

HERTS WELCOMES
REFUGEES

Evaluation Report: Evidence of Impact

2023



Table of Contents

S T I L L L I N G S

01.

Introduction

02.

Infographics

03.

Case Studies

04.

Evaluations

05.

Video of activities/audio of
asylum seeker

06.

Partners

In order to demonstrate the impact we make with our service users (we call them refugee partners), we have collated some different types of evidence in this report.

In the first section, we use infographics to summarise some of our key data and give the reader a sense of the amount of support we offer to both Refugees and Asylum Seekers across Hertfordshire. Please note these figures are indicative only as they change regularly.

The second section includes a range of case studies, where we have spoken to our volunteers and the refugee partners on a range of topics to get their views and record their experiences. These demonstrate evidence against our agreed outcomes. We have not been able to include photos in all case studies as some people are concerned with their image being visible.

In the third section, we have included four evaluations using a range of methodologies. It is worth noting that gathering evidence from the asylum seekers group is challenging due to their limited English.

As an overview summary in section 4 we have included a video which gives a flavour of our work set against our outcomes.

NON
THE
D
O
R
THE
N
I



VOLUNTEERS/REFUGEES



INCREASED
NO OF
VOLUNTEERS




RESETTLED REFUGEES
SUPPORTED




RESETTLED FAMILIES
SUPPORTED




DISPERSED
ASYLUM SEEKER
FAMILIES

Resettled refugee:
someone with refugee
status who is living
permanently in UK

Dispersed asylum seekers:
asylum seekers living in self-
catered accommodation
while their claims for asylum
are assessed, usually
previously in contingency
hotel accommodation





EVACUEES/ASYLUM SEEKERS IN HOTELS



INCREASE IN
NUMBER OF
HOTELS
SUPPORTED



ASYLUM SEEKERS IN
HOTELS



AFGHAN EVACUEES
CURRENTLY
SUPPORTED IN HOTEL
(230 SINCE AUGUST
2021)



HOMWORK
CLUBS



CHILDREN WHO HAVE
RECEIVED SCHOOL
UNIFORMS



CHILDREN WHO HAVE
RECEIVED SCHOOL
SHOES

The status of **Afghan refugees** is officially evacuee rather than refugee; Afghan evacuees have different entitlements to refugees under other resettlement schemes



LANGUAGE SUPPORT VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Language support
includes ESOL, drop-ins
and conversation

13.5



WEEKLY LANGUAGE
SUPPORT HOURS
FOR ASYLUM
SEEKERS

8



WEEKLY LANGUAGE
SUPPORT FOR
AFGHAN EVACUEES

16



TRAINING SESSIONS
DELIVERED FOR
VOLUNTEERS

10+



AVERAGE ATTENDANCE
AT TRAINING SESSIONS
FOR VOLUNTEERS

45



COMPLETED GLOBAL
ENGLISH COURSE

INFOGRAPHICS



WELLBEING



ASYLUM SEEKERS
WEEKLY DROP-IN
SESSIONS



SIM CARDS
DISTRIBUTED

PHONES
DISTRIBUTED



FREE SHOPS



BIKES REPAIRED
AND DELIVERED



XMAS BOXES

EASTER EGGS



VOLUNTEER ROLES

We have over 150 volunteers who fulfil a variety of roles:

Area convenors: we currently have 14 area convenors who work in conjunction with the volunteer coordinator to support our volunteers and work with refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

Supporting refugees: we have 66 volunteers who primarily support refugee families on a one to one basis along with asylum seekers living in dispersed accommodation.

Support in hotels: we have 46 volunteers who spend most of the HWR time assisting asylum seekers and Afghan evacuees at hotels across Hertfordshire. Many of them provide other support for HWR.

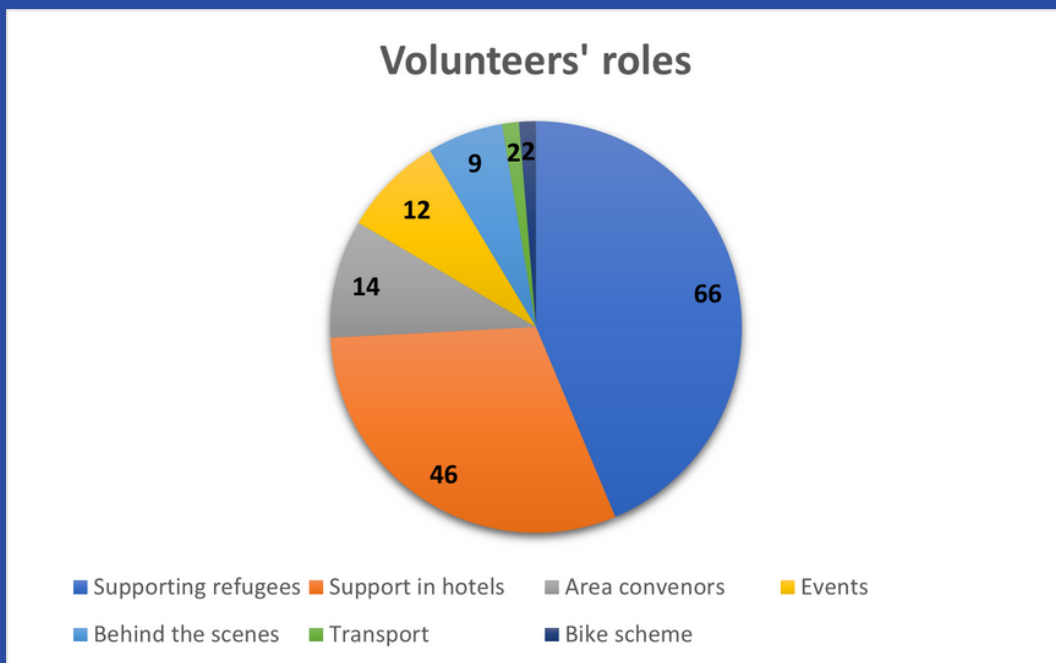
Events: we have 12 volunteers who we can call upon to help with events such as trips to the zoo, family picnics, etc.

Transport: we have 2 volunteers dedicated to transporting furniture for refugee families.

Bike scheme: 2 volunteers run our bike scheme. One is the bike coordinator who oversees the project (to deliver 100 bikes to those in need). He does bicycle maintenance and sources bikes. He is assisted by a volunteer who delivers the bikes.

Behind the scenes: 9 volunteers have a predominantly non-client facing role including our Treasurer, our IT Support Manager, our Bid Writer, and volunteers who support impact assessment and communications. Some of them also volunteer with our refugee and asylum seeker partners.

The chart below shows the number of volunteers in each role:



These case studies illustrate the experiences of both our volunteers and partners.

We have grouped them by outcomes.

CASE STUDIES

OUTCOME - SUPPORTING SOCIAL NETWORKS:

SAHAR, RESETTLED REFUGEE

Sahar and her husband arrived in England four years ago with their three children and speaking no English. After meeting her volunteer from Herts Welcomes Refugees she was supported in all aspects of life.

Sahar said, “My volunteer Veronica, is an amazing women and she is gorgeous and helpful. I love her.”

Sahar says that Veronica helped her with shopping, the doctor, schools, learning about the culture in the UK and learning to drive. She attended college to learn English four days a week for two years and her HWR volunteer helped once a week with English and with her other needs. The children were also helped by HWR with school uniforms and their English.

Now, because of the help Sahar herself received from HWR, she welcomes and assists new refugee families when they arrive. For example, in January 2023, when a new family arrived in Letchworth, she arranged a welcome party with traditional food and 30 other local refugees attended. Sahar has also organised picnics in the park and meetings at refugees’ homes. She is seen as a local community leader for refugees, makes sure that new arrivals are visited frequently at home to help and share knowledge of how to adapt to their new life in the UK.




