sessional Workers

Alice Horsley - Youth Worker

Rukeya Mohamed - Youth Worker

Ashley Levien - Football Coach

Ghazala Khattak - Youth Counsellor

Jasmine Ansari - Youth Counsellor

Hicham Jabrane - Youth Counsellor

Jani Santos - Youth Counsellor

Banu Aydin - Counsellor

Kiymet Omur - Counsellor

Sultana Momand - Counsellor

Valbona Preniqi - Counsellor

Fadi Salam - Counsellor

Negeen Zohari - Counsellor

Sahar Salim - Counsellor

Zara Tylor - Counsellor

Hicham Jabrane - Counsellor

Njomeza Kartallozi - Counsellor

Shamsi Mahdavi - Counsellor

Soraya Mohammadi - Counsellor

Ghazala Khattak - Counsellor

Faduma Farah - Counsellor

Aliona Lebed - Counsellor

Bogdana Leete - Counsellor

Zainab Alkhoe - Counsellor

Yasmin Sher - Counsellor

Ummu Gulsum - Counsellor

Shahrzad Khamoush - Counsellor

Olga Paraska - Counsellor

Etti Kia - Family Therapist

Kiran Seth - Clinical Supervisor

Paul M Terry - Clinical Supervisor

Haleh Kazemian - Clinical Supervisor

Sara Betteridge - Clinical Supervisor

Sarah Reilly - Clinical Supervisor

Evonne Cameron-Phillips - Clinical Supervisor

72
Active
Volunteers

Our History

Barnet Refugee Service emerged as a charitable entity resulting from the integration of two initiatives founded in 1997: the Refugee Health Access Project and Homeless Action in Barnet - Asylum Seekers Project. Achieving independent charitable status in **April 2005**, the organisation has operated under the working name "**New Citizens' Gateway**" (NCG) since **April 2021**.

About New Citizens' Gateway (NCG)

NCG is collaborating with both individuals and organisations to **enhance the well-being** and **elevate the quality of life** for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who are situated in the UK, whether they reside, work, or pursue education here. Our activities are aimed at diminishing inequalities in health, as well as social and economic exclusion while facilitating a **positive process of integration** and **fostering personal independence**.



Our Values

Inclusive, Respectful, Collaborative, Empowering



Vision

All refugees are to be **welcomed, safe, respected** and **resettled**.



Mission

New Citizens' Gateway (NCG) provides **holistic support and services** which enables the inclusion of those seeking and getting protection in **England and Wales** and to access their full potential as equal participants in UK life. The focus of our work is to improve the quality of life and promote the **physical, social and mental well-being of refugees** and people seeking asylum who live, work or study in the UK. We also help to reduce health inequalities, social and economic exclusion and enable positive integration and personal independence of these people.

Our Ambitions

1. For NCG to be more **client-led**.
 2. To further develop our **holistic model of support**.
 3. Establish NCG as one of the most **trusted organisations** in youth work.
 4. To work **in collaboration with other agencies** to influence government policies and public narratives for improvement in the protection of refugees and those people seeking asylum.
-

Our Clients

NCG's purpose revolves around aiding refugees and individuals seeking asylum who have endured harrowing experiences under some of the world's most oppressive regimes. Having escaped unimaginable horrors, they encounter ongoing challenges in the UK, frequently grappling with homelessness, impoverishment, and the inability to secure employment. Our objective involves **extending essential assistance** to these profoundly vulnerable and traumatised individuals and **equipping them with the necessary support to reclaim a life of dignity**. Subsequently, we guide them in constructing secure, contented, and meaningful lives within the confines of the UK.



Our charity's objectives, as defined in the Memorandum of Association are:

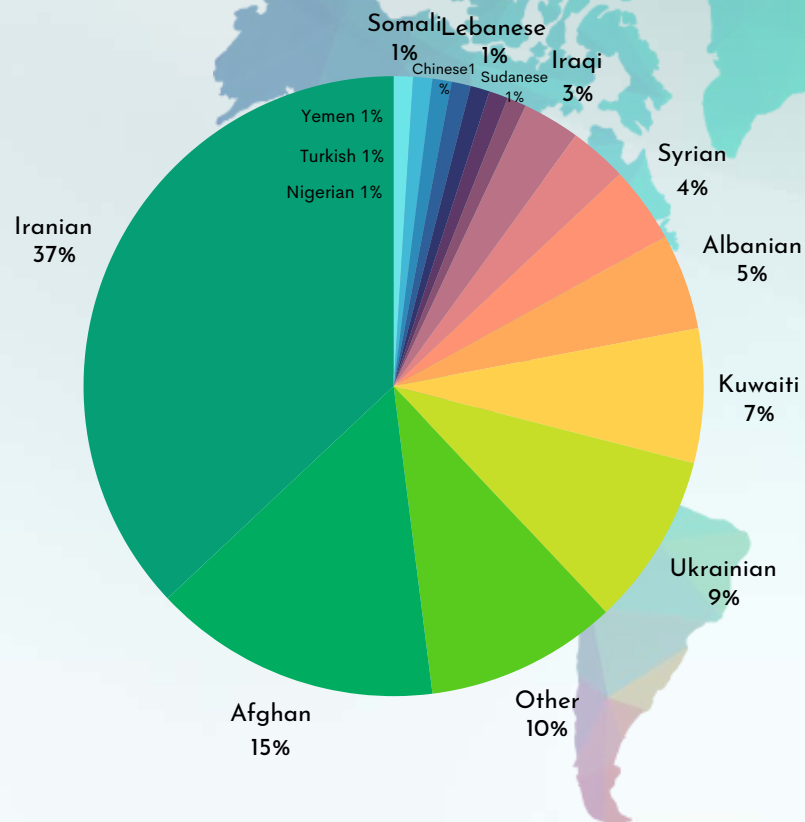
1. To **preserve and protect the physical and mental health** of those who are seeking asylum or who are granted refugee status and their dependents living, working or studying (temporarily or permanently) in England and Wales (hereinafter, the 'Beneficiaries').
2. To advance the **education and training** of those persons defined in Object 1 as Beneficiaries.
3. To advance the **education of the public** in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.
4. The relief of **financial hardship** to those persons defined in Object 1 as Beneficiaries.
5. The **provision of facilities** for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons defined in Object 1, who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances.

Clients Satisfaction Survey 2023-24

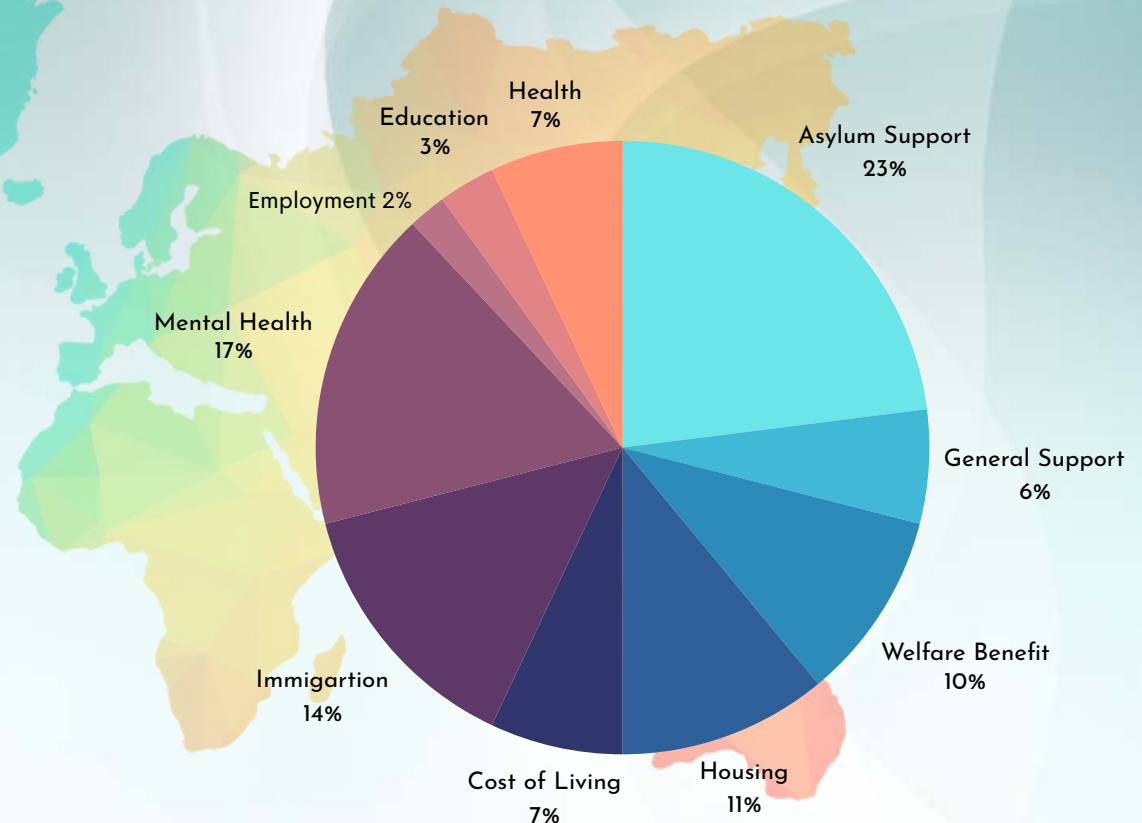
To measure the impact of our work, each project at NCG employs **an internal evaluation** framework that outlines specific aims, outcomes, and outputs with corresponding indicators. We also conduct customer satisfaction surveys for each individual project. During 23-24, we randomly selected **350 clients** from a pool of **692 new clients**, including individuals who accessed multiple services. A team of volunteer interviewers reached out to these clients, with **226 participants actively responding**. The evaluation revealed that **84% of our clients are very satisfied** with our services. The full evaluation report is available at our offices for further review.



Where Our Clients Come From?



Enquiry Areas



Our Achievements at a Glance



GSK

An award winner of **GSK Impact Award 2023**



6,500

Individuals participating in our wide range of services



1,364

Asylum seekers accommodated across **5** Barnet hotels



16,649

Advice and general inquiries were dealt with



£78,848

Raised in **financial assistance** for individual clients



2,628

Bilingual counselling sessions benefiting **219** clients



111

Participants took part in **21** cooking sessions



424

Participants attended **34** psycho-educational **IAPT workshops**



783

Christmas gift parcels were distributed to asylum-seeking children



87

Participants took part in two Day Trips to **Kew Gardens**



34

Sessions of the Mums & Tots group, with **38** participants



135

Participants attended **49** **Gardening sessions**



350

Participants attended **14** **Yoga sessions**



1,723

Total participations, engaging over **160** **young people** in our **186** **youth activities**



252

Individuals attended both **formal and informal ESOL sessions**



72

Women took part in **39** **Jasmine Women's Group Sessions**



8

Volunteers transitioned into **paid roles**



116

Volunteers engaged in various **NCG activities**, with **72** **actively participating**



5

Volunteers completed level one **adult and children safeguarding training**

Admin Team



Freshta Khandhari
Admin Coordinator



Farahnaz Orandi
General Administrator



Sara Golmakani
General Administrator

During the 2023-24 period, our dedicated administrative team provided indispensable support across multiple projects and activities. Their efforts ensured seamless client interactions and the **efficient management of a diverse range of tasks and challenges**. By doing so, they enabled managers and staff to focus on their core responsibilities, resulting in smoother workflows and greater organizational effectiveness.

