

New Beginnings Impact Report 2022 to 2023

About the New Beginnings project:

The New Beginnings Project supports anyone who is seeking sanctuary in Sheffield, both refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as their family members. We support our clients to gain the skills and confidence they need to independently access education, training, volunteering and employment opportunities, as well as offering them the chance to participate in a wide range of social activities and events.

Since its inception in 2004, the New Beginnings Project has **supported over 4,000 people** seeking sanctuary in Sheffield, continually developing and refining service delivery, amidst shifting priorities and at times, immense operational pressures due to Covid, Ukraine war, different refugee settlement schemes among many.

We have established strong connections/partnerships with a huge range of organisations and employers in Sheffield, as well as being one of the key partners in SPRING (Sheffield Project for Refugee INtegration and Growth) Project, working with 5 other organisations to offer refugee integration and move on refugee support.

The project operates the key principles of person-centred empowerment and structures support and guidance based on the following model adopted from a refugee community leaders' experience in a refugee camp:

Doing For → Doing With → Stepping Back

At New Beginnings project we strive to work holistically with our clients and to tackle any barriers they might face as a team. For example, our volunteers are encouraged to engage with the Employment and Education advisers to talk through how their volunteer activities can be demonstrated on their CV, and the clients that we register for ESOL are encouraged to attend social activities, enabling them to develop their communication skills and build their social networks. Throughout a client journey, someone is likely to work with nearly every member of the team creating a supportive environment where everyone feels that they belong.

Case-study

We first met 'R' at an event at Sheffield College for their ESOL learners in February 2023. She was looking for more educational opportunities to improve her English. She arrived in UK in July 2022 and was feeling a bit isolated with very few connections in Sheffield.

We booked her in for an initial appointment. Alongside discussing further educational opportunities, we suggested that she might want to volunteer. She was happy to volunteer, although lacked confidence in her English language skills. The initial meeting also talked about her skills and future career aspirations. R' has a background in finance and education management and so the goal was to support her in that area in the future so it was important for us to find a volunteering opportunity that matched her skills and would help her secure work.

We approached ASSIST and discussed what volunteer roles might be appropriate through the New Beginnings volunteering support. They were able to take on R,' as a finance volunteer. This role includes handing money, using a bespoke database for managing finances and using spreadsheets which is boosting 'R's confidence and experience that helped her secure employment in the future.

In additional, 'R' signed up for a course in Worker's Rights and Exploitation' we run in collaboration with Norther College in Barnsley which she successfully completed and received a Level 1 qualification.

Given the experience, knowledge, network of friends and skills 'R' is developing we are more positive of her succeeding in finding employment in the future.

The key objectives and outcomes of the New Beginnings Project

- Clients are empowered to have fulfilling, autonomous and interconnected lives in Sheffield, to the point that they no longer need support.
- Clients have clear and impactful progression routes into 'real world' employment and volunteering roles, which prioritise the development of leadership skills and foster peer-support networks.
- Clients are able to model a training and development approach, which can be rolled out city wide, with a focus on improving organisational capacity to train, develop and accommodate people seeking sanctuary as volunteers and employees.
- Clients are able to build wider connections, through social activities, volunteering and employment, enabling them to integrate more confidently into life in Sheffield.
- Clients have access to meaningful and tailored training, volunteering and participation activities and employment opportunities, which focus specifically on enabling individuals to effect positive change within their lives and their communities.

Staff, volunteers and clients deliver the service.

The current team consists of a Project Manager, 3 Employment and Education Advisors, a Volunteer Coordinator, a Participation Coordinator and a team of 21 volunteers specially developed to support refugee and asylum seekers.

The service provided is beneficiary led by a team of refugee staff who started as volunteers and volunteers who are leading areas of service delivery as well as native British staff and volunteers.