Picnic meal in the park for refugees

Most recently, at Eid, Sahar helped to organise a meal for families from Letchworth and Stevenage to celebrate the festival.

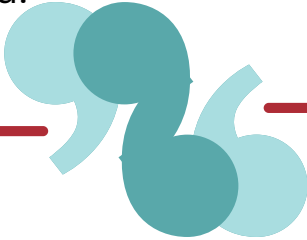
Veronica from HWR said “Sahar galvanises the local families to support new arrivals who are often shell shocked when they arrive. Sahar helps these families to feel supported. Not only is she able to help with practical matters, such as where to buy the appropriate food and sorting out SIM cards, but more importantly she can give emotional support and the reassurance that this period of shock and adjustment will pass, which HWR volunteers cannot give in the same way”.

Sahar said “I am not a community leader; we are all sisters”.


CASE STUDIES



Sahar galvanises the local families to support new arrivals who are often shell shocked when they arrive. Sahar helps these families to feel supported.



.....she can give emotional support and the reassurance that this period of shock and adjustment will pass



OUTCOME -LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER:

RESETTLED SYRIAN REFUGEES TRAINING AS DOULAS

CASE STUDIES

Najah and Arwa and their families have been supported by Herts Welcomes Refugees for a number of years since their arrival in St Albans. Support has included help with English and with their children including applications for university and college.

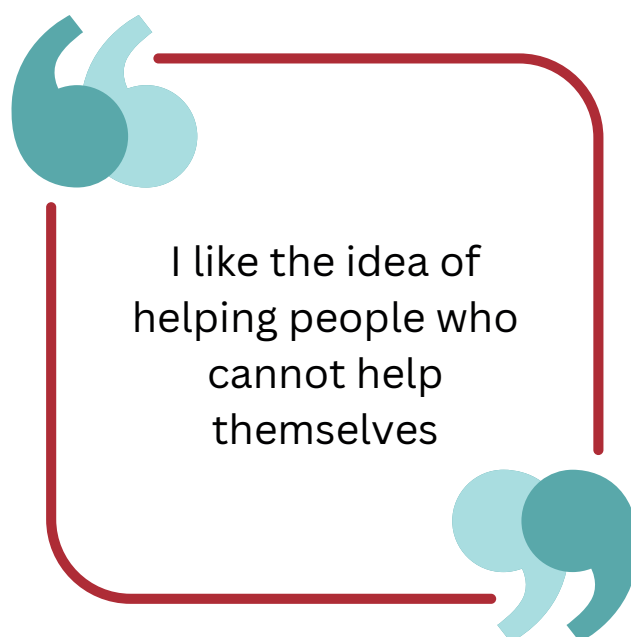
Both women have recently completed extensive training as doulas as part of the Doulas Without Borders programme. This role was suggested to them by a volunteer at Herts Welcomes Refugees and both women were interested to get involved in helping other refugees and use the opportunity to develop themselves.

Najah explained “I was interested in taking the training, as I had experienced difficulties when I had one of my children in the UK and was not able to understand what was being said to me.”

Arwa said “I like the idea of helping people who cannot help themselves.”



Najah and Arwa sharing their experiences at the HWR AGM 2023

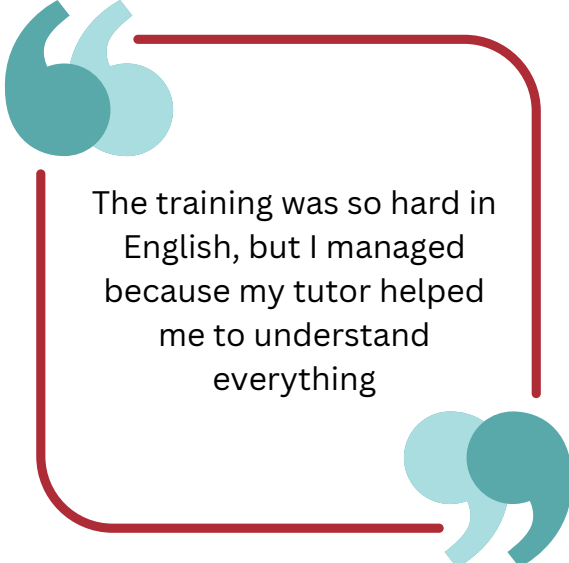


I like the idea of helping people who cannot help themselves


Before the Doula training, Najah and Arwa took part in the Mother Tongue programme. This programme was developed in direct response to support women with refugee status who are going through their entire maternity care experience without language support. This lack of shared language contributes to the disparity in survival rates between women during the childbearing year. The training consists of explaining the role of a Doula in Arabic, the role of the Doula for Refugees in English and a course about supporting mothers to breastfeed.

A Doula ensures pregnant women and people receive continuity of care at a life-changing and potentially vulnerable time. Doulas provide nurture and education towards informed decision making, signposts to services and offer 'on the ground' companionship. The Doula service can greatly assist in a more positive experience of childbirth and early bonding.

Both Najah and Arwa have completed their Mother Tongue and Doula training and are listed on the Mother Tongue Directory and both are excited to be put in touch with their first pregnant woman.



The training was so hard in English, but I managed because my tutor helped me to understand everything



It was difficult training because of the English, but enjoyable and I learnt a lot of new vocabulary and information about the health service in the UK

OUTCOME - REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION:

REUNITING ASYLUM SEEKERS

Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) volunteers have worked with partner agency Migrant Help to support the reunification of family groups who are separated from their family members.

A 23 year old Somali woman who had been living all alone at a hotel in Welwyn Garden City for 16 months, suffering with severe mental health issues and loneliness has recently been reunited with her sisters who are in Ireland.



In another instance a woman and her two children were living in a Welwyn hotel, while her husband was in South London. The impact of this separation for the family was immense. While the husband tried to visit as often as he could, the whole family was very distressed. HWR again working with Migrant Help supported the reunion of this family.

In a third case, there was an Eritrean woman at the hotel in Welwyn who had been living alone while her husband was at another hotel; they were separated for over a year. The woman's mental health was rapidly deteriorating. Again, with Migrant Help, HWR reunited the couple and she was moved to his hotel. Although they had no children, the reunification boosted her spirits and they can now rely on each other for support.

CASE STUDIES

Reunions make a real difference to people's mental health

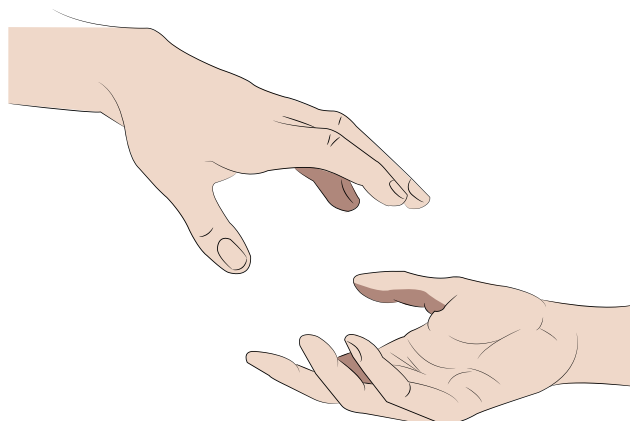
OUTCOME - REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION:

RESETTLED REFUGEE GETTING INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING OTHERS.

Mrs X arrived in England in 2021, with her family from Afghanistan. They were accommodated in a hotel in Hemel Hempstead. Life in the hotel was very hard as Mrs X could speak very little English. She said she could just about say 'hello' and ask 'how are you?'. She reported to feel very traumatised after suddenly leaving her country, her family and friends and to find herself in a strange and unfamiliar country.

At that time there were no classes in the hotel where the family was accommodated, and Mrs X asked the Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) volunteers who visited the hotel, if these could be arranged as the families needed to learn English and there was nothing to do all day in the hotel. HWR responded and arranged classes three times a week and Mrs X attended and learnt English. Mrs X's volunteers also helped her children, including filling in school application forms and obtaining school uniforms.