The significance of our office administrative and support staff is often overlooked, yet they play a critical role in the smooth functioning of our charity. While much of their work happens behind the scenes, it is no less essential than that of other departments. Their contributions, though hidden from view, are equally important and deserve recognition.

Our heartfelt thanks go to every member of the admin team. A special mention must go to our **Admin Coordinator, Freshta Khandhari**, for her continuous dedication and unwavering support.

Thank You Admin Team!

Winning the 2023 GSK
IMPACT Awards



Advice, Information and Guidance Team



Roya Ebrahimi
Refugee Team Advisor



Glyn Owen
Refugee Advisor



Latefa Guemar
Refugee Advisor



Jawharah Albakri
Refugee Advisor



Abdul Qodoos
Outreach Support



Isabelle De Lima Pereira
Outreach Support



Defalla Mohamed
Outreach Support

The 2023-2024 period was both **a successful and challenging year** for NCG's Advice Team. With a significant rise in demand for specialist refugee advice and support services, NCG faced the complex task of addressing the needs of new refugees and asylum seekers in London.

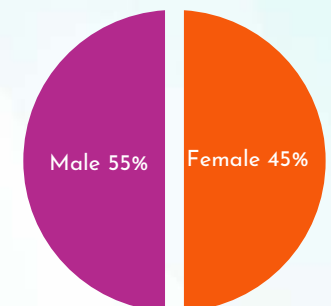
Throughout the year, our team responded to thousands of enquiries from clients across London and other cities in the UK.

Unlike the pre-pandemic era, where mainstream services for housing, welfare benefits, disability rights, and asylum immigration advice were more readily accessible, we found ourselves among the few specialist providers addressing the broad range of challenges faced by refugees. This included navigating **housing, homelessness, and settlement processes**, which became major barriers for many refugees post-Covid, especially in London, where there has been a sharp increase in positive asylum decisions.

Our dedicated team successfully handled over **5,200 client visits**, focusing specifically on providing advice to **692 new clients**, while managing to update the status of **4,254 cases**. In an effort to assess the quality of our services, we conducted an **evaluation** by randomly selecting **350 clients** from our new client base. Volunteer interviewers reached out to these individuals, with **226 participating** in the evaluation process. The results of this evaluation highlighted a **high level of client satisfaction with our Advice & Outreach Services**. The positive feedback we received strengthens our commitment to delivering high-quality, impactful support to those in need. We are mindful of the ongoing challenges and will use the feedback from the evaluation to enhance and refine our services further.

A special note of thanks goes to our Advice Team and in particular our **Advice Team Manager, Roya**, whose management and dedication were instrumental in navigating the complexities of the year and delivering successful outcomes. As we look ahead, we remain committed to adapting and improving our services to ensure we continue to meet the evolving needs of refugees and asylum seekers in London.

Clients' Gender



Outreach Services across Asylum Hotels in Barnet

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic and related travel restrictions, a significant influx of asylum seekers began arriving with many being temporarily housed in London hotels by the Home Office. **Since 2020, our Outreach Team, funded by Barnet Council, was quick to establish a crucial presence initially operating in two local hotels, which in 2022 expanded to three.**

During 2023-24, the impact of our Outreach Team was profound, providing critical support to **over 1,800 asylum seekers** accommodated in these Barnet-based hotels. Throughout the year, we maintained regular **on-site consultations**, offering a welcoming and accessible environment for asylum seekers in these hotels to seek assistance and guidance. The outreach team's dedication and commitment were evident in the substantial number of visits they conducted. Altogether, we facilitated over **3578 visits** across the three hotels, addressing more than **12395 inquiries** from asylum seekers in these temporary accommodations. We are deeply grateful to the individuals, groups, faith-based organisations, and other entities that contributed to and supported this project. Their collective efforts were crucial to its success. We also extend our sincere thanks to **Barnet Council** for their generous financial support, which was instrumental in bringing much-needed relief to those in need.

Legal Housing Advice Clinics

In a proactive initiative, our Advice Team collaborated with the specialist law firm, **LawStop**, to establish **monthly on-site legal housing advice clinics**. This partnership aimed to provide essential legal support to refugees and asylum seekers facing crises that exceeded the support threshold of NCG's advice services. The importance of housing solicitors cannot be overstated, especially given the current shortage in this vital area, which has left many vulnerable individuals without the legal assistance they desperately need. Throughout the year, we successfully conducted **12 clinics**, during which **over 70** refugees and asylum seekers had the opportunity to meet with solicitors to discuss their cases. The outcomes of this initiative were highly positive, with many clients achieving favourable results through the interventions and follow-ups facilitated by both the **solicitors and NCG advisers**.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to **LawStop** for their pro bono work and unwavering dedication. Their commitment to supporting our clients has made a significant impact, addressing immediate legal needs and enhancing the overall support network for those in crisis.



Partnership with Migrant Help

In response to the rising number of "New Refugees" across the UK, we entered into a partnership with Migrant Help under the **"Move-on Service" contract**. This collaboration allowed us to provide **online and remote advice and support to refugees settling in various regions outside London**.

Over a three-month period, our team successfully **assisted 30 families and individuals**, offering crucial advice and information to help them navigate their settlement processes primarily in the **North of England and Scotland**.

This initiative underscores our commitment to extending support to refugees wherever they may be, ensuring they have access to the resources and guidance needed to establish their new lives.

Case Study 1



Vahid Karimi
Volunteer Advisor

I was uncertain about my ability to effectively support vulnerable individuals with diverse backgrounds, and my prolonged absence from an office setting further impacted my self-assurance.

Upon joining NCG as a volunteer advisor, my reservations quickly dissipated. The team's unwavering support made me feel like an integral part of the group from my second day onwards. They provided me with a unique opportunity to undergo training by closely shadowing experienced advisors, exposing me to a variety of cases and the daily challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers. Following each client appointment, my kind and professional supervisor provided comprehensive feedback on the assessment and tailored recommended actions.

Working closely with the team at New Citizens' Gateway proved to be an invaluable experience, acting as a catalyst for both personal and professional growth. NCG was more than an organisation; it was a gateway for me to blossom. The nurturing and empowering environment not only allowed me to rediscover and hone my skills but also played a crucial role in opening doors to meaningful employment. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the community, and my journey with NCG stands as a testament to the transformative power of support and mentorship in one's professional and personal life.

Case Study 2

MP: *A few years ago, I was going through a challenging time, both emotionally and mentally. I was struggling to cope, and that's when I realised I needed support.*

I have been in contact with New Citizens Gateway (NCG) and have been joining the women's group for many years. It was through NCG that I came across their counselling service.

I used the NCG counselling service twice. I had two kind counsellors who spoke my language, and I had 12 sessions with each one of them. The sessions were a safe space where I could openly express my thoughts without judgment. My counsellors helped me unpack my feelings and guided me through coping strategies. Through counselling, I began to understand myself better and learned how to manage my emotions. It gave me a sense of clarity and strength that I didn't know I had.

I understand that there are people who may feel shy or lack the courage to seek help, as in many communities, getting mental health support is still a taboo. I encourage people to seek help as soon as they can.

I am very grateful to NCG, my counsellors, and the people who supported me along the way. Their care and dedication have been life-changing.

Bilingual Counselling Service



Shahrzad Khamoush
Therapeutic Services Manager



Ellie Safe
Counselling Coordinator

During the 2023-24 period, our Counselling Team, composed of **23 skilled bilingual therapists**—including experienced professionals and trainees—**delivered culturally sensitive psychological support in clients' native languages**. This inclusive approach enabled access to services in a wide range of languages, including Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Kurdish, Pashto, Punjabi, Somali, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

Over the year, the bilingual counselling service received **497 referrals** for individual psychological support. Referral sources were: 34% from NHS IAPT Services, 42% from other organisations (including NCG), 9% from GPs, 8% from Social Prescribers, and 7% were self-referrals. Of these, **62 clients were funded under the IAPT one-to-one counselling program**.

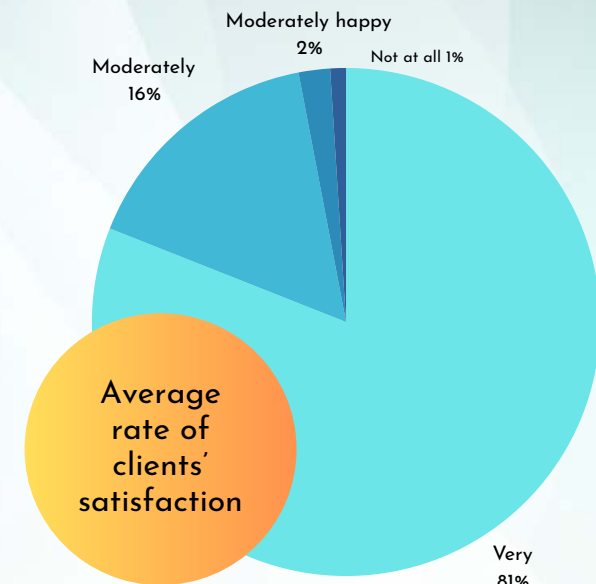
Overwhelmed by the growing demand for this service, we successfully managed **assessments for 258 clients**. In total, the counselling team delivered approximately **2,628 bilingual counselling sessions to 219 clients** who completed their treatment.

Client outcomes showed significant improvement: After 12 counselling sessions, data from the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 demonstrated a recovery rate of **54% (52% for IAPT clients)**, surpassing the national IAPT recovery rate of **49.9% in 2022-23**. Notably, the recovery rate increased from **41.6% after six sessions to 54% after an additional six sessions**.

Our clients present with complex issues. Among the 497 referrals, 198 clients (39.8%) reported suicidal ideation or a history of suicide attempts, and 164 clients (32.9%) had a history of self-harm, underscoring the severity of the challenges they face.

We are proud to report that the completion rate for our clients was 85%, with a dropout rate of just 15%, significantly lower than the national dropout rate of 62%, as reported by NHS Digital in the IAPT annual report for 2022-23.

Special thanks go to our Counselling Team, especially Therapeutic Services Manager, Shahrzad Khamoush, and Counselling Coordinator, Ellie Safe, for their dedication and excellent management. We also extend our gratitude to our funders, **NHS Barnet** and **Henry Smith**, for their financial support.



Ukrainian Mental Health Support in Barnet

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the mental health and integration of **Ukrainian refugees in Barnet**, we have implemented a range of **therapeutic activities tailored to their specific needs**. These initiatives have led to significant positive outcomes for participants, addressing both mental health concerns and social integration challenges faced by Ukrainian refugees.

One-to-One Counselling: Delivered in their native language by Ukrainian therapists, our one-on-one counselling services provided vital emotional and mental health support to **17 individuals**. This safe space allowed for emotional processing and contributed to participants' overall well-being. We assessed the effectiveness of this service using PHQ-9 and GAD-7 before and after treatment, achieving an impressive **88.8% recovery rate**, highlighting the success of this intervention.