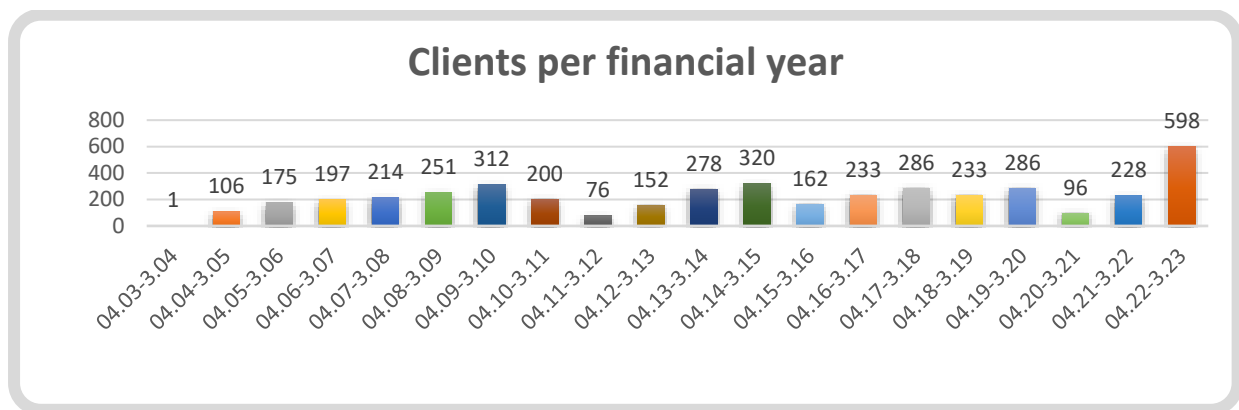
The majority of our clients are supported in development and education programs helping them to improve their skills in English, communication and IT, which enables them to then progress into volunteering roles, education or paid employment. The Volunteer team register new clients, discussing their goals and aspirations and working closely to match them with opportunities.

Client support

During the past year we have supported 750 people, including 598 newly registered clients, which is a significant increase on previous years. Connecting them with different organisations through;

- One to one meetings with clients to ensure appropriate support and guidance.
- Drop-in sessions at The Circle and Victoria Hall Refugee Multi-Agency drop in.
- Weekly Job clubs in different sites.
- Employment and Education workshops
- Social events

We have supported clients from 118 countries to date. In 2022-23 the top 5 have been Ukraine 90, Iran 88, Eritrea 61, Sudan 50, Afghanistan 38 and Iraq 32 among others.



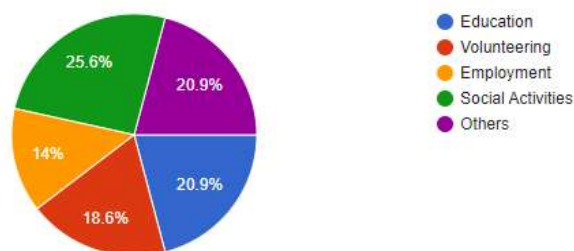
This year the NB team was stretched due to the high number of new registrations. We really appreciate their hard work to ensure that people seeking sanctuary in Sheffield are well supported and made to feel welcome by other support organisations in Sheffield.

New Beginnings impact on clients

The project provides a unique multiple service delivery which allows clients to access different opportunities and activities across the city. There's a flexibility for old clients who had moved on to always come back should they need any other kind of support in Employment, Volunteering, Education and participation in Social activities like going on trips and walks.

What support did you receive?

43 responses



Volunteering and Participation opportunities

This year the New Beginnings project worked with about 25 charity organisations to create and secure inclusive volunteer opportunities to 57 of our new registered clients – people who had never volunteered before. Post COVID, the culture of working for many charity organisations changed which affected the availability of many volunteering opportunities as many required remote working

Organisations where we matched our clients with volunteer opportunities

- Sheffield Teaching Hospital's NHS Trust
- St Luke's Hospice
- Oxfam
- Sheffield City Council -Park and Countryside
- Refugee Council (Sheffield Office)
- Migration Matters Festival
- Learn for Life Enterprise
- ASSIST
- Burngreave Library
- 35th St Oswald's Scout Group
- SAGE Sheffield
- City of Sanctuary Sheffield
- Stroke Association Support
- Age UK Sheffield
- Darnall Dementia Trust
- Healthwatch Sheffield
- Sheffield Samaritans Charity shop
- The Sunday Centre