Mrs X said of her HWR volunteers that "they gave her hope to find her way in this new country" and added "there was no limits to what her volunteers would do for her and her family".



Mrs X was provided with a house after 6 months and again she reports her volunteers helped with everything, including accessing and building furniture, getting paint to decorate the house and taking her to the shops to learn how to use them and to start her new life. Mrs X reports the charity took her family and others on wonderful trips including to the zoo and Waddeson Manor and gardens. She said this was fantastic and that she thoroughly enjoyed these trips. The family was also taken, along with others from the hotel, to a park in Luton to celebrate Eid with other families; she liked feeling part of a wider Muslim community.

Reflecting back after being in England for 2 years, Mrs X recognises how important it was to her and her family, to have the support from Herts Welcomes Refugees upon arrival in this country. She says she can see how good people can help others during very tough times.

In order to help others, Mrs X now provides weekly support to Farsi speaking asylum seekers in order to assist with them with their asylum applications. She says “to give back, is a good feeling”.



OUTCOME - IMPROVING WELL BEING:

KITE FLYING WITH AFGHAN REFUGEES BIKES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Supporting people to get out into the local community and meet new people is a great way of improving health and well being. For asylum seekers living in hotels it is vital to provide activities to support mental well being, as they are unable to work and have very little to occupy their time. For refugee families, these social activities are helpful to support integration and developing their English language skills. HWR volunteers have organised a range of activities to support asylum seekers and refugees over the last year.

In Dacorum during August 2022, 76 Afghans took part in a programme of activities; the first involved making kites with children working alongside volunteers. After this activity, a trip was arranged with the Afghan refugees and some of the resettled families to Dunstable Downs to fly their kites for the Fly With Me Festival. This international festival celebrated Afghan culture and solidarity.

CASE STUDIES



Volunteers making the kites



Flying the kites on the Downs

One volunteer remarked “it was such a privilege to be there at the kite flying and also the kite making. I so enjoyed working alongside the children”. Another said “the ratio of volunteers to attendees at the event, meant we could really get to know the asylum seekers as individuals and give them time”.

Another project to support mental health and well-being is our bike scheme. This helps refugees and asylum seeker to become mobile and so allows them to access local services, schools and colleges and also to visit friends. Cycling also has many well documented health benefits. Since June 22, we have collected, repaired and distributed 80 bikes, plus safety equipment, lights and locks to refugees and asylum seekers across Hertfordshire and we continued to support both groups with repairs and ongoing maintenance. The majority of recipients were from Syria and Afghanistan but others came from an increasingly diverse range of countries, including Ukraine, Russia, Iran and the Democratic Republic of Congo. At least ten of the school aged children are regularly using their bikes to get to school. Fifteen adults are using their bikes to get to college course and four are using their to get to work.

Our bike scheme coordinator, Andy, says ‘The bikes, in addition to providing exercise, are frequently the recipients’ main (only) means of transport and (are) used to go to school/college, to access social and education activities (thereby) preventing isolation and enabling a number of refugees to engage in volunteering in the wider community’.



asylum seekers and bikes

my father was sick and the bikes were the only entertainment we had and it was horrible without the bikes

Quote from young asylum seeker living in a hotel

OUTCOME - IMPROVING WELL BEING

COOKERY PROJECTS FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Food is an important cultural experience and Herts Welcomes Refugees supports a number of food based activities including celebrating festivals, cooking clubs and lunch clubs. Here are a number of recent examples which have been delivered by HWR volunteers and the resettled Syrian and Afghan families.

Celebrating Eid in April 2023

There was a range of activities organised for Muslims in hotels and hostels. For example food was jointly cooked to celebrate the festival by a number of the resettled families. Five Syrian families, four of whom have been supported by HWR, cooked Iftar meals for 50 people, including two families, at a local hotel. The asylum seekers said “they were so happy to break their fast with fresh food”.



Food from Iftar meal

Cook and eat sessions

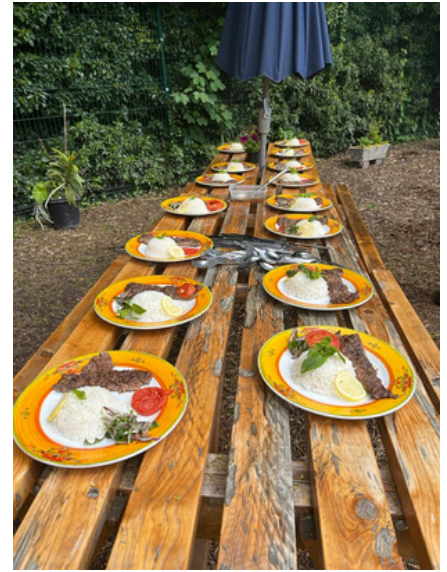
Asylum seekers in many of the hotels and hostels in the county have only a narrow choice of foods as their food is pre prepared off site and limited. In many settings, the asylum seekers have to eat their meals in their bedrooms as there isn't a dining room. Many find this experience very difficult and challenging. They miss familiar foods and the act of eating a meal together. The ability to share food with others and cook familiar foods is a very powerful positive experience. Working in partnership with Mind, cook and eat sessions are being delivered with asylum seekers. The aim of the partnership is to promote mental health and well being.

There is a cooking club in Welwyn Garden City once every six weeks with 4-6 residents from the hotel meeting in a local church hall or in volunteers' homes. The sessions include women from a range of nationalities and this provides a good opportunity to get to know each other and build positive relationships.



Welwyn cooking club

Area Convenor Joyce says “We find that the cooking sessions provide a relaxed atmosphere where most feel very comfortable and happy doing what they love. A lot of casual, lovely conversations then ensue in the course of cooking. We talk to them about where they learned how to cook or who taught them or whose recipe they are cooking etc. It helps us to get to know them in a low pressure, relaxed atmosphere while they are busy cooking and they are able to express themselves in a different way. We feel how proud our cooks are by the end of the session when they have finished making their dish. They all seem to take great care in presenting it in a beautiful way. Sometimes they have brought the dishes back to the hotel and shared it with their family. We have also had sessions where the food is shared with the volunteers who are there supporting. It makes for a nice, shared meal in a very relaxed, happy environment outside the hotel and facilitates more relaxed conversation”.



shared meal cooked by asylum seekers

In Hemel Hempstead, feedback from the husband of a pregnant asylum seeker and is suffering with morning sickness was, “Hi Mrs Alison, I wanted to thank you, my dear sister, yesterday you took my wife with you for lunch and fun and she is much better and in a good mood”.

Lunch clubs

The Herts Welcomes Refugees East Herts Family Group meets twice a month to socialise and share food brought from home. Usually about 14 people, volunteers, partners with families and single people attend. It has grown from being a women's group to include men, parents and their children along with single refugees and asylum seekers. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other and their partners. From time to time there is an activity or a speaker to help with integration or understanding life in Britain, and also to have fun – for example, making Christmas decorations, singing, or hearing a speaker from Citizens Advice explain their service.



lunch club

Having this primarily social event regularly benefits our partners who have few opportunities to go out

Kate, the Area Convenor, says "I find the Lunch Group rewarding and quite challenging. Having this primarily social event regularly benefits our partners who have few opportunities to go out, the dispersed asylum seekers, the mothers with small children and the older couples. The volunteers also can enjoy meeting the partners and each other. And useful information is shared though it can be difficult to get people to pay attention. The feedback has all been positive - except for an older lady who once complained that she did not want to talk to children!"

Welcoming new arrivals

To welcome new Afghan arrivals into the local area, a number of meals for Afghan families have been organised funded by HWR and prepared in homes. The women cook familiar food and are supported in the logistics by HWR volunteers.