Group-Based Therapeutic Workshops: In response to a strong preference for group-based activities expressed by our **Ukrainian clients**, we developed a series of workshops in collaboration with Barnet Homes for Ukraine's team with **24 participants** attending. Led by our Ukrainian therapist, the workshops covered topics such as:

- Introduction to counselling and mental health self-care
- Identifying personal needs and creating an action plan for self-improvement
- Managing stress in everyday life
- Coping with stress, anxiety, and apathy

These sessions provided participants with practical tools to improve their mental health while fostering trust, cultural understanding, and a sense of community.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Barnet Council's Homes for Ukraine Team** for their financial support and dedicated engagement in the delivery of this service.



Ukrainian Mental Health Support in Brent



As part of our continued dedication to supporting the mental health and integration of Ukrainian refugees, during the past year, we launched **a pilot bilingual counselling service specifically for Ukrainian individuals residing within the London Borough of Brent**. This initiative was designed to address the unique emotional and psychological needs of this community by providing therapy sessions **in their native language**.

To date, we have supported **10 individuals** through one-on-one counselling, offering them a vital space to process their experiences, manage mental health challenges, and begin the healing process. By offering counselling in Ukrainian, we ensured that clients could **fully express themselves and engage with therapy in a culturally sensitive and linguistically accessible way**. This pilot not only serves as a direct intervention for the clients involved but also allows us to assess the potential for expanding this service to reach a broader population within the Ukrainian refugee community in Brent. Initial feedback and outcomes have been overwhelmingly positive, indicating a strong demand for the continuation and growth of the service. We would like to extend our special thanks to our Ukrainian therapists for their dedicated work, and to Brent Council for their financial support, which made this pilot possible. Their partnership has been invaluable in providing this essential service and ensuring the mental well-being of Ukrainian refugees in the borough.

IAPT Psycho-educational Workshops

The **IAPT** service Step Two offers **low-intensity psychological support** for individuals experiencing mild to moderate levels of depression and anxiety. Over the past year, we registered **450 participants** and conducted **34 workshops** attended by **424 individuals**. These workshops covered a broad range of topics, including **PTSD, self-care, sleep management, self-esteem, OCD, and coping with grief and depression**, and were conducted in **Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, and English**. The primary goal of these workshops was to help clients **gain a better understanding of mental health conditions** and to equip them with **essential coping tools**. To evaluate the impact of these workshops, we used an evaluation form which participants completed at the end of each session. This feedback form likely captured valuable insights regarding the participants' experiences, the relevance of the content, and the effectiveness of the delivery. Overall, the IAPT Psycho-Educational Workshops have made a positive impact by providing valuable knowledge and skills to individuals dealing with mental health conditions. Focusing on five key questions, **the majority of the 424 participants** who completed the form **found the workshops useful for managing their mental health and improving their coping skills**.



Barnet

Clinical Commissioning Group

Case Study 3



Barbara Rostás
Volunteer Advisor

My volunteering story began while driving through Calais, France with my family, where I saw the tents and camps of displaced people firsthand.

This experience motivated me to dedicate my time to supporting refugees and asylum seekers, leading me to volunteer with two incredible organizations: Care4Calais(C4C) and New Citizen's Gateway (NCG).

Since then, I've been an active volunteer with both charities, working directly with refugees and asylum seekers. I believe (and hope) that we all benefit from the synergies between NCG and C4C, gaining access to resources and information from both organisations, which enhances our ability to assist the most vulnerable individuals effectively.

I find great fulfilment in my work, especially through the variety of activities I get to be involved in. Each day brings new challenges and opportunities, from helping refugees update their CVs and search for jobs or guiding them in joining volunteer programs to improve their community integration, to connecting them with courses that enhance their skills. Some days I'm organising clothing distributions, while other times I'm deep in administrative work, filling out forms, ensuring their claims are ready or coordinating with lawyers on their legal cases.

A key aspect of my work is the personal connection I try to build with our clients. I make it a priority to meet them in person, engage in meaningful discussions, and get to know their unique stories. This personal interaction allows me to better understand their needs and challenges. We actively involve asylum seekers and refugees in events, and community activities, helping them feel more integrated and welcomed.

Despite the challenges that come with this line of work, the NCG office maintains a positive atmosphere. I was welcomed from the very beginning by the team, I have been getting incredible guidance from my supervisor and strong support from staff and management.

This environment has made my volunteering experience even more rewarding, especially when I receive grateful messages from our clients, which continually reinforces the value of what we do.

It's been a privilege to volunteer and to be part of the NCG team and I am looking forward to continuing this challenging but fulfilling work in the future.



NCG Youth Wellbeing Project (YWP)



Maryam Ansari
Youth Wellbeing Manager

In response to the rising number of “New Refugees” across the UK, we entered into a partnership with Migrant Help under the **“Move-on Service” contract**. This collaboration allowed us to provide **online and remote advice and support to refugees settling in various regions outside London**.

Over a three-month period, our team successfully **assisted 30 families and individuals**, offering crucial advice and information to help them navigate their settlement processes, primarily in the **North of England and Scotland**.

This initiative underscores our commitment to extending support to refugees wherever they may be, ensuring they have access to the resources and guidance needed to establish their new lives.



Joseph Shotton
Refugee Youth Worker

The YWP is aimed at young people from a refugee or asylum-seeking background, providing holistic services to support their **overall mental health and wellbeing**, as well as **building community cohesion, facilitating integration and promoting social skills**. Our services include weekly youth **social clubs and football clubs, online ESOL lessons, one-to-one youth counselling, educational workshops, outings and trips, school holiday activities, performing arts, and youth volunteering opportunities**.

Over the past year, we have held regular co-design and feedback opportunities, and in consultation with the young people, we have continued and expanded our projects and activities. From April 2023-2024, we engaged over **160 unique young people** and received **104 new referrals**. **186 different sessions/activities** were delivered, engaging over **1723 young people in total**.

During this reporting period, we built on existing partnerships, while at the same time, we fostered collaborations with new partners.

This year we collaborated with a number of partners, including **Chickenshed theatre, the Arts Depot, Art Against Knives, Brook, the Roundhouse, Proud Places, Go Live Theatre, Heath Hands, Barnet Bulldogs and the Mosaic Rooms** to deliver a range of diverse and enriching sessions and activities to our young people.



We continued our long-term partnership with **Middlesex University** and **Lift CIC**, while also continuing to offer **our weekly youth club and football sessions**, as well regular friendly **matches and tournaments**. Our ongoing partnership with **Chickenshed Inclusive Theatre** also led to nuanced projects and performances this year.

The achievements of our YWP project can be attributed to the kind financial assistance provided by our Funders: **Violence Reduction Unit**, **BBC Children in Need**, and **The John Lyons Charity** and **Goldman Sachs** and we are grateful to all.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Youth team volunteers and staff, especially to our **Youth Team Manager, Maryam Ansari**, for her dedication and exceptional management.

Weekly Social Club

The NCG Youth Club provides a range of enriching activities for a diverse group of young refugees and asylum seekers **aged 12 to 19**, including unaccompanied minors and separated children. The social club convenes every Thursday evening at Middlesex University, where we offer opportunities for young people to **socialise, learn new skills, and build a community**. Throughout the 2023-24 period, we held **35 youth club sessions, with 374 total attendances**. These were often either run by **our dedicated youth team and volunteers** or we welcomed in guest facilitators to run activities. Sessions included opportunities for young people to engage with performing **arts, crafts, sports, fun games, music, educational workshops, cultural enrichment, skills enhancement**, and much more.



"It helps me a lot about some questions I don't know. Orna too is very good to answer any questions I have or difficulties about the language, writing or reading. It is very, very, very helpful. I like it and I appreciate all your offer of English classes".

ESOL For Young People

We offer accessible ESOL (English as a Second Language) lessons online to empower young refugees and asylum seekers to integrate and form a vital part of the community. During the 2023-24 period, we provided **72 online ESOL sessions** catering to both **beginners** (entry level 1) and **advanced learners** (level 2+), with a total of **228 participants**. Classes were interactive and led by **qualified teachers and volunteers**, supporting students to enhance their communication skills and social integration while also providing many with the confidence to navigate schoolwork, exams and even daily life.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to our dedicated **volunteer ESOL Teachers, Linda Carey and Orna Almagor**, for their contributions and unwavering support.

NCG Football Club

Football continues to be one of our most popular activities, with an average of **25 attendees per session**. Our Youth Team delivers weekly football clubs, led by a **qualified coach** who provides guidance and assistance to the young participants, with support from our **Youth Worker and Volunteers**. The football club takes place every Friday evening at Middlesex University. This not only offers a chance to have fun and exercise, but also leads to socialising and community building through sports.

In 2023-2024, the Youth Wellbeing Project successfully delivered a total of **32 football club sessions**, leading to an impressive **total attendance of 713**.

Throughout this period, we held **three football tournaments**, with NCG teams playing friendly matches with **Young Roots** and **Lift CIC**. On each occasion, we distributed certificates of attendance to every participant, as well as medals or trophies to the winning teams, ending the session by **offering all teams pizza and drinks** and a chance to socialise and get to **know each other** afterwards. We have plans to continue holding regular tournaments with partner organisations in the coming period.

Thanks to the **John Lyons Summer Activity Fund** that we were awarded in 2023, as part of our summer plans, we invited **13 of our most regular Football Club players** to watch the **Emirates Cup Final** live from **Arsenal Stadium** with us.

A special thanks to the Youth team for their hard work in running our football sessions. Our gratitude is extended particularly to **coach Ashley Levien**, who has been a role model to the young people and whose dedication and hard work have been invaluable.



Launch of Youth Volunteering and Leadership Project

In October 2023, we launched our Youth Volunteering and Leadership project. By adhering to young people's feedback, we aimed to create **volunteering opportunities for young people** in a way that also meant they were making a **positive impact on their own communities**. We did this by planning to run **activities and games for children under the age of 12 in the contingency accommodations or asylum seeker hotels that NCG is supporting**. These sessions were planned during school holiday periods and half-terms, where children had less to do, and our young volunteers were more available. During the reporting period, we have run active **games, arts and crafts sessions, and Christmas gift distributions in three hotels**.

With each volunteering session, we held briefings and debriefings with our young volunteers, gathering feedback on their experiences and trying to adapt future sessions to meet their expectations.

We have plans to continue to offer volunteering opportunities to our young people, while also providing activities for children in contingency accommodation throughout Easter and the summer period. We also aim to provide other volunteering opportunities, such as working in a food bank, or retirement homes in the future, to give young people more nuanced experiences.