Volunteer opportunities within the New Beginnings project

Volunteers are crucial to the delivery of the New Beginnings project, both because it's part of our mission and values to create opportunities for refugees to develop skills and feel welcome in Sheffield, but also because they are essential to deliver a service that is refugee led and meets the scale of need. Most of our staff member came in as clients and then later joined the project as volunteers

We therefore improved our way of supporting volunteers by developed a progression pathway for volunteers within the project that can lead to growth in skills development and potentially lead to employment in the future with the main focus on the Admin volunteer role.

We had 21 refugee volunteers supporting the project by participating in different roles listed below in addition to the admin opportunity;

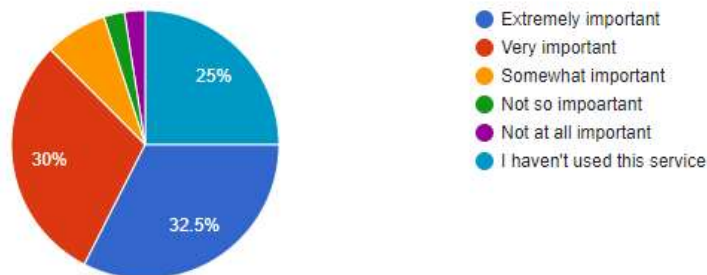
Volunteering opportunity within New Beginnings project

- **Volunteer Advisors** who provide face-to-face engagement with our clients. The role involves provision of information for suitable volunteering opportunities and matching them with the clients and contact the prospective host organization for a volunteer placement.
- **Customer Service and Administration volunteers** who take on the tasks form all the project team of recording new clients, making follow ups and dealing with the case work which can involve face to face meetings, making phone calls, making appointments and recording actions.

- **IT Volunteers** who run the weekly IT drop-in on Thursday afternoon to help clients who need support with access to a laptop for any use – could be completing an application form, or creating an email address. The volunteer is always at hand to help clients build that confidence and provide the access.
- **Outreach Volunteers** who go out in the community to meet and register potential clients. By community we mean meeting new arrivals to Sheffield at the Multi Agency Drop-in, The City of Sanctuary and various temporary accommodation sites.
- **Events volunteers** who support the project during social events like the Christmas event where we need a lot of volunteers to help with the wrapping of presents.
- **Participation and Sustaining Nature Volunteers** who support the project with facilitating and Organising activities including walks and trips and accompanying clients. Researching on available opportunities and contacting organisations. Participate in the design and delivery of the New Beginnings project. Gathering and recording feedback from activity attendees by Nature Champions and pastoral volunteers
- **Sewing Group volunteers** who are involved in the running of the weekly sewing group sessions at The Sanctuary attended by our clients and support them to develop new skills and meeting other people for relationship building which is good for their general wellbeing.

How important was the volunteer support you received?

40 responses



Feedback on the impact of volunteering.

'It helped me with my mental health'

'The support was very important, as it made it easier and was a great help in a new place',

'helped me to adapt to new conditions, to solve many problems that we faced when we arrived in Britain'.

'Volunteer advisor helped me to start my volunteering work'.

'Since I was new in the UK it was hard to start from somewhere as an employee which corresponds with my old work experience. After the volunteering opportunity that was connected by you had a crucial part in my integration to this new environment. That is why I can't express my feelings enough for this help of you. Thank you again lovely people'.

Participation in Social Activities

Aim

- To facilitate the development of refugee leadership and enable refugees to lead the development of social activities, creating opportunities for friendships to develop.
- To increase refugee participation in the design and delivery of the New Beginnings project by developing and supporting the refugee Participation group that advises on the direction of the New Beginnings project. The Participation group also researches and advises on the social activities that can be client led and meaningful for other refugees and Asylum seekers we support.
- To build new partnerships as well as strengthened existing partnerships making a total of way over 20 organisations with whom we share learning and expertise.