Feedback from the participants:

“Thanks for your supporting to buying some food to share with all”

“We had many delicious foods after a long time and I visited some new friends and families whom I just saw some of them in online classes. It helped me to find more families and friends around me and know more about them. I met some friends after long time and it had a very good feeling. I loved the welcoming, caring and hospitality of the people. They were really friendly, lovely and kind. I enjoyed being there and speaking to them”

Veronica, Area Convenor for Stevenage and Letchworth, says “It’s so lovely to see new arrivals being welcomed into the area and making new friends”.



Welcome meal

OUTCOME - HELPING WITH EDUCATION:

SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS INTO COLLEGE

Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) have helped 28 asylum seekers to access college courses at the local College of Further Education in Hemel Hempstead during this academic year. Primarily the students wish to study ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses, which are a stepping stone to training. Adult asylum seekers can access college once they have been in the country for six months but it can be difficult for them, particularly for those with little or no English, to find out what courses are available, where and how the assessment process works.

In Hemel Hempstead, one volunteer identified this need after being approached by an asylum seeker to help her go to college to study ESOL. The student attended the ESOL class at a local church which runs for an hour once a week. The volunteer liaised with the local college, and helped with her application process and the assessment. In addition, as the asylum seeker was a single parent, the volunteer was also able to arrange her to get her free 15 hours of childcare to enable her to attend college.



ESOL class group in January 2023, some of whom went on to attend the local college

Since this first student in September 2022, the work has expanded and a further 27 asylum seekers have been supported to ensure they can navigate the application process, undertake their assessment and then start their learning.

Volunteers supported the students in the assessment process by physically attending the college with the students and providing them with encouragement and support.

Again, as is common in this cohort of asylum seekers, a large number of those who were supported into college and enrolled on courses, have since been moved to other parts of the country. Because the support offered by HWR was positive, several asylum seekers have made contact with the HWR volunteer to help them again in their new location to enrol for college courses.

In particular, support has been offered to three young men aged 16-19 years who are attending a full time course at college which focuses on English, maths and IT. These students are just completing their courses.



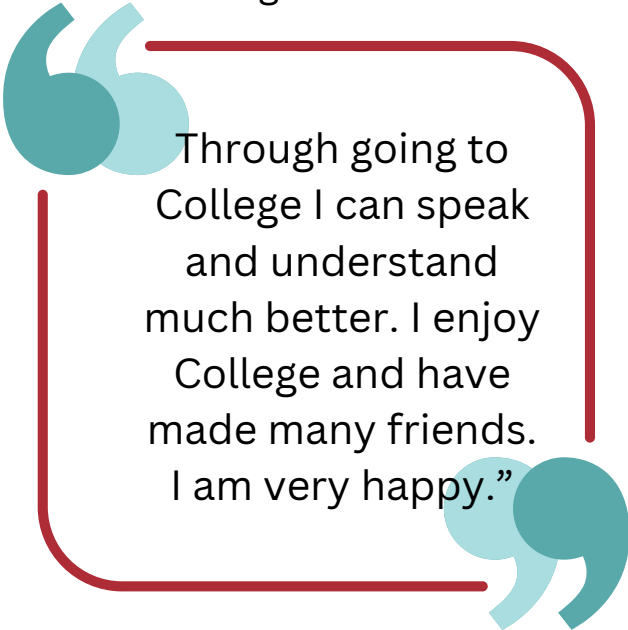
Daniel with HWR Volunteers Marianne and Alison

Marianne, the volunteer who started this support programme for the asylum seekers, said “It is so heart-warming to see the asylum seekers enrolling in college courses and their pleasure and excitement in doing so.” She added “I was so pleased to hear from some of those asylum seekers who had been moved and were asking for help to enrol for a college course in their new location.”

This feedback is from Daniel, who is just completing his full time course at West Herts College:

“I have just taken an ESOL Pre Entry level 1 course and completed my exams this week. I don't have the results yet but I hope to move to level 2 in the autumn. I want to continue with computing and hope to work in programming eventually. Through going to College I can speak and understand much better. Communication is now possible. I enjoy College and have made many friends. I am very happy.”

As a result of the work of HWR, the local college, is now more prepared to welcome asylum seekers in the new academic year and will be organising an induction session to make the application process and adjustment to college easier.



Through going to College I can speak and understand much better. I enjoy College and have made many friends. I am very happy.”

OUTCOME - HELPING WITH EDUCATION:

ENGLISH FOR RESETTLED REFUGEE

Amira, along with her husband and two children, arrived in England seven years ago from Syria, speaking only Arabic. She says she could not even say her name. Today, Amira is a confident English speaker, who now has four children and has learnt to drive. All her children attend school and Amira herself is looking for work.

Amira was supported by Herts Welcomes Refugees by three volunteers. As Amira had very young children she could not attend the local college to learn English, and so Judy, a specialist ESOL tutor, met Amira once a week to help her learn English.

Two other volunteers, Sobia and Nayla, came for two hours every week to help her with English conversation, and to help her understand the culture and to offer support with everyday things, such as health appointments, letters from the children's schools and bills. and so the volunteers came to her home to help her.



Amira also talks of the help Sobia and Nailor provided during her pregnancies and labour, and describes them as “angels as I found everything so hard.” They helped Amira with her health appointments and during labour by staying and supporting her, giving her massages and support throughout.

Amira says that she could not have managed without the help of her volunteers. She said “It’s really hard when you cannot speak the language and you have no family around you to help.” She added, “The volunteers became like my family and helped me”.

Judy, the ESOL volunteer said, “Amira has been an amazing student, from having no English at all, she has worked very hard and now is a confident English speaker.”

Amira started college in September 2022, but has recently left to find work.



OUTCOME - HELPING WITH EDUCATION:

SUPPORT FOR RESETTLED STUDENT

Mariam was thirteen years old when she left Syria with her family. When they first arrived in Hertfordshire, the family felt very isolated. None of them spoke English and they were overwhelmed. “We didn’t know how to use the bus. We didn’t know how to go to town or the shops to get what we needed,” Mariam recalled. Additionally, Mariam’s older brother had heart problems. “It’s one of the main reasons why we came to the UK, because my brother needed an operation,” she said.



Mariam learned English by speaking with older people and attending school. She worked really hard to listen and communicate with people. When she needed help with her GCSEs, Herts Welcomes Refugees helped her to get a tutor. “When we needed help,” Mariam said “Herts Welcomes Refugees was there.”

Today Mariam is studying Biomedical Sciences at Westminster University. She hopes to become a cardiologist or a surgeon because of her older brother’s heart problem. “I’ve been with him through his treatment and surgery so I know quite a lot about the heart and it really interests me,” she said. Mariam hopes to pass her driving test in January. With the support of Herts Welcomes Refugees, she recently earned a qualification as an interpreter so she can work remotely while attending university.

“The first year [in the UK] was so hard in so many ways,” Mariam said. “But you have to be patient and work hard. If I didn’t work hard, I wouldn’t be at university right now.”

Mariam has just completed an interpreting course and can now provide official interpreting services at hospital. She says “Engaging in this work has given me valuable opportunities to expand my medical knowledge and ability to interact with patients.” Mariam wishes to study medicine once she completes her Biomedical Sciences degree.

Mariam and her family have submitted their applications for British citizenship and are currently waiting to hear.

EVALUATION

We have undertaken a range of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation to gather evidence of our impact.

SURVEY TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF OUR SERVICES ON OUR REFUGEE PARTNERS

OUTCOMES: DEVELOPING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS, INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

We have used an online Google survey methodology to measure the impact of our services over time. In this survey the time difference is 6 months.

Two surveys were developed one for the resettled families and one for the asylum seekers in three of the hotels we work with.