Partnership with Chickenshed and NCG Drama Group

Our existing partnership with Chickenshed Inclusive theatre group expanded this year to include the **setting up of our own NCG drama group**, both across **adults and youth groups**, including joint performances. In the lead-up to the NCG Annual General Meeting on 4th October 2023, we scheduled over five rehearsals for our youth group, giving the young people **a unique opportunity to practice theatrical skills, song, rap and choreographies, with Chickenshed's support**, culminating in a final performance **at our AGM**. NCG staff have also been invited to lead talks and information sessions for Chickenshed's young actors and performers about refugees in the U.K. and the experience of refugee camps, based on our staff's expertise. In addition, our youth groups were invited to view several of Chickenshed's other performances and plays, one of which, **'Love from Carmen', was set in a refugee camp, and was dedicated to NCG in recognition of our long-term partnership**.

We worked with Chickenshed again for Refugee Week, bringing our youth and adult clients together to put on a play encompassing real life stories about the refugee experience.



Youth Excursions and School Break Activities

In 2023-2024, the Youth team delivered **32 outings with a total participation of 218 attendees**. These outings and events were scheduled mainly during evenings, weekends, and school/college holidays to ensure maximum participation. The wide range of activities included things like an **engaging heritage tour** and **stone carving workshop with Proud Places**, a tour of **Camden Art Centre**, a **visit to Vauxhall city farm**, **kayaking at Welsh Harp with Phoenix Canoe Club**, a full-day excursion to **London Zoo**, as well as an outing to view the **Barnet Bulldogs in a basketball match**, among many others.

We also went on several visits to **Totteridge Farm** with Grow to learn about sustainable living and make our own pizzas with fresh produce from the farm, as well as **conservation day at Hampstead Heath**, which included a **walk led by Heath Hands**, opportunities to engage in conservation work, and a picnic at the end of the day.

In the summer period, we also invited a group of our most dedicated young footballers to view the **Emirates Cup Final at Arsenal Stadium**, and a group of our most active and regular young people on a **day trip to Brighton**.

Gathering on previous feedback from the young people, we also ran a **series of Kickboxing sessions** during the summer period, focusing on warm-ups, techniques, and beginner stances. The sessions were led by **refugee volunteers**, a father and son with a professional background in kickboxing, and were tailored to our youth group.



'It helps me a lot about some questions I don't know. Orna too is very good to answer any questions I have or difficulties about the language, writing or reading. It is very, very, very helpful. I like it and I appreciate all your offer of English classes.'



'Everything was great. I like all the activities. NCG has a great team, always friendly. I have made new friends and had the chance to explore different parts of London.'

Some of our winter outings this year included ice **skating at Winter Wonderland**, walking the **Christmas lights trail at Kew Gardens**, as well as an outing to the **Revel Puck Circus**, with complimentary tickets received from the **Arts Depot**.

Throughout the year, we also went on several outings to the **theatre**, including to see the **Chickenshed Christmas play**, as well as **Love from Carmen**, a story that was set in a refugee camp inspired by their partnership with NCG.

We had a series of visits and workshops at the **Mosaic Rooms Gallery**, which culminated in the **Young Collective's Exhibition**, presented to the public on 18th November (see below for more details).

Through our partnership with The **Roundhouse**, we provided our young people with **several opportunities to engage in music production workshops** at the **Roundhouse Camden studio**, giving young people the chance to learn **music recording, lyric writing and vocals**, as well as **using specialised software, sound mixing and DJ skills**. We are now planning a series of **filmmaking workshops** together with the **Roundhouse** and the **Rainbow Collective**, where young people will explore representations of the theme of **'home'** through storytelling, interview skills and animation for Refugee Week 2024.

These diverse activities played a crucial role in fostering social skills, fun and integration for our young individuals. Their active participation not only improved their mental and emotional well-being but also improved their **independence and communication skills** and gave them unique opportunities to become familiarised with several diverse aspects of art, sports and culture in the UK.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our **funders, partners, youth volunteers, and dedicated youth team** for their contributions.

"I am really appreciate for your kind fantastic way to keep busy and fun time for us. What I like most is the enthusiasm and involvement of the people. I also really like the opportunity to meet other people with different cultures."



Educational Workshops

Through the reporting period, we ran a series of educational workshops targeted specifically at **vulnerable young people** with limited access to educational settings and young people from **diverse language backgrounds**. By partnering with specialised organisations such as **Brook, Family Action, Refugee Education UK**, and **Lift CIC**, we delivered several information sessions and workshops on issues including **sexual health, healthy relationships, substance misuse, CV writing and employment, and access to higher education**.

Mosaic Room Young Collective

The Mosaic Rooms have been committed to their support for artists and cultural practitioners spanning the **Arab world and beyond**. In 2023, in a second collaborative effort with the Mosaic Rooms, **we established our own young collective within the Mosaic Room Gallery** in West London. This initiative, known as the **Mosaic Rooms Young Collective**, extends an invitation to young individuals to **immerse themselves in the realm of visual arts**, adopting fresh perspectives in analysing, conversing about, and generating creative work as a unified entity. A cohort of up to **12 young participants** from the NCG Youth Wellbeing Project participated in various stages of the project.

The Mosaic Rooms Young Collective: Shall We Sit Together?

In collaboration with the participatory arts group, **Febrik**, we reinitiated this activity in March, doing **monthly workshops and meetings**, using different mediums including **design and photography**, culminating in a final public exhibition on 18th November 2023. The exhibition stayed open to the public for two weeks and received very positive feedback from viewers.

Our heartfelt appreciation is extended to The Mosaic Room for their invaluable partnership and unwavering support in making this venture possible.



Outreach

This year the NCG youth team expanded its outreach to schools, colleges and other youth groups in order to **spread awareness about our charity and recruit new young people into our programme**. Between 2023-2024, the NCG Youth team led talks at **Copthall School, Compton School, Islington College** and **Chickenshed theatre**. We are presently in talks with other schools and colleges in the borough as well continuing to expand our outreach work.

Youth Evaluation Survey

The Youth Wellbeing Project is a complex project consisting of multiple activities and services to support the **psycho-social needs** of young asylum seekers and refugees. Within each regular activity (ESOL, Youth Club, Football, Youth Volunteering, and Outings) there are multiple sub-activities, individual workshops, and events. Due to the capacity within the youth team, and a high number of individual workshops/activities, it is not possible for the youth team to evaluate every individual activity independently. In response to this, the youth team has developed multiple methods of evaluation of the activities, services, and young persons' development within these activities. The youth team evaluate the young people's progress using **quarterly Youth Satisfaction**; Feedback made during activities to staff members, staff observations during activities, regular face-to-face young person feedback sessions, reflective meetings and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, a total of **108 young people** responded to the Youth Satisfaction Survey; **75% of responders were male, and 25% of responders were female; 22% of responders were aged between 12-15 years, 52% 16-18 years, and 26 % were 19+.**

An overwhelming **96.2% of the respondents said they had seen positive outcomes from joining the NCG youth activities.** These included feeling happier, having fun, learning new skills, making new friends, reducing loneliness, making a positive impact on their community, and improving English language skills.

94.6% reported that being part of NCG's youth club had improved their overall well-being. This feedback highlights the positive impact the project has had on young people's mental and physical health, addressing their emotional needs and fostering a supportive environment.

The Youth Team has successfully implemented their evaluation plan during this reporting period. Their key measurement objectives included improving health and well-being, enhancing young people's engagement, increasing social skills and knowledge, and identifying mechanisms of change.

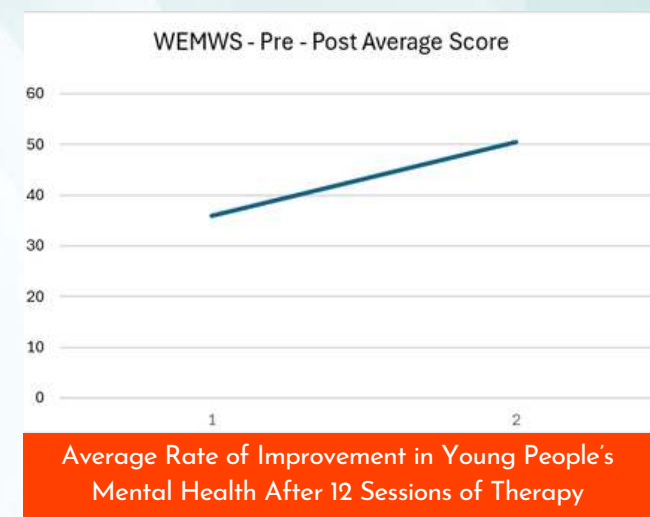


Youth Counselling Service

The Youth Counselling Service, implemented between April 2023 and March 2024, aimed to provide **weekly counselling sessions** to young refugees and asylum seekers **in their own native languages**. Generously supported by **John Lyons charity** and **Children In Need**, the service catered to the needs of **21 young people** during this period.

To assess the impact of the Youth Counselling Service, participants were asked to rate their mental well-being using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) before and after the completion of their counselling sessions. The Pre/Post ratio, which represents the average well-being score before and after counselling, showed an **initial average score of 36, which increased to 50.5 after the completion of the 12 counselling sessions**. Notably, all but one participant demonstrated an **improvement in their well-being scores from pre-counselling to post-counselling**, indicating a positive change in their mental well-being. The most significant improvement in an individual client's well-being score was recorded as **+32**, with a **pre-counselling score of 29** and a **post-counselling score of 61**. This highlights the **effectiveness** of the counselling sessions in significantly enhancing the mental well-being of the participant.

In conclusion, the Youth Counselling Project effectively addressed the mental well-being needs of the young participants, as evidenced by the significant improvements in their well-being scores. The positive outcomes achieved by the project highlight the importance of providing accessible and culturally appropriate counselling services to youth.



A Tribute to Parham Kazemi



It is with a heavy heart that we announce that one of the most inspiring and dedicated young members of the New Citizens' Gateway Youth Group, Parham Kazemi, passed away in November 2023 at the age of 20.

Parham came to the U.K. from Tehran, Iran with his mother at the age of 15. He was an active young boy, eager to learn, sing and perform, and had dreams of one day becoming a pilot. Soon after his arrival in the country, however, he was diagnosed with the degenerative motor neuron disease, which impacted his learning and communication capacities, meaning he had to stop attending college.

Still, he persevered. Despite his restricted mobility, using a wheelchair and being connected to a respiratory machine, not to mention a rapidly deteriorating eyesight as well, Parham became one of the most regular and devoted participants of NCG's Youth Wellbeing Programme between January 2021 - November 2023.

He was the most regular attender of our online ESOL lessons, as well as many youth club sessions and outings around London. Due to his unquenchable thirst for knowledge, leadership and the arts, Parham also took part in our Youth Council in 2022, helping the staff team co-design our youth programme. He was awarded a certificate for his continued dedication and efforts and was also referred to the Future Leaders Programme, which he completed.

Parham's unwavering love of life and his determination not to be defined by his disease was a demonstration of resilience and strength, the likes of which we have never seen before. His is a legacy that will continue to inspire all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.