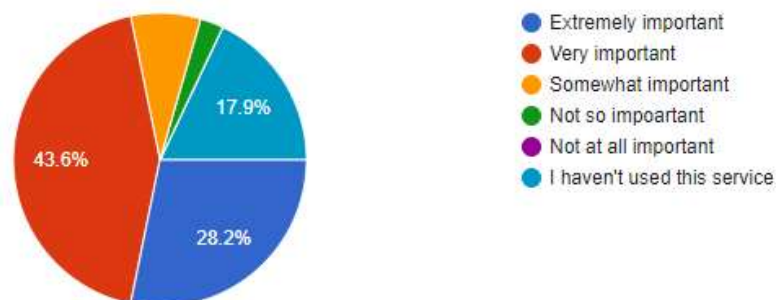
Organisations we worked with included;

- Green City Action
- Sheffield Botanical Gardens
- Peak District National Park
- Peak District MOSAIC
- Peak District National Foundation
- Alpkit
- Sheffield Theatres
- Newfield Spring woods
- Sheffield City of Sanctuary
- Inova Consultancy
- Centre for Mindful Life Enhancement
- Sheffield Central Library
- Chatsworth House
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- FURD – U-MIX
- Sheffield & Hallamshire County Football Association
- Sheffield Hallam University
- The university of Sheffield
- Sheffield City Council (HAF programme)
- Hallam FM Cash for Kids
- The Climbing-Hanger
- Cycling without age Sheffield

Response from the survey

How important were the social activities you participated in?

39 responses



Social Activities

We facilitated a monthly creative art guided walks for refugees and asylum seekers in the Peak District in 2022 with an average of 20- 32 participants at each walk. These included;



- Longshaw Moorlands Discovery Centre family art and drama in March,
- Hathersage walk with creative art and poetry reading with the Peak District Mosaic on 5th June,
- Mindfulness day in Edale on 23rd June,
- Thornhill Rewilding nature walk and talk with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust in July,
- Chatsworth house in August,
- Peak District National Park Monsal trail Sound and Cycling in September,
- Eastern Moors Deer walk and creative play activity at Longshaw in October
- Heritage skills day at Brunts Barn Grindleford in November.
- We collaborated with Peak District National Trust to facilitate an educational Peak District walk attended by 51 refugees and Asylum seekers

Leadership development

To facilitate the development of refugee leadership, we have developed three active walk leaders who started a Participation led New Beginnings Peak District Walking group supported by a couple of British native mentors. We also collaborated with Alpkit who provided the walking gear to the group through their [Continuum](#) and Peak District National Park Foundation who are covering travel costs for the group as well as costs for mapping and Navigation courses for the walk leaders. The walk leaders organise and lead at least one Peak District and other green spaces walk every month which are attended by 15 – 20 participants.



Clients Feedback from one of the Peak District walks

'I enjoyed it all, I like the idea of the last activities, using the five senses and gratitude, learned about Edale and now I will be able to visit with my family, lovely village, beautiful people and lovely nature.'

'I felt relaxed, fresh breeze and enjoyed the group activities and having guides'

'I met new people and enjoyed nature and meditating which I had not done before, for a second I felt normal and forgot about my Asylum case...'

'It is really awesome, good experience with changing weather, new friends, staff members and volunteers..'

'I learned about different kinds of plants and birds names, the garlic smell from a wild leaf. Thanks to our walk guide Pete. I liked the creative writing'

'I mostly enjoyed the socialising aspect and the togetherness as a family during the walk. We learnt about the history of this place, who the owners were and how it became an National Trust Estate property'

'I learned how to build a wooden nest for birds, how to build walls with dry stones and how to use a drill and how to do pyrography'



We collaborated with Migration Yorkshire to facilitated 150 clients to travel to Leeds in September 2022 to participate in the Migration Yorkshire Integration festival where they felt a sense of belonging celebrating their vibrant diverse cultures through food, music, dance, art, film, fabric etc

Our Participation led New Beginnings sewing group relaunched after closure during covid and now has an average attendance of 11 participants every Monday at the City of Sanctuary