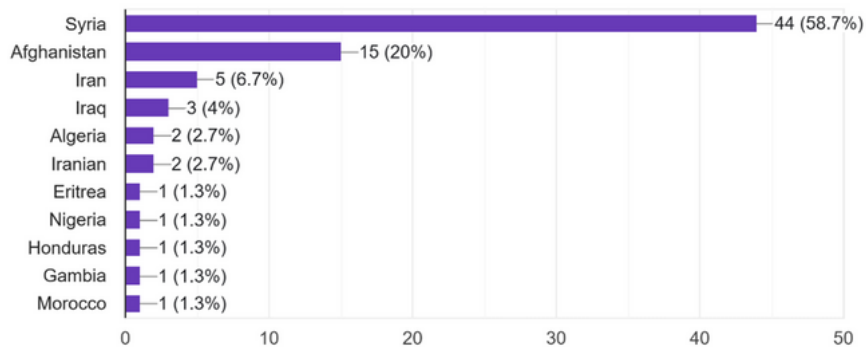
The three measures chosen for the surveys represent some of the main outcomes of the Charity.

EVALUATION

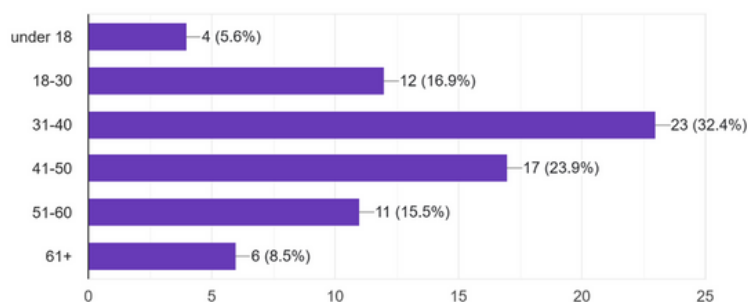
Resettled families. This survey was sent to the volunteers to complete with their partners. The response rate was 77. This was from 70 of the 107 families as some families had more than one person being supported in the family. This was a response rate of 65% a very good response. It is also important to consider the findings with the following caveats:

- Some families have lived here for over 5 years so the change over the last 6 months might not be very significant.
- Some of the refugees we support are elderly with complex health conditions which have affected their ability to get involved with their local community. However, their volunteer has provided an essential lifeline to improving their overall well-being in ways this survey cannot capture.
- Some of the refugees have had babies recently and due to their cultural background their involvement with the local community is limited at this stage.
- Some families have higher language levels and greater familiarity with British culture and do not need the same sort of support as outlined by this survey but they have been supported in other ways.

Country of origin / nationality
75 responses



Age:
71 responses

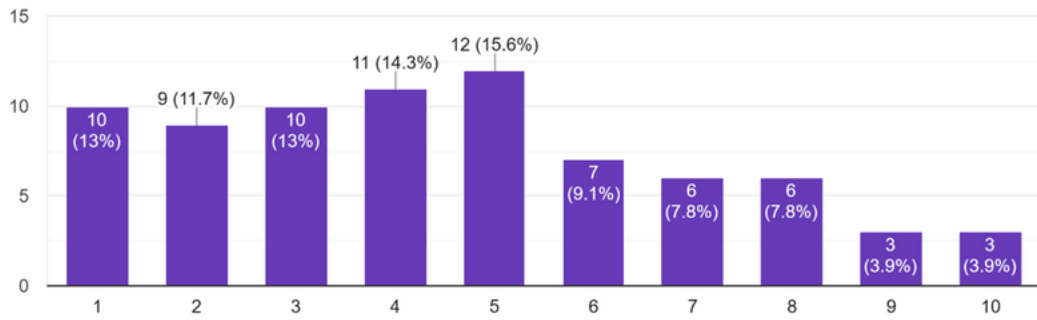


1. Confidence in English communication

To assess the value of the volunteers in supporting the development of English the resettled families were asked about their confidence in communicating in June 2023 compared to 6 months earlier. The graphs below demonstrate a shift towards more confidence as reported by the partner.

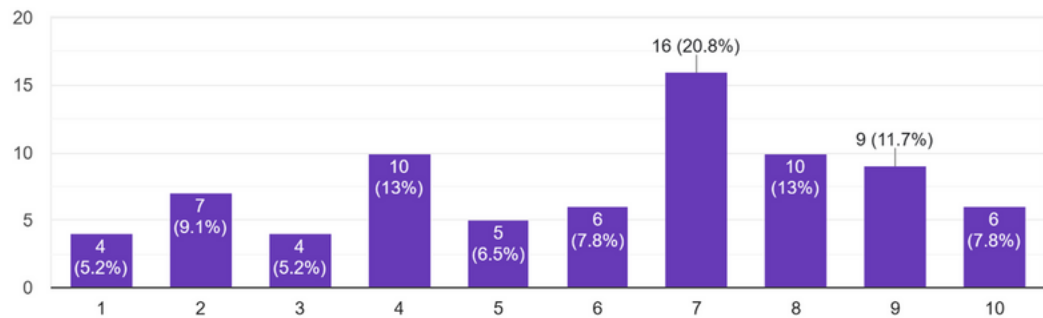
How confident did you feel communicating in English 6 months ago? 1 = not at all confident, 10 = extremely confident

77 responses



How confident do you feel communicating in English NOW? 1 = not at all confident, 10 = extremely confident

77 responses

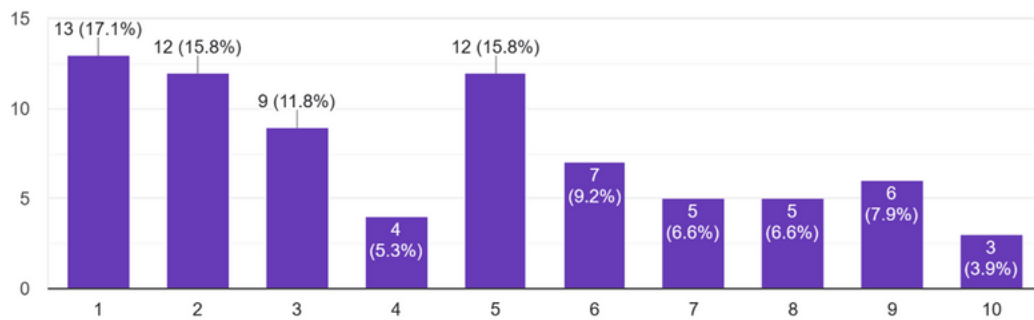


2. Integration into the community and building confidence.

Supporting our partners to get involved in local community life supports the opportunities to learn English but also settle into their new life in the UK. The charity supports this through a range of activities including volunteering, trips to the library, supporting attendance at meetings, shopping trips etc. The graphs below shows a shift towards more involvement in activities by the partners.

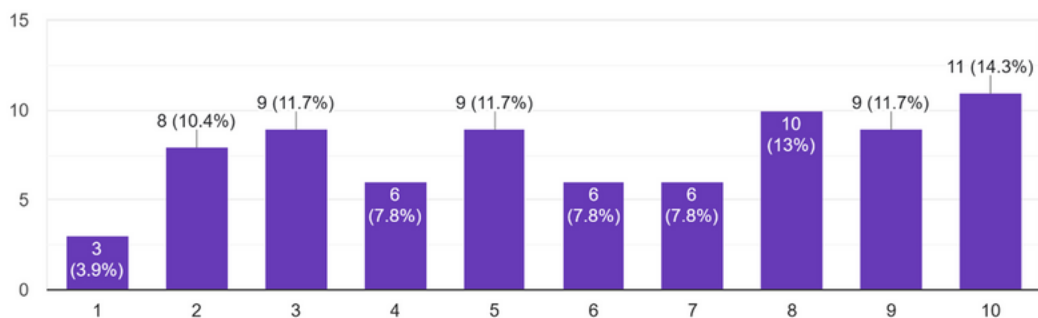
How involved were you with English speaking people 6 months ago? For example: volunteering, working, socialising. 1 = Not at all involved, 10 = Every day

76 responses



How involved are you with English speaking people NOW? For example: volunteering, working, socialising. 1 = Not at all involved, 10 = Every day