'Tenacious: The Inspiring story of my son Parham', a book written by Parham's mother , Elahe Lotfali, was launched this year and is available for purchase on Amazon UK:



Health & Wellbeing



As a key partner in the Barnet Wellbeing Hub, much of our work is dedicated to health-related issues. This commitment is evident in our handling of over **4,200 health inquiries** through our services. During 2023-24, our health initiatives included:

- Expanding our **"Holistic Model of Support"** to enhance the mental well-being of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Continuation of mental health support initiative **for young refugees**.
- Offering **ESOL classes** focused on improving vocabulary for medical appointments and health-related topics.
- Playing an active role in planning the **Barnet Mental Health Event**.
- Implementing **ecotherapy activities**, such as gardening, to support individuals facing mental health challenges in a natural setting, along with workshops on food and nutrition for our clients.
- Participating in **The Refugee Mental Health & Place Network**, organised by King's College.
- Engaging in the **Barnet Mental Health Strategic Partnership**.
- Providing personalised **one-on-one emotional support and counselling for both youth and adults**.
- Facilitating **psycho-educational workshops** as part of the **IAPT provision**.
- Organising a series of weekly therapeutic sessions for groups such as refugee women facing mental health issues, and survivors of domestic violence, torture, and rape. Our **Women's Group**, Jasmine, offers activities like **music therapy, yoga, mindfulness, art and crafts, poetry workshops, and dance**.
- Building strong **collaborations with researchers** from institutions like St. Mary's University, Middlesex University, Brunel University, UCL, and King's College.

In addition to these efforts, NCG has actively participated in initiatives led by NHS Barnet and Barnet Public Health to improve community health. This includes involvement in HealthWatch, the **Suicide Prevention Scheme**, and organising events for **World Mental Health Day**. We serve as a valuable resource for health professionals, helping them provide better support to this client group and deepen their understanding of their unique needs.

Cooking Project

For many asylum seekers in full-board accommodation, the lack of access to a kitchen and the inability to prepare their traditional meals is a significant challenge. In response, NCG has taken the initiative over the past two years to organise cooking sessions, **providing a space for people to reconnect with their cultural traditions.**

During the 2023-24 period, we successfully organised **8 cooking sessions in partnership with Bread N Butter for 40 asylum seekers** residing in a Home Office contingency hotel. In these sessions, participants had the opportunity to select familiar recipes, gather the necessary ingredients, and prepare meals together in a communal space outside of the hotel. This great therapeutic project was made possible by financial support from **Barnet Public Health.**

Additionally, NCG hosted **21 cooking sessions at their allotment**, supported by funding from the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** and **London Churches Refugee Fund**. These sessions were **attended by 111 clients** and offered more than just cooking; they provided a welcoming environment that allowed asylum seekers to leave their rooms, gather produce they had grown in the allotment, and prepare meals in a space that felt more like home. The sessions also created opportunities for **cultural exchange**, enabling participants to **bond with local community members through food**. Our special thanks must go to **Bread N Butter, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** and **The London Churches Refugee Fund** for their valued partnership and support.



"This project is so unique and deeply close to my heart. In the warmth of the beautiful green environment and the soil of a garden that reminded me of my village in Sudan, I found pieces of the home I thought I had lost. Cooking together brought comfort and healing, showing me that even far from home, our roots can still grow, and the flavours of our past can heal both our hearts and minds."

"For 18 months, I didn't have the chance to taste my own cultural food. The first time I was invited, along with two friends from the same hotel, to prepare our traditional food and share it with others from different countries, we were really excited. We got to choose what to cook together and being able to buy the spices we used back home was an amazing feeling. On the day we cooked, even chopping onions and smashing garlic felt enjoyable—something you can't fully understand unless you've been through what we experienced. We cooked the dish with love and served it with love. It was such a therapeutic experience."



Gardening Project

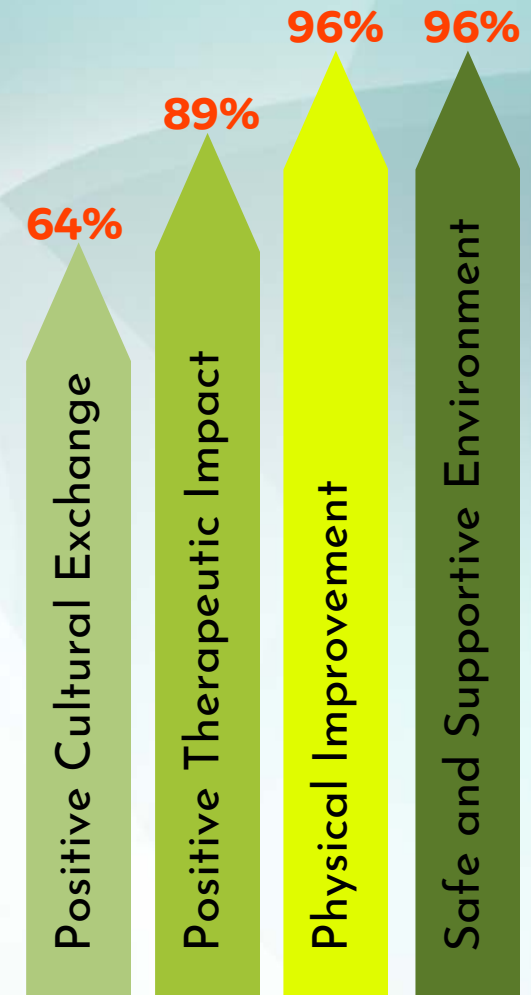


Since 2015, NCG's **Ecotherapy** programme, **Sowing Seeds**, has been a cornerstone in improving the mental health and well-being of socially marginalised asylum seekers and refugees. This innovative project provides participants with the opportunity to reconnect with their cultural roots through traditional gardening practices, allowing them to grow familiar plants and crops from their home countries.

NCG is proud to say that **this project is a volunteer-led initiative, with 10 dedicated volunteers, all from refugee backgrounds**, leading the way. Their involvement not only strengthens the sense of ownership but also provides valuable peer-to-peer support within the community.

Between April and November 2023, we held **49 gardening sessions**, including **15 special cooking-in-the-garden events**. A total of **135 individuals** took part, with **38 attending regularly**. The combination of **hands-on gardening** and **shared meals** has fostered a **strong sense of community** and well-being.

The evaluation of this project confirms **96%** of participants said the social interactions in the garden helped them make friends and offered **emotional support during difficult times**, helping to **combat isolation and loneliness**.



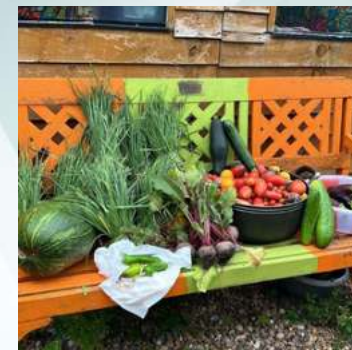
The Sowing Seeds Gardening Project stands as a testament to the power of nature, culture, and community in transforming lives. With the continued support of our funders **The Garden Trust** and **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** and **volunteers**, this project will keep providing a vital lifeline to those who need it most, offering not just a garden, but a place of healing, connection, and growth. Our special thanks must go to our **Gardening Volunteer lead Mohammad Fard** for his ongoing dedication and support.

"I don't know if I can begin to tell you how much our visit to the garden with you meant to me. What an impressive group of women! I am so grateful that they have you to help them find their way here in England. You are blessing so many lives! Thank you for all that you do! We look forward to working with you in the future!"

Funders- Susan Killpack

"I'm alone here in the UK, no family around. But going to the garden helped me make lots of friends. It's not an exaggeration to say that the garden saved my life. I'm not in a good financial situation to go out, but this place always welcomes me. I spend quality time here with people from different cultures and countries. Thank you, NCG, for saving the lives of many refugees and asylum seekers through your services."

Quote from a client



ESOL Classes

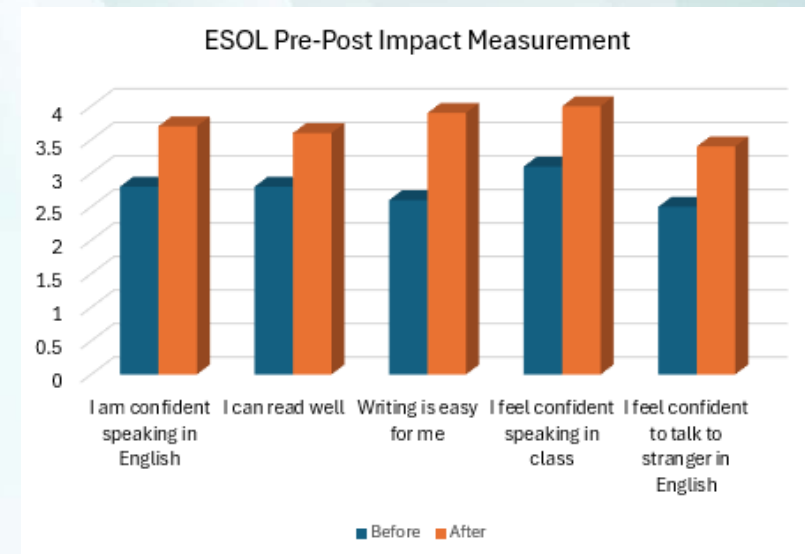


Sara Hessabi
ESOL Manager

During 2023-24 we successfully delivered essential ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision tailored for asylum seekers and refugees at various **Skills for Life Entry levels, from Pre-Entry to Entry Level 3**. We were dedicated to meeting the high demand for **both online and in-person** learning opportunities, demonstrating our commitment to accessibility and flexibility. Our informal classes offered a supportive environment where students from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, and locations across the UK could not only improve their English skills but also build social connections and enhance their cultural understanding. We aimed to enrol 8 to 12 students in each class and consistently maintained this number. From April 2023 to March 2024, nearly **252 students participated in our 90-minute weekly sessions**, with a few attending twice a week. The classes followed Barnet's timetable for term times and benefited from the unwavering commitment of **18 volunteer teachers** and **4 assistants**, playing a crucial role in the students' progress.

Throughout the courses, students' progress was continuously evaluated to ensure they were benefiting from the lessons and improving their English skills. To evaluate the impact of the programme, we conducted a pre and post-evaluation in which **80 participants** took part. All attendees reported a **74% increase in their confidence in speaking English**, a **74% increase in reading**, and a **72% increase in writing** in English.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our **ESOL Manager, Sara Hessabi**, for her unwavering commitment and exceptional management, as well as to all our **volunteer ESOL teachers** and **helpers** as well as the **City Bridge Foundation**, for their financial support. Without their dedication and support, none of this would have been possible.



Trinity Accredited ESOL

New Citizens' Gateway has proudly served as a **registered Trinity Exam Centre for seven years**, consistently delivering structured **ESOL provision** to students striving to earn their **Trinity certificates at various Entry levels**. This year, we successfully offered **three courses**, providing students with different background and nationalities with the opportunity to benefit from our structured English syllabus, based on the National Standard ESOL Core Curriculum. We are pleased to report that **24 students** attended our Trinity ESOL courses from April 2023-March 2024, covering different Skills for Life Entry levels. Attendance was outstanding throughout the courses, with students consistently participating in **five hours of classes per week** during term time. The exam results were exceptional, with a **100% pass rate**, enabling **all students to successfully earn their certificates**, qualifying them for further study or employment. Attendees confirmed that they had **75% growth of confidence** in speaking English, **76% growth in reading** and **70% growth in writing** in English. We remain committed to providing high-quality education and support, helping our students to achieve their language learning goals and obtain accredited certificates.