After a successful football taster session during the 2022 refugee week attended by 13 refugees and Asylum seekers, we started regular participation led refugee women's football sessions at U-Mix in collaboration with FURD funded by Sheffield & Hallamshire County Football Association



We secured funding from the HAF programme to support low income refugee and Asylum seeking families by facilitating participation led events and trips to the National Rail Museum - York on 14th April 2022 (53 attendees), Bridlington on 4th August (71 attendees), Yorkshire wildlife park on 25th August (32 attendees), Winter warmer Christmas celebration on 22nd December (120 attendees), Yorkshire Sculpture Park trip on 12th April (53 attendees)



We collaborated with Hallam FM Cash for Kids to provide Christmas gifts to 288 children from refugee and Asylum seeking children, without which they could have potentially gone without Christmas presents

We had an educational woodland spring flowers and trees walk in collaboration with Newfield Spring wood attended by 11 refugees and Asylum seekers on the 29th April 2023

We also had a Bluebell Spring family walk at Newfield Spring wood attended by 22 refugees and Asylum seekers and led by our walk leaders on 20th May 2023



We have also collaborated with Chatsworth house who offered free tickets and travel subsidy for 55 refugee and Asylum-seeking families

Impact of participation in social activities

Case-study on

'L' came to us seeking ways to participate in social and educational activities and walks in order to cope with the mental struggles she was facing including stress, anxiety and depression that was related to her past experiences that forced her to flee from her home Country. She also wanted to engage in these activities in order to reduce isolation and meet new people.

She essentially started participating in our Peak District walks, football and other activities which made a massive difference in her wellbeing. She also joined the New Beginnings Participation group as well as volunteers as our office administrator, a New Beginnings walk leader and one of the Founders of the Peak District Walking group as part of our Sustaining Nature Project.

To enhance her personal and refugee leadership development, we signposted 'L' to series of courses, some of which she has successfully completed including the National Volunteer Certificate, Adult Safeguarding Level 1 and 2, Safeguarding children level 1 and 2, first aid course and has also registered for the mapping and Navigation course due to start soon. We have also supported her to study digital skills at Central library, English classes at Learn for Life Sheffield, Mathematics at Sheffield College and crafting for wellbeing at Broomhall Centre.

All these engagements have been vital in restoring 'L's confidence, mental wellbeing and empowering her to realise that she is more than her current circumstances. She now has the confidence, drive, skills and determination that will certainly enable her to live a fulfilled independent life in the near future and most importantly she rightfully feels included and a very valued member of the New Beginnings family and Sheffield as a whole.

Employment and Education Support

The New Beginnings clients are supported by a team of experienced Employment and Education Advisors and volunteers. Our team provides two drop ins a week for one-off advice, for example, registration for college, booking appointments for national insurance numbers. For people that need more intensive support we offer structured meetings so that clients can understand the UK jobs market, how to write a personal statement and interview practice alongside agreed actions. Our advisers are experienced in dealing with specific barriers in relation to their refugee status such as where or how to look for jobs and how to address employment gaps in their CV. We made connections with over 50 employers and secured 56 employment opportunities for our new.

Case-study

'S' had been an Asylum Seeker in Sheffield for around 6 years, during this time he volunteered at The Sanctuary. S was referred to New Beginnings through the SPRING project in October 2022 after he received his Right to Work status.

He came to The Circle for an appointment with Emma, a New Beginnings Employment and Education Advisor. He wanted to use his IT and Customer Service skills in a paid job role but S had never completed a competency based application form or had an interview and his confidence was quite low in his job specific skills.

S came in to see Emma weekly and worked on his application and interview skills, having practice interview sessions to highlight his skills. S applied for a Customer Service Advisor role and he got an interview. Emma arranged for him to go to The Suit Works so he was prepared with interview clothing and he came in to New Beginnings for some last-minute interview preparation.