77 responses

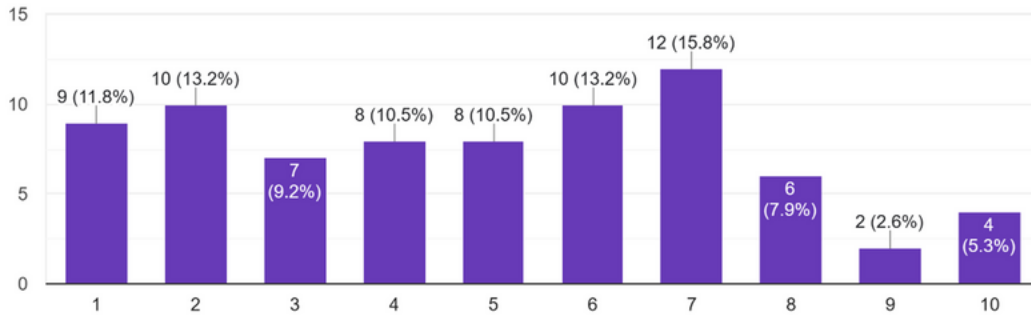


3. Reducing social isolation

In a similar way to above we are supporting our partners to get involved and ensure they are not isolated. This measure also demonstrates mental well-being. The graphs also demonstrate a movement to the right showing less isolation.

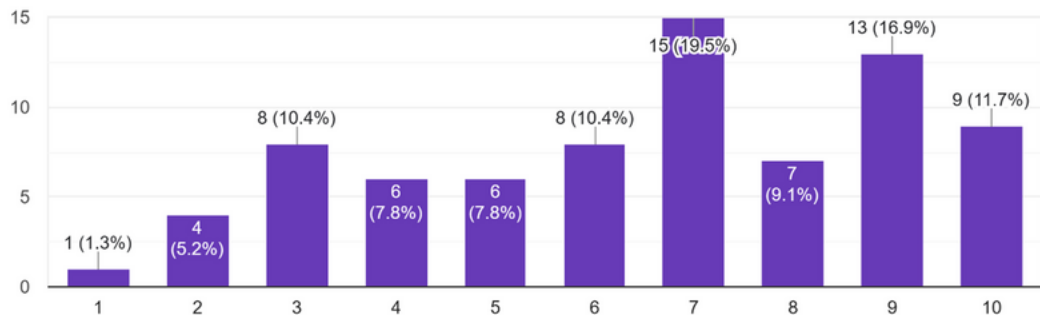
How isolated and lonely did you feel 6 months ago? 1 = very isolated and lonely, 10 = not at all isolated or lonely

76 responses



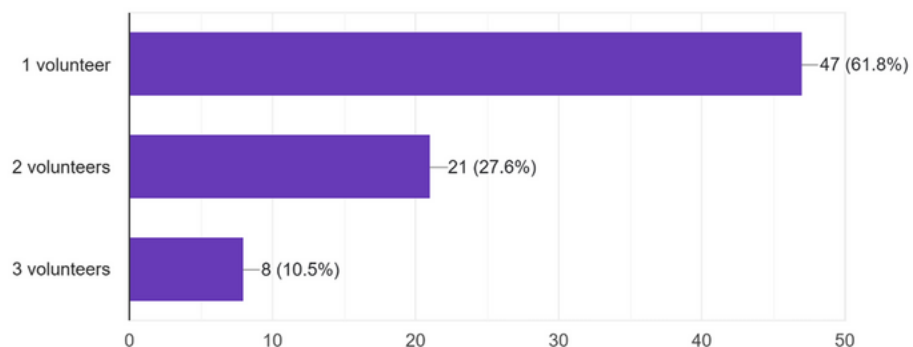
How isolated and lonely do you feel NOW? 1 = very isolated and lonely, 10 = not at all isolated or lonely

77 responses



How many HWR volunteers do you have?

76 responses



Asylum Seekers

The survey was administered by volunteers at three of the asylum seekers hotel and was completed by 49 people.

This is just a small proportion of the number of asylum seekers who are supported by HWR.

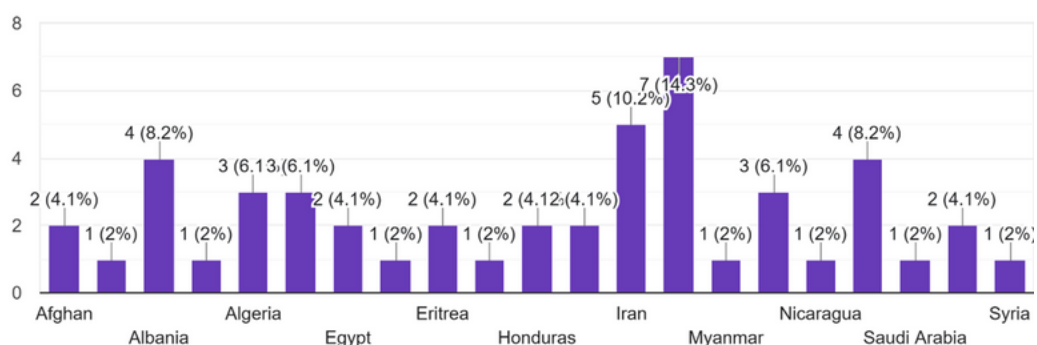
It is important to note that for some of the asylum seekers the level of English language is low and this will have made the survey more complex to complete.

In general this survey was completed on paper and then included in the online survey.

The findings from this survey may also have been impacted by the length of time some of the partners have been in the country. Some may have been here for just a few weeks others may have been here for over one year.

What is your nationality?

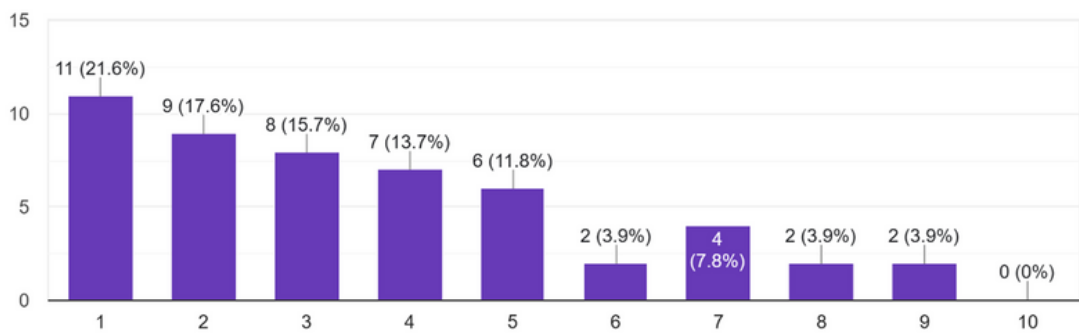
49 responses



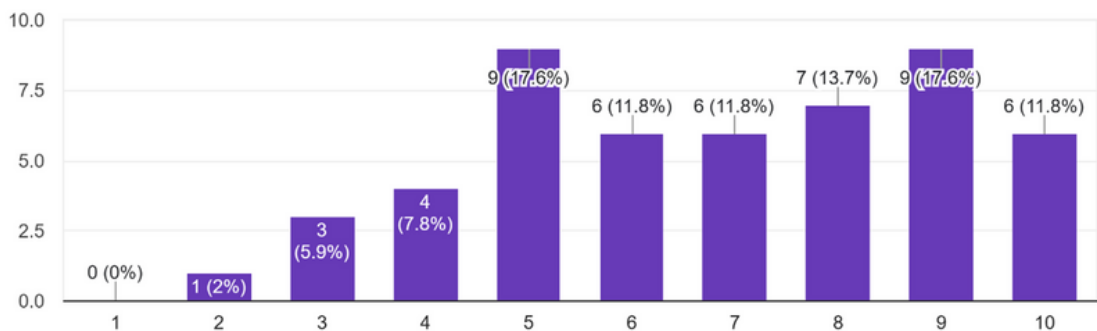
1. Confidence in English communication

Asylum seekers are offered a range of support to improve their English communication. The scores demonstrate a significant shift towards more confident scores. Please note however, these scores are self assessed and do not demonstrate an assessed measure in English by a teacher.