Mums & Tots' Group

We offer a unique English learning programme **tailored specifically for mothers**, providing them with the opportunity to improve their language skills **while their preschool children are cared for** in a vibrant crèche. This setup allows the mothers to focus on their English learning with peace of mind. The project, in partnership with **Hyde Children's Centre**, proudly welcomed **18 mothers and 20 children** into the program last year. Every Friday morning during term time, a group of refugee and asylum seeker women attended our **Mums and Tots group at Pre-Entry level**, making significant progress in the four essential language skills. The lessons contributed meaningfully to their daily lives, **enhancing their conversational abilities** for tasks such as shopping and visiting the doctor. The mothers participated in a **two-hour class taught by a dedicated volunteer teacher** in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Meanwhile, their children were cared for **by a qualified nursery teacher and a volunteer assistant**, surrounded by engaging **educational toys** in a safe environment. In July 2023, the NCG ESOL team organised a visit to **Belmont Farm** for the mothers and their children, **celebrating their progress**. We are committed to continuing this valuable programme in the coming years.

Our evaluation and impact measurement for 2023-2024 confirms that all attendees reported a 64% increase in their confidence in speaking English, a 60% improvement in reading, and a 54% growth in writing skills. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Hyde Children Centre and our staff and volunteers for their invaluable support of this programme.



Destitution and Social Support



Refugees and asylum seekers in our community face significant financial challenges. With the limited support they receive, prioritising daily necessities often leaves little to no room for other essential expenses, such as school uniforms, shoes, winter clothes, and food. Many parents are unable to afford entertainment for their children or provide gifts during important festivals like Eid or Christmas, further straining their ability to create joyful experiences for their families.

During 2023-2024, NCG provided **£13,800** worth of **supermarket vouchers for asylum-seeking children in hotels** to buy school uniforms, and **310 school bags** were distributed to ensure they had the supplies needed for education. In addition, we spent **£5,000** to top up **Oyster cards for over 50 parents**, enabling them to transport their children to and from school, which eased a major burden on these families.

To further support vulnerable members of our community, NCG distributed **200 Aldi vouchers**, each worth **£20**, to **pregnant women, people with disabilities, those with specific dietary requirements, and individuals whose financial support had been temporarily stopped**. We also provided over **800 data SIM cards** to new arrivals in contingency hotels, helping them stay connected with loved ones during a difficult time of transition. Additionally, we managed to provide **35 laptops to those residing in the hotels and joining online classes**.





In celebration of Eid, we distributed **502 gifts to children living in hotels**, ensuring that every child, regardless of faith, felt included in the festivities.

During the summer of July and August 2024, we organised special events to bring joy and entertainment to asylum-seeking families living in hotels. These included engaging **magic shows** and fun **balloon modelling sessions for the children**, creating moments of laughter and excitement. We also brought an **ice cream van** on two separate occasions to **five different hotels**, serving **451 people**, mainly children, on the first round and 318 on the second. These activities helped strengthen a sense of community and provided much-needed relief from the challenges these families face on a daily basis.



These initiatives would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors and partners: **Barnet Refugee Welcome Board, Nisa Neshem, Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care, King Alfred School, Saracens Sport Foundation, Chipping Barnet, Screen Share, Community TechAid, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Vodafone UK, Association of Asian Muslims of North London, Khawateen, and Artsdepot**. Their contributions have made a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable families in our community, and we are deeply grateful.



Together, we are making a difference, and we look forward to continuing this vital work with their support.

Donations

Throughout 2023-24, we were deeply honoured by the generous financial support we received, totalling approximately **£78,848, from individuals, organisations, and faith communities**. We are immensely grateful to every supporter who played a crucial role in making our work possible. We would especially like to acknowledge **an anonymous donor who generously contributed £4,300**. Additionally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to **Mr. & Mrs. Demashkieh** for their **£14,300 donation**, **Latter-day Saint Charities** for their **£15,300**, **Saracens Sport Foundation** for their **£5,000**, **Mercy Mission** for **£18,326**, **London Churches Refugee Fund** for **£1,000**, **Barnet Refugee Welcome Board** for **£2,638**, the **Association of Asian Muslims of North London and Khawateen** for **£9,562**, **Barnet Community Events Fund** for **£1,840**, **Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue** for **£1,082**, **Trace Foundation** for **£2,000**, and **Finchley Reform Synagogue** for **£500**. Special thanks also go to **Jodi Mishcon** for her **fundraising efforts** through the **Big Shop Appeal**, which raised **£3,000** for New Citizens' Gateway. In terms of food support, we are incredibly thankful for the contributions from individuals, churches, mosques, synagogues, and food banks that allowed us to provide food parcels to destitute asylum seekers. These donations were vital in helping us respond to immediate needs.

During our year-end celebration, the outpouring of generosity was particularly heart-warming. We received gifts from faith groups, **Goods for Good, the Young Barnet Foundation, Sebby's Corner** and many caring individuals, making the event a truly memorable one. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the **Ruth Hayman Trust** for their invaluable support through grants, which have helped refugees and asylum seekers cover the costs of courses, training, and educational materials. These contributions have been instrumental in empowering individuals to complete their education and pursue meaningful employment opportunities.

We are also grateful to the numerous **faith groups, local businesses, and individuals who supported us financially** or with in-kind donations. This includes **CJ & JD Novick, Russell & Cohen, Nisa-Nashim, St. John's United Reform Church in New Barnet, the Iyengar Yoga Group, New North London Synagogue, The Sacred Heart Church Mill Hill, Personal Improvement Ltd, St. Mary at Finchley, Manor Drive Methodist Church, United Synagogue, Trinity Church Colindale, the Young Barnet Foundation, Masorti Judaism UK, Mitzvah Day, Hampstead Garden Suburb, the Shamash Family, Suleman Sharjeel, Kew Gardens Community Access Scheme, Better World Charity, Sebby's Corner, Age UK Barnet, Vodafone UK, Artsdepot, Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care, King Alfred School, The Hygiene Bank Barnet, Screen Share, Community TechAid, Chipping Barnet Care4Calais, Colindale Food Bank, Burnt Oak Community Food Bank, Finchley Food Bank, Barnet Foodshare, and many others.**

Although it's difficult to assign an exact value to the in-kind contributions, we estimate that they amount to over **£50,000** in retail value. Once again, we extend our deepest thanks to all supporters, organisations, and individuals whose generosity and commitment have been crucial in advancing our mission. Your contributions have made a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support.

Supporting Health Professionals



During 2022-2023, as part of our Afghan project funded by the European Fund (AMIF), we delivered a 26-week **Occupational English Test (OET)** course. Although the project funding ended, we continued our support into 2023-2024, **assisting a few refugee doctors by providing funds to join OET classes.**

We are deeply grateful to **Mercy Mission** for their financial support, which has enabled refugee medical professionals to cover the costs of their OET, **PLAB 1, and PLAB 2 exams.** This year, with their assistance, **two of our refugee doctors successfully passed their OET exams and PLAB 1.** Additionally, **one student passed PLAB 2 and is now in the process of registering with the General Medical Council** and securing a clinical attachment, bringing him closer to being eligible to work as a doctor in the UK.

We are proud to highlight that the student who passed all his exams is one of our dedicated volunteers. With lived experience as a refugee, he now provides advice and guidance to newly arrived health professionals on the steps required to pursue their careers in the UK. Over the past year, he has successfully advised and **guided 10 refugee doctors**, helping them navigate the pathway to practicing medicine in the UK.

We are actively seeking additional funding to continue this vital project in the future.



Case Study 4



Farhad Farewar
Volunteer Advisor

I am a qualified medical doctor from overseas and a refugee from Afghanistan. Like many asylum seekers, I have experienced some of the most challenging times in my life.

Initially, I was unaware of the services provided by the NCG to asylum seekers and refugees when I arrived in the UK. As a new arrival, it was not easy to find my way and adapt to the new environment.

A workshop that was organised by NCG, sparked my interest in volunteering as an interpreter and later as a volunteer adviser to give back to society. This experience has not only provided me with insight into the organisational culture in the UK but has also prepared me for future employment opportunities.

While working as a volunteer, I came to realise the vital role that charitable organisations like NCG play in the lives of asylum seekers and refugees seeking to integrate into the UK community. The English language courses offered by NCG provide refugees with a means to communicate in English and become more self-sufficient. Additionally, the NCG allotment/garden project offers refugees a chance to connect with nature and help them improve their mental health and well-being. The community formed around this initiative has allowed us to network, exchange opinions, learn from one another's experiences, and become more resilient.

As a medical doctor, I have been working towards re-qualification in the UK. The NCG has played a crucial role in assisting me with my preparation for the OET exam. I was offered the opportunity to join a 6-month daily online OET class, and fortunately, I passed the exam.

NCG continued to support me financially and I am proud to say that I passed my PLAB 1 and PLAB 2 and now I am in the process of registering myself with the General Medical Council and hopefully soon start my career as a medical doctor in the UK.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the NCG management and staff for their invaluable services to those in need. A special mention goes to Ms. Farida Stanikzai, whose encouragement has been instrumental to pursue my career as a medical doctor.



Campaign

Food Quality Improvement Campaign

New Citizens Gateway (NCG) continues its close collaboration with **Barnet Citizens**, a branch of **Citizens UK**, along with community organisations and asylum seekers, to lead a campaign focused on **enhancing the quality of food provided in contingency hotels**.

In partnership with **Citizens Advice Barnet**, NCG has maintained **continuous communication with Barnet Council, the Home Office**, other charity organisations and accommodation providers to explore ways to **improve food standards for asylum seekers**. A delegation of **twenty-three leaders**, including one representative from each of the five asylum hotels, met with **Council Leader Barry Rawlings, Cllr Zahra Beg**, and other relevant council officers. During this meeting, the delegation **formally presented a petition signed by each organisation**. They provided detailed testimonies about the food situation at each hotel and urged the Council to commit to addressing the issues by writing to the Home Office and contractors.

We are grateful to **Citizens Advice Barnet** for their tireless efforts, collaborative work, and follow-ups to ensure these commitments are translated into tangible actions and improvements.

As a result of our ongoing efforts and persistent advocacy, **we are pleased to acknowledge the significant improvements that have been made in the quality of food provided at these hotels**.



Campaign for Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers

On 7th February 2024, campaigners, including **80 community leaders from Citizens UK**, along with **representatives from New Citizens' Gateway** and **individuals seeking asylum**, gathered outside **London City Hall**. They rallied to **call for free bus travel for asylum seekers** and requested a firm date to meet and discuss the matter further with city officials.

This initiative is part of Citizens UK's broader agenda for the upcoming London Mayoral election. The campaign will culminate in an **"accountability assembly"** on 25th April 2024, where over **2,000 participants** will hold mayoral candidates responsible for their commitments to social issues, including public transportation access for asylum seekers.



We are pleased to share that on 14th March, five representatives—including one of our service users and an NCG Outreach worker—had the opportunity to meet with Deputy Mayor of London for Transport, Minister Seb Dance.