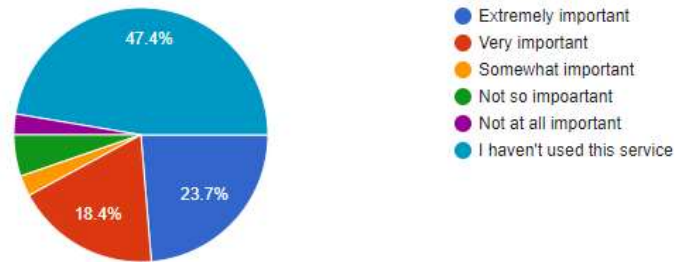
He felt confident in himself and his abilities, and he was successful in getting the job! He is now enjoying learning new skills in his new role.

Alongside client-focussed support, our advisers have an effective network to call upon to help maximise employment, training and educational opportunities in Sheffield. This includes sector-specific employers to review CVs, further and higher education institutions, DWP and Opportunity Sheffield training providers. We work in collaboration with other Refugee support organisations through the SPRING project (Sheffield Refugee Project for INtegration and Growth), ensuring that clients are adequately supported and accessing relevant services.

Responding to the needs of our clients, the team have developed a network around higher education so that we can better respond to the queries that we receive. This resulted in a Higher Education fair with presentations from both Universities and Sheffield Council apprenticeship team. The event was attended by over 80 clients.

How important was the employment support you received?

38 responses



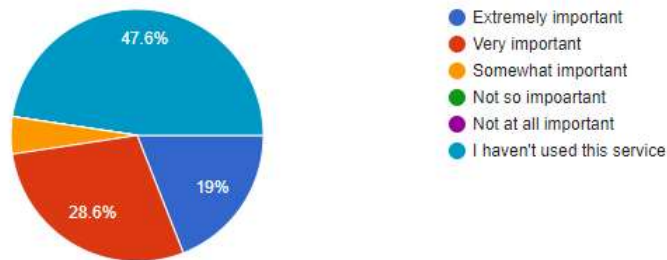
Breaking barriers

Different measures are taken to help break the barriers our clients face in accessing employment but the one that stands out is the collaborative work we developed with Northern college in Barnsley to provide the Worker's Rights and Exploitation' training course among many other courses to our clients through the ESF Positive Change program with 90% of clients gaining a level 1 qualification. This training is crucial to our clients because the majority of our clients, lack confidence in finding work and are concerned that they might be subject to discrimination or manipulation in the workplace due to their lack of understanding of UK systems and lack of understanding of English.

Our support therefore is vital in helping many access different education and training programs to improve their confidence and skills. This is the same explanation of high numbers of registered clients against those who actually start volunteering or employment.

How important was the Education support you received?

42 responses



Feedback from a client who had a one to one support meeting with one of our employment advisors in preparation for a job interview

Client 'V' Just wanted to share impressions on the today interview. I think I managed to stay quite relaxed.... There were 3 people interviewing, but they were quite friendly. Most of the questions they asked were the ones we have worked through before, so I appreciate your help with CV and covering letter. I felt re ally prepared... I'm not sure I impressed them with my English, but still this was a valuable experience. Thanks Katy.

Future of the New Beginnings Project

Our main focus will continue to holistically support refugees and asylum seekers in accessing opportunities in volunteering, employment, education and participation in social activities. We strive to ensure that the project operates the key principles of person-centred empowerment and structures support that will lead to fulfilling, autonomous and inter-connected lives for our clients.

The project will continue to build and strengthen the model of progression imbedded in our service delivery and reaching out to organisation and employment providers to widen access to various opportunities in Sheffield for refugees and asylum seekers. We hope to ensure high skilled refugees are able to get into high skilled jobs opportunities that match their professions.

The project will continue to facilitate the development of refugee leadership through the participation group and enable refugees to lead the development of social activities, creating opportunities for friendships to develop.

The project will continue to involve refugee participants in the design and delivery of the New Beginnings project by developing and supporting the refugee Participation group that advises on the direction of the New Beginnings project.

The project will continue to work with key partners in the SPRING Project, build new partnerships as well as strengthened existing partnerships to ensure that barriers refugees and asylum seekers face in accessing various opportunities are alleviated and create a welcome environment in Sheffield for people seeking sanctuary.