How confident did you feel communicating before meeting Herts Welcomes Refugees volunteers? For example - speaking to people at the h...filling in a form, reading information at the hotel.
51 responses



How confident do you feel communicating in English now?
51 responses



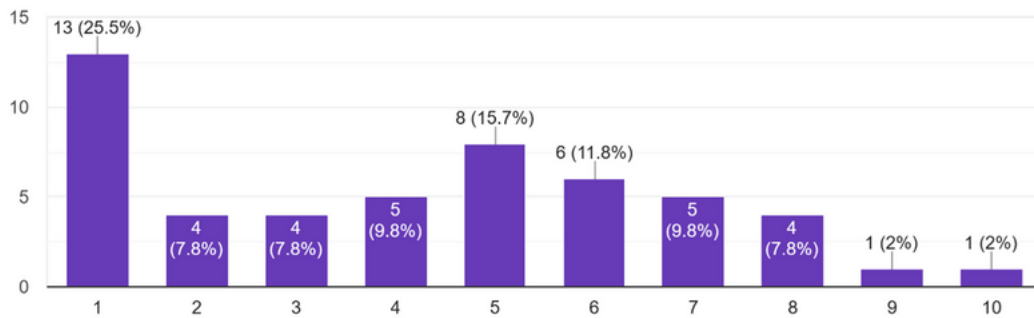
2. Reducing social isolation

Support to asylum seekers who are living in hotels are offered by the Charity to encourage interaction with others and to reduce social isolation. These include for example weekly drops in, language, classes, cooking sessions and trips and visits.

The graphs below indicate a shift towards the right showing a feeling of less isolation and loneliness.

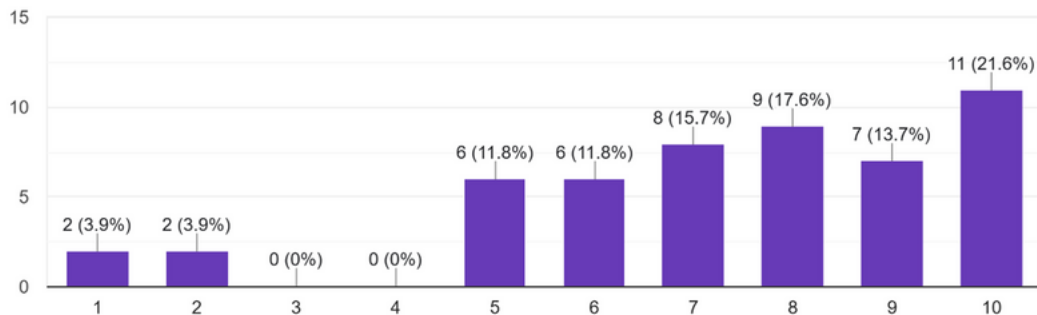
When you first met the Herts Welcomes Refugees volunteers, how isolated and lonely did you feel? 1 = very isolated and lonely, 10 = not at all isolated or lonely

51 responses



How isolated and lonely do you feel now? 1 = very isolated and lonely, 10 = not at all isolated or lonely

51 responses



Next Steps

We have learnt from undertaking these surveys how to administer the surveys and how to phrase the questions. There are complexities in working with in particular the asylum seeking group as they are very mobile and can be moved with very limited notice period.

Going forward as a Charity, we are planning to develop this methodology to measure the impact of our services and will undertake surveys every 6 months/regularly to be able to record over time the journey travelled of our partners.

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

EVALUATION

The charity is now supporting over approximately 585 asylum seekers living in hotels and 85 Afghan evacuees in hotels (May 2023). We run 13.5 hours of language support groups for asylum seekers and 8 hours for Afghan evacuees a week across the County. This is very different to when the grant outcomes were agreed and the focus of the charity was focused on the teaching of English with only resettled refugee families.

In Hemel Hempstead, for example, about 40 to 50 people a week attend one or more of the ESOL classes. The classes for asylum seekers are run by volunteer teachers and ESOL tutors who are supporting learners with very basic English skills. The students attend two sessions per week on Tuesdays and Fridays and at each session, there are different levels of classes to meet the students' needs. In addition, at the classes a range of other services are offered including help with form filling, access phones and SIM cards etc.

There are a number of challenges in trying to measure the outcomes from this group:

- as the level of English is so limited, it is vital to ask very simple questions to be able to elicit a response. The questions could appear leading.
- as the asylum seekers are often moved with limited notice from one area of the country to another, it is very difficult to assess learning from point a to point b. Some people attend the classes for as little as four weeks and then are moved on to another area, without any notice being given at all.

A very simple way to collate the views of the service users was needed because the level of English is very basic. Consequently, we used a simple Mentimeter survey to collate the feedback with the learners using their phones to answer seven questions. We also used smiley and sad face icons to help the students to answer the questions. The survey asked questions to elicit views about their views on the classes and if they found them friendly.

Twenty five learners were asked to complete the survey. Some found the survey difficult and needed help from the volunteers.

Question 1

Do you like the Tuesday and Friday groups? Mentimeter



This was the first question asked and some of the students were struggling with the technology. However 80% responded to the question. The response was positive from those who responded.

Question 2

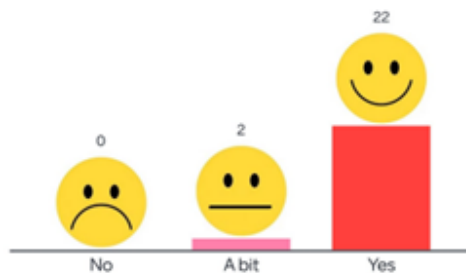
How do the Tuesday and Friday groups make you feel? Mentimeter



This question indicates that the students enjoy the class. The response rate was 86%.

Question 3

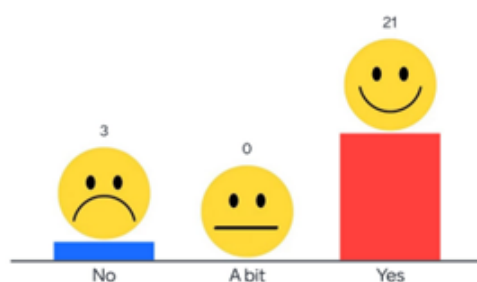
Do the Tuesday and Friday groups help me? 



There was a positive view that the classes helped them. Only 8% were less positive. However, none of the students who responded were completely negative about the classes.

Question 4 **Are the volunteers helpful?**

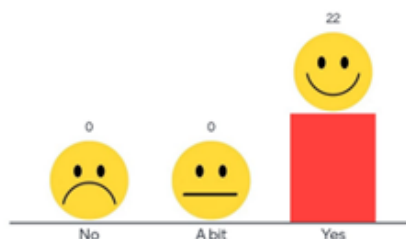




This question was aimed at gathering the views of the learners about the volunteers that help them and the feedback shows overall 84% was positive. A small number said the volunteers were not helpful. It should be noted that the student may have been referring to other support offered to the learners by the volunteers.

Question 5

Does coming to ESOL classes help me to improve my English? 

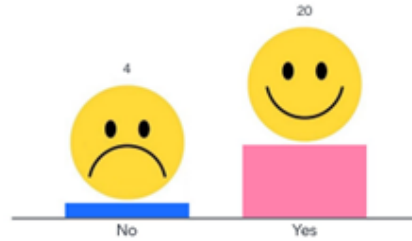


This question was asked to understand from the students' perspective, whether the ESOL classes are helping them to improve their English. All students gave a positive response to this question.

Question 6

Have you made friends at the Tuesday and Friday groups?