During the meeting, they emphasised the vital role of **affordable London buses for asylum seekers**, advocating for policies that could significantly improve their mobility and access to essential services. This is a key step toward ensuring that asylum seekers can move freely and affordably within the city, strengthening their integration and quality of life.



Training for Professionals

As a leading expert in refugee support, NCG has been conducting comprehensive **training sessions on the Asylum Support System in the UK** for the past few years. Last year, we provided this training to **40 volunteers and staff from various local organisations**. Participants included representatives from **Volunteering Barnet, Sebby's Corner, Young Barnet Foundation, US Chesed, Trinity Church, St. John's United Reformed Church, Age UK Barnet, Chipping Barnet, Royal Free Hospital, Barnet Council, and Arts Depot**.

Our interactive courses cover a wide range of essential topics, starting with **an overview of the current international asylum context and the reasons why refugees are forced to flee their countries**. It also provides an in-depth understanding of the **UK's legislative framework** and the **asylum determination process**, from the initial application to the final decision. Additionally, the session explores the dispersal process and introduces key areas of asylum support, including **Section 98, Section 95, and Section 4 support**. This training is part of NCG's ongoing commitment to **empowering local communities with the knowledge and tools needed to assist refugees effectively**.

Family Reunion Support

Throughout the years, NCG has been key in supporting refugee families with their legal settlement in the UK under the **Family Reunion Scheme**. Since 2020, we have closely collaborated with the **Mercy Mission charity** to advance this cause. Their dedication and contributions make a meaningful difference and serve as a beacon of hope for refugee families separated by difficult circumstances.



"I came to the UK in 2004 and **spent 20 long years waiting for my status**. When I arrived, I had to leave behind my wife and four children, one of whom has severe disabilities. It was very painful not being able to see them or watch them grow. Thankfully, last year I finally got my status and **reached out to NCG for help to reunite with my family**. It wasn't an easy journey. **NCG supported me financially and connected me with a good lawyer** who started the process. My case was refused the first time, but with the lawyer's hard work and NCG's continued financial support over the year, **my wife and children finally received their visas, and we were reunited**. I am deeply thankful to my lawyer and NCG for their advice, guidance, and support. They brought light into my life, and I will be grateful forever."

My family reunion application has been accepted, **I would not have done this without your support**. I am very grateful for all your help and support. Thank you and God bless you.
My family and I owe you a great deal"
Yohannes

Educational Sessions and Outings

NCG continues to organise **educational sessions** and outings for refugees and asylum seekers to enhance their knowledge, help them learn about their new surroundings, **reduce feelings of isolation**, and assist them in their **resettlement journey**. During the past year we organised **2 trips to Kew Gardens** in August and December. **87 clients with their children** joined us to discover the wide variety of plants that grow at Kew Gardens.

In July, 8 mums and **12 children from the Mums and Toddlers Group**, accompanied by their teachers, visited **Belmont Farm**. The children and their parents experienced an educational adventure to see, touch, and engage with the natural world. During the visit, the children had an opportunity to touch and feed the animals, creating a deeper connection with nature and learning about the importance of caring for living creatures. This hands-on experience not only excited the children but also enriched their understanding of farm life and the environment.



In November 2023, the **Finchley Reform Synagogue education team** invited **19 asylum-seeking children and their parents** to a family activity morning. The children participated in various activities, including sports, cooking, and drama sessions, alongside children who attended Hebrew school on Sunday mornings. This event fostered a sense of community and provided a joyful and engaging experience for the asylum-seeking families. Our special thanks must go to **Finchley Reform Synagogue** for their ongoing support.

Partnership with Police

In April last year, NCG invited **the Metropolitan Police** to partner in coordinating neighbourhood policing activities and providing valuable **safety and policing information to the new arrivals**. Many children attended this social event with their parents, creating a welcoming atmosphere for interaction with police officers. This opportunity allowed families to gain insight into the important work that the police do, and where they can seek help. The event not only strengthened community bonds but also built a sense of trust and understanding between the residents and law enforcement, empowering families to feel **safer and more informed in their neighbourhoods**.



Jasmine Women's Group

For refugee women, the journey of resettlement is often marked by immense emotional, physical, and mental struggles. Displacement brings significant loss, uncertainty, and the overwhelming challenge of adapting to a new culture and environment. In the face of these hardships, many refugee women seek ways to **regain a sense of stability and well-being**.

For the past **15 consecutive years**, NCG has proudly provided **a safe and supportive space through the Jasmine Women's Group**. This group has become a crucial platform where refugee women gather every Friday from 10:30 to 12:30 to build **lasting friendships, share their experiences, and support one another in healing and integrating into new communities**.

In the past year, **72 women from 13 nationalities** participated in **39 sessions**. A survey of 23 participants revealed significant improvements in social integration, well-being, and personal growth after nine months of involvement in group activities. The **educational workshops and capacity-building exercises** tailored to their needs **have positively impacted their adaptation and overall quality of life**.



We extend our deepest thanks to **Tanya Novick**, our dedicated Women's Group Coordinator, to **Sacred Heart Church** in Mill Hill for their generous hosting, and above all, to the Jasmine **volunteers** – Kathy Lichman, Rojan Akruran, Jen Albert, Gulseka Sattar, Muzhgan Parsapour, Mastura NoorAlam, and Mhanaz Pedram – for their commitment and support in making this project a success.

The Jasmine Women's Group has been a lifeline for me. Every Friday, it is the one place I look forward to going. The group offers a great, welcoming, and friendly atmosphere with many activities and workshops that have increased my knowledge. It has helped me improve my English and make friends. This Group is like my family, and I am grateful for the positive impact.



Clients Satisfaction Rate of Participating in Our Gardening Project

94%

Facilities at the venue

91%

Usefulness of the talk/workshops

92%

Proficiency of our volunteers

Yoga Sessions

Enhancing Mental Well-Being and Resilience through Yoga

The NCG yoga sessions are designed to enhance the **mental well-being** and **resilience** of refugee women who face significant mental health challenges as a result of their displacement and resettlement experiences. Through the practice of mindful breathing, physical postures, and relaxation techniques, these sessions **help refugee women reconnect with their bodies and minds, offering a vital pathway to healing and self-reliance.**

Our yoga sessions are held every other week on Fridays and are structured with cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in mind. **A total of 14 yoga sessions were held** between 2023 and 2024, with an average attendance of **25 participants per session.** To evaluate the sessions' impact and participant satisfaction, pre- and post-session impact evaluation questionnaires were utilised.

The feedback from the Participants shows they were **highly satisfied** and pleased with their instructor's dedication to tailoring the sessions to fit their abilities and rated **9.5 out of 10**, incorporating chair yoga to promote inclusiveness and active engagement.

Our special thanks go to our yoga instructor, **Mags Bee-Quigley**, for the incredible support she has provided to our women's group through her yoga sessions. We also want to extend our gratitude to the **Northeast London Iyengar Yoga (NELIY) group** for making this project possible and for your ongoing support.

Refugee Week Celebration

Refugee Week is the **world's largest arts and culture festival**, celebrating the invaluable contributions, resilience, and creativity of refugees and those seeking sanctuary. In line with **Barnet Council's commitment to becoming a borough of sanctuary**, New Citizens' Gateway proudly participated in the 2023 Refugee Week celebration held in June at **Victoria Park**. This vibrant event embraced the year's theme of compassion. Hundreds of refugees, including children, joined the event. The day was filled with live performances, opportunities for networking, physical activities, guest speakers, and information stalls run by Refugee community organisations, the NHS, and the police.

It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the contributions of refugees to the Barnet community, **fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity**. This event would not have been possible without the generous financial support of **Barnet Council**, which enabled us to serve delicious Middle Eastern cuisine. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Council for their ongoing commitment to our cause.



International Women's Day

On 1st March 2024, the Jasmine Women's Group hosted a highly successful celebration of International Women's Day, focusing on the theme **#InspireInclusion**. The event was opened by the **Worshipful Mayor of Barnet**, who delivered an inspiring speech. The celebration brought together **98 women** from the local community, refugee organisations, and faith groups, creating **a vibrant atmosphere of unity and inclusivity**. Refugee women shared powerful stories of overcoming challenges and spoke about the inspiring women in their lives, which moved everyone present. The event also featured a multicultural food fair, where women from diverse cultural backgrounds prepared and shared traditional dishes, creating a beautiful opportunity for **cultural exchange**. The highlight of the day was the **Mayor presenting certificates of recognition to women volunteers who had made significant contributions to the community**, honouring their dedication and hard work. Undoubtedly, the event would not have been possible without **Barnet Council's** financial assistance, which allowed us to provide a fantastic experience with delicious food and we thank them for this.



"I felt so good to be able to join the NCG International Women's Day event. I was so inspired by the story of Elsa a 97-year-old volunteer who devoted her time to volunteer and support refugees. She gave me a lot of motivation to strive as much as I can and not give up. Overall, I gained a sense of empowerment."

End of Year Party

On 19 December 2023, we hosted an end-of-year party **to reflect on our achievements** and the bonds we have built with refugees and asylum seekers, celebrating **resilience, diversity, and unity**. **Over 132 adults and children** attended the event, which provided a wonderful opportunity to bring together individuals and families from various backgrounds, creating a warm and welcoming environment to celebrate the year's accomplishments and strengthen community ties. Families shared music and dance from their cultures, as well as traditional dishes and sweets. NCG would like to thank **Sebby's Corner, St John's United Reformed Church in New Barnet, Young Barnet Foundation, Mulalley & Co, The US, Trinity Church North Finchley, and Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care** for their support, which enabled us to provide **783 gift bags** filled with essentials and thoughtful items for children and families. This gesture, though small, symbolised care and support, reminding everyone that they are not alone in their journey. We are also incredibly grateful for the generous offer of the venue by **Finchley Reform Synagogue** and the support from their volunteers. Having such a welcoming space allowed us to create an inviting atmosphere for everyone, enabling us to celebrate our achievements together.



London Legal Walk 2024



The London Legal Walk is an annual 10km post-work event starting from Carey Street, behind London's Royal Courts of Justice. On 18th June 2024, 16,000 walkers participated to support frontline free legal advice agencies.

This year, NCG's dedicated team of eight walkers proudly joined in for the 16th time, raising an impressive £1,890 in sponsorships. These funds will directly support NCG's critical advisory services, aiding clients who have fled persecution, sought asylum, and are striving to rebuild their lives.

A heartfelt thank you to our walkers and, above all, to our generous sponsors who made this possible.

"Together, we have the power to make a lasting impact!"



Volunteering Project



Farida Stanikzai
Operations Manager

Volunteers are the heart and soul of NCG. They come from diverse backgrounds and age groups and bring invaluable knowledge and skills to the organisation. They dedicate their time, expertise, and compassion to support one of the most marginalised groups in society through challenging circumstances.

Our volunteers are instrumental in bridging these divides, providing the vital support that allows individuals to settle into their new communities, access essential services, and begin to rebuild their lives.

During 2023-24, we had a pool of **116 registered volunteers, with 72 actively participating**, including both new and existing members. Of these, **61 engaged in a variety of activities across various projects on a weekly basis.**

The programme showcased a holistic approach by providing a broad spectrum of opportunities, such as **advice, campaigning and lobbying, ESOL, Mums and Tots group, counselling, women's group, youth group, gardening, mental health and well-being workshop facilitation, admin, interpreting, food and clothes parcel collection and distribution, organising events, and service evaluation.** This wide range of activities highlights the programme's effectiveness in addressing the distinct needs of the refugee and asylum seeker community.

The assessment of NCG's Volunteering Programme for 2023-24 highlighted its effectiveness and the positive impact it had on both the organisation and its volunteers. A remarkable **100% of survey respondents acknowledged feeling appreciated within the organisation, suggesting that NCG has effectively cultivated an environment of inclusivity and recognition for its volunteers.** Moreover, **100%** of participants expressed **their commitment to continue volunteering with NCG**, underscoring the fulfilling and significant experiences they have encountered.

By utilising the commitment and expertise of its volunteers, NCG effectively assisted refugees and asylum seekers, fostering their social integration and empowerment. Volunteers expressed high levels of satisfaction, appreciation for the support they received, and a willingness to recommend the programme, all of which highlighted the programme's quality and NCG's ability to create a nurturing and fulfilling environment.

The programme's success is further evidenced by the specific benefits experienced by refugee volunteers, including enhanced employability skills, improved social integration, and increased empowerment during their transition to paid employment. NCG's commitment to **making a lasting difference in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers** through volunteering is apparent in these positive outcomes.



We are proud to report that during 2023-24, our dedicated volunteers contributed 2,754 hours to support NCG, equivalent to 1.5 full-time positions.

We extend a special appreciation to all our volunteers, The Mercers Company for their financial support and Farida Stanikzai, our Operations Manager, for her exceptional dedication that has led to the success of our volunteering programme.



Paid Employment Transition

Remarkably, NCG's assistance went beyond volunteering, as the organisation helped 8 individuals secure paid employment during the evaluation period. This accomplishment showcases the concrete results and practical influence of NCG's initiatives. The successful transition of volunteers into paid roles highlights the programme's effectiveness in fostering professional development and offering avenues for individuals to enhance their situations



"NCG helped me to complete the Level 2 Teaching Assistant Diploma. I completed the course. NCG then registered me with a job agency and provided me with a reference. Now I work full time in a primary school."

Volunteers' Party 2023



We make a living with what we get but we make a life with what we give!
A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all our volunteers!

List of Volunteers 2023-24

Trustees

Michael James Young
Sanja Dujmovic Potnar
Tata Issa Sougui
Esmond Sidney Rosen
Geethawathy Thirusaba-Nathan
Fanta Sheriff
Dr Penelope Anne Trafford
Dr Sanjiv Ahluwalia
John Conor Doyle
Golnar Bokaie

Client Advisor

Alaa Alibrahim
Farhad Farewar
Najma Al-Nadhari
Barbara Rrostas
Vahid Kermani

Counsellors

Khadijah Rahimi
Yasmin Sher
Zara Tylor Jackson
Haulah Zacharia
Zainab Alkhoe

ESOL Teachers

Bernadette Steiert
Dinaz Bomanji
Elizabeth Morrell
Faarid Hashim Patel
Flora Jacobs
Helen Halpern
Helen Stone
Helen Wiseman
Jenna Dean
Linda Carey
Liz Johnson
Marth Kontoghiorgha
Orna Almagor
Ros Staines
Ruth Kitching
Kholoud Porter
Shelly Fennell
Sima Rutherford
Simon Tabbush
Uliana Yaskiv

Legal Advisor

PegahTamkinfard

Gardening

Mohammad Bahmaninejad Fard
Gulseka Satar
Mahjabeen Saboor
Mozghan Parsapour
Mastura Noorallam
Shafiq Valizada
Mahnaz Pedram

Women's Group

Tanya Novick
Kathy Lichman
Anhita Mollajan
Fouzia Arouche
Mozghan Parsapour
Mastura Noorallam
Jennifer Yvonne Albert
Laura Rojan Akturan
Elsa Shamsh
Mahnaz Pedram
Delavar Haidary
Gulseka Satar
Golafshan Karami
Fariba Raffie

Interpreters

Alaa Alibrahim
Moussa Ahmad Diabi
Fatemeh Mir Sadeghi
Molouk Vakili
Mohammad Hussein Idris Abbaker
Mohammad Said
Farhad Farewar
Mohsen Sanjaghi

Mums and Tot's Group

Freshta Ahmadi
Mozghan Parsapour

Youth Work

Maria Pitsini
Reza Nourmand
Mohsen Sanjaghi
Sheku Kamara
Sara Cohen

Volunteer Business Administrator

Inese Luse

Finance Administrator

Fahimeh Afshinrad

BARNET REFUGEE SERVICE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31st March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:				
Donations and legacies	477,617	402,778	880,395	1,005,089
Investments	10,671	-	10,671	2,630
Other	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	488,288	402,778	891,066	1,007,719
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Charitable activities	432,790	414,837	847,627	979,150
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	432,790	414,837	847,627	979,150
Net income	55,498	(12,059)	43,439	28,569
Transfer between funds	(437)	437	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	55,061	(11,622)	43,439	28,569
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:				
TOTAL FUNDS AT 1 APRIL 2023	358,270	240,090	598,360	569,791
TOTAL FUNDS AT 31 MARCH 2024	£ 413,331	£ 228,468	£ 641,799	£ 598,360

Financial Information



Elif Kayikci
Finance Manager

The above statement has been extracted from the accounts prepared by Knoxcropper and were approved by the Trustees of Barnet Refugee Service in November 2024.

The full report will be submitted to the Charities Commission and to the Companies House. Copies of full report can be obtained from the Chief Executive Officer of Barnet Refugee Service.

Geetha Saba-Nathan
Treasurer

Thank you to our Partners and Collaborators 2023-24

5E	ChickenShed	IHRC Legal	Schools and Early Years, Family Services, Barnet
Advice UK	Child Poverty Action Group	Inclusion Barnet	Screen Share UK
Afghan Association Paiwand	Childs Hill Primary School	International Gospel Church	Sebby's corner
Age Concern	Chipping Barnet/ The Trussell Trust Food Bank	Iyengar Yoga Group	Shrimad Rajchandra Love & Care
Age UK Barnet	Churches Together	Jewish Volunteering Network	Shubbak Festival
Alyth	Citizens Advice	Julia & Rana Solicitors	Social prescribers
Anglia Ruskin University	Citizens Advice Barnet	Kew Gardens Community Access Scheme	Solace Women's Aid
Art Against Knives	Citizens UK	King Alfred School	St John's United Reformed Church New Barnet
Artsdepot	City and Islington College	King's College London	St Mary at Finchley
Association of Afghan Healthcare Professionals -UK	Claremont High School	Kol Nefesh Masorti Synagogue	St Mungo's
Association of Asian Muslims of North London- Khawateen	Clear Voice Translations	Lawstop	St Raphael's Family Well-Being Centre
Atta & Co Solicitors	Clearsprings Ready Homes	LDS Charities Friendship Centre	St. Mary's University
BACE	CNWL Talking Therapies Service Brent	Let's Talk IAPT	The Association of Jewish Refugees
Barnet Social Prescribing Service	Colindale Communities Trust	Little village	The Bernard Charitable Trust
Barnet 0-19 Early Help Service, Family, and Children's Services	Colindale Food Bank	London Faith and Belief	The Betty Messenger Foundation
Barnet Bulldogs	Colindale Library	London Youth	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Barnet Citizens Advice	College of Northwest London	Masorti Judaism UK	The City College
Barnet Council	Community Barnet	Meeting Point	The Everglade Medical Practice
Barnet East Locality Team	Community Focus (ARTiculate)	Mercy Mission	The Ex-Detainee Project
Barnet Education and Learning Service	Community Techaid	Meridian Wellbeing	The Faith & Belief Forum
Barnet Federated GPs	Copthall School	Metropolitan Police	The Flying Seagull Project
Barnet Healthwatch	Coram	Middlesex University	The Garden Trust
Barnet Homes	Crisis in Brent	Migrant Help	The Hyde Children's Centre
Barnet Libraries	Dahlia Project	Migrant Voice	The Hyde School
Barnet Mencap	Delivery Unit	Mind in Barnet	The Hygiene Bank Barnet
Barnet Multi Faith Forum	Dispensaries Francais	Mitzvah Day and Hampstead Garden Suburb	The Mosaic Room
Barnet Recovery Centre	Doctors of the World	National Zakat Foundation	The Network
Barnet Refugee Welcome Board	Dr Azim and Partners	Nawaal Benevolence Fund	The Northern Ireland Education Authority
Barnet Social Prescribing Services	Duncan Lewis Solicitors	Never Such Innocence	The PhotoVoice Project
Barnet Social Services	Early Help HUB (West) Family Services	New North London Synagogue	The Sacred Heart Church Mill Hill
Barnet Southgate college	Early Help HUB(South), Family and Children's Services	NHS Foundation Trust	The Tavistock & Portman NHS
Barnet volunteering	ECPAT UK	Nisa-Nashim	The Trussell Trust
Barnet volunteering	Edgware Community Hospital (sexual health clinic)	NNLS	Trace Charitable Trust
Barnet Wellbeing Hub	Finchley Progressive Synagogue	North Locality Link Worker	Transitions Living
Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	Finchley Reform Synagogue	North London Hospice	Trinity Church Colindale
BBC Children In Need	Foundation Trust	Northwestern Reform Synagogue	Trinity Church North Finchley
Better World Charity	Freedom from Torture	Onwards and Upwards (Leaving Care Team)	Turning Point
BOLOH	Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group	Paiwand	UCL Respond Team
BOOST	Give Together	Persian Advice Bureau	United Synagogue
Bore Place	GlaxoSmithKline	Personal Improvement Ltd	University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Bread n Butter	Go Live Theatre	Project Seventeen	University of Oxford
Breaking Barriers	Good for Goods	Ramfel	Victim Support
Brent Council	Greater London Authority (GLA)	Red Cross	Vodafone UK
British Red Cross	GroundWork London	Refugee Action	Volunteering Barnet
Brookes	Haringey Council	Refugee Council	Waging Peace
Brunel University	Helen Bamber Foundation	Refugee Support Network	Waterloo counselling
Cambridge University	Hendon Jobcentre	Roundhouse	Watling Park School
Camden Council	Hendon School	Royal Free Charity	Wessex Gardens Primary School
Camden Social Services	Hestia	Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust	West Hendon Community Hub
Care4Calais	Homeless Action Barnet	Ruth Hayman Trust	West London Welcome
Central and Northwest London NHS	Home-Start Barnet, Brent, Enfield & Harrow	Sacred Heart & Mary Immaculate R C Church	Westminster LAC & Leaving Care Service
Centre Point	Home-Start Barnet, Brent, Enfield & Harrow	Salvation Army	Yoga Headspace
CGL	Hopscotch	Samafal	Young Barnet Foundation
Change Grow Live	iAspire Care	Saracens Sport Foundation	Young Roots



Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

•Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights•