Mentimeter

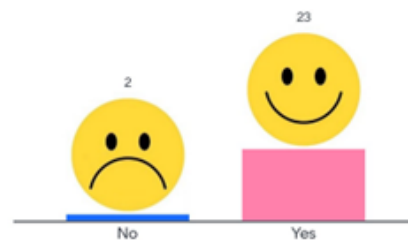


This question was designed to understand about reducing social isolation and making friends. In terms of response, it is interesting that 16% felt that they had not made new friends. This may be due to language barriers or because they tend to socialise with people who speak their language and so are not mixing with others who do not speak their native language and therefore not extending their social network. This will be fed back to the teachers so that can consider how they may encourage greater mixing of the language groups.

Question 7

Will you tell other people to come to the Tuesday and Friday groups?

Mentimeter



This question was again aimed at getting a view about satisfaction with the service. The vast majority of students were satisfied, but there was a very small number who weren't. Due to time pressure and English difficulties, this was not explored any further with the students.

HOMESCHOOL CLUB FOR ASYLUM SEEKER CHILDREN

HWR supports children and young people at Homestead Court Hotel with weekly homework classes. Students from local schools volunteer to help children and young people with reading and writing offering 1-1 support through a range of games and activities.

Nineteen children and young people were asked “How does homework club make you feel?”. Eleven children were of primary school age, five of secondary school age and three of college age. Two children were not at school.

Some of the children used Menti.com to respond to the questions. Younger children, who did not have phones, had their thoughts recorded on paper and then added to Menti to produce a word cloud of their views.



EVALUATION

EVALUATION

Children were also asked to draw pictures and write letters, expressing what they felt about homework club. Two examples are shown here:

Home work club
it's very good club
I learn to talk in
English Better and
all of them are nice
actually I'm happy
Because of this club
Please ~~not~~ keep coming.
it's fun and learning
I Love this club.

I like homework club it
is fun and exciting I look
forward to Thursdays
im proving my English.

me doing homework
with my friends



OUTCOME - TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

GLOBAL ENGLISH COURSE

We deliver a wide range of training for our volunteers to support them in undertaking their role. The training topics include Mental Health, First Aid, Safeguarding, Refugee trauma, Refugee Well-being and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). To provide a flavour of how we evaluate our courses, we have included the feedback from the Global English 'Enter English Course'.

This online training is a 10 hour introductory course suitable for volunteers working with refugees who need help with English. It covers the basics of teaching ESOL. The aims of the course are to raise awareness of the needs of refugees and to equip volunteers with the knowledge and skills to support their partner(s). The course includes modules on teaching English grammar, teaching beginners, teaching functional English and teaching English vocabulary. We evaluate the training course use of an online survey.

The training provided by the introductory Global English course is supplemented and enhanced by monthly webinars delivered via Zoom by our ESOL training consultant. These are on a variety of topics which are requested by volunteers, such as teaching vocabulary, planning a session, etc. and are recorded so that those unable to participate can watch them later. We have found this to be an effective way to deliver training to a large number of volunteers.

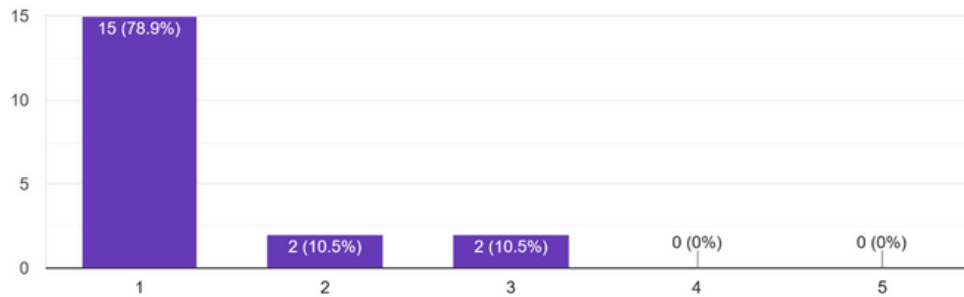
In order to evaluate the Global English training course, we used an online survey following the course. We collect feedback after each webinar too.

Evaluation from the Global English training course

Forty-six people have completed this training so far. An online survey was sent with a response rate of 43%.

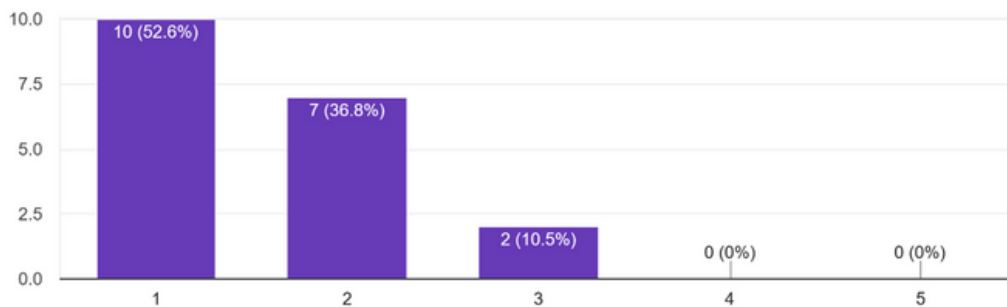
Q1 How relevant did you find the training?

How relevant did you find the Global English course? 1 =very relevant, 5 = not at all relevant
19 responses



Q2 How useful did you find the course ?

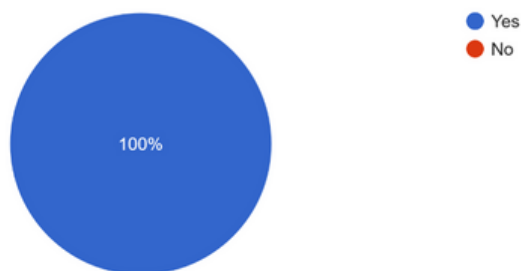
How useful did you find the course? 1 = very useful, 5 = not at all useful
19 responses



Q3 Would you recommend the course to others?

Would you recommend the Global English course to others?

19 responses



Quotes from participants

"I thought it was an excellent course. I did my CELTA course in January and this Global English course was a very useful follow-on course. It gave me lots of new ideas and was also very relevant for teaching refugees. The trainers were also very encouraging and enthusiastic which made the course a pleasure to complete."

"It was put together very well and was fun to do as well as being extremely useful. Lots of advice and contacts to take away with one at the end of the course."

"I am not actually intending to teach ESOL and did the course just to extend my knowledge of the area. If I was intending to teach it would have been very useful. They provide a lot of information about resources which would be extremely useful to support teaching."

VIDEO OF ACTIVITIES AGAINST OUTCOMES:

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW

Herts Welcomes Refugees Report to Funders July 2023



Welcoming and supporting refugees in Hertfordshire

FEEDBACK FROM MARCUS, ASYLUM SEEKER IN A HOTEL, ON SUPPORT FROM HWR

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW



Yes, they made our life much easier,
because whenever we need them, it's easy to find them.



LIST OF OUR PARTNERS

Alternatives Watford
Bosnian Community Hertsmere
Box Moor Trust
Care4Calais
Caritas
CDA - Community Development Action
Citizens Advice Dacorum
Communities First
Community Action Dacorum (CAD)
Dacorum Borough Council
East Herts District Council
East of England Local Government Association
Flourish
Goods for Good
Hertfordshire Asian Women's Association
Hertfordshire County Council
Herts for Refugees
Herts Help
Hertfordshire Services for Young People
Herts Young Homeless
International Rescue Committee
Jewish Council for Racial Equality
Migrant Help
Oaklands College
Red Cross
Refugee Action
Refugee Council
St Albans for Refugees (STAR)
Steps2Skills
Stevenage Borough Council
Strategic Migration Partnership
Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership
West Herts College
YMCA
NRPF Network
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
Modern Slavery Unit
Welcome Churches Watford

PARTNERS

HERTS WELCOMES
REFUGEES

www.hwsf.org.uk

