



Wycombe Refugee Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From

01 September 2018 Period start date to
31 August 2019 Period end date

Charity name

Wycombe Refugee Partnership

Charity registration number

1168176

Charity's principal address

% All Saints Parish Office

8 Castle Street

High Wycombe

HP13 6RF

Structure, governance
and management

**The charity uses a constitution and is
registered as a Charitable incorporated
Organisation.**

**Trustees are appointed by the existing
trustees.**

Objectives and Activities

Purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document

To prevent and relieve poverty among refugees and asylum seekers and people granted humanitarian or discretionary leave to remain, together with their dependents by providing advice / access to: interpreting, translating, advocacy, health, housing, employment and education in the High Wycombe area.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our beneficiaries are mainly people who have come to the UK as asylum-seekers, then obtained refugee status and applied for family reunification visas. Once these visas are granted, the families have only a few weeks to travel to the UK. Without support, they may find themselves homeless.

It is challenging for refugees to find accommodation in the UK. With the Right to Rent scheme and welfare reforms, private landlords are increasingly unwilling to rent to either individuals who do not have a British passport or those who are on benefits. In addition, long waiting lists and constrictive eligibility criteria make it difficult for refugees to access social housing. The challenge is exacerbated by potential language barriers and a lack of understanding of how the housing system works in the UK.



To address this issue, our main activity is housing refugee families in the High Wycombe area. Firstly, a family will move into Mellor House, the three-bedroom halfway house owned by Chilterns Area Quaker Meeting, for at least two months. Once the family is earning money, our property team helps them to find accommodation and we lend them the initial rent. Our donated goods team then sources furniture and furnishings for them, managing donations and arranging deliveries.



Additionally, we offer befriending, education, language, welfare and job-seeking support to enable our beneficiaries to build their lives in the UK. We appoint a befriender who offers an orientation around High Wycombe, supports the family to register with the local GP, dentist and library, signposts them to relevant activities in the community, helps them to keep track of appointments and, when possible, to understand British culture and systems. The education team applies for school places, buys uniforms and offers extra home-tuition, if necessary, for the children. The English Language team assesses the adults' needs and helps them to enroll for English classes or arranges home-tuition. A volunteer from the welfare team helps the family to register for Universal Credit and Child Benefit. A volunteer from the work team helps with job seeking.



Our Welcoming Coordinator ensures that the family feel safe in the first few weeks. They organise for the family to be met at the airport and Mellor House to be stocked with food, toiletries and cleaning products. A Family Support Coordinator is appointed to ensure that the volunteers across the different teams are communicating with one another and that the needs of the family are assessed at different stages from when they arrive in High Wycombe.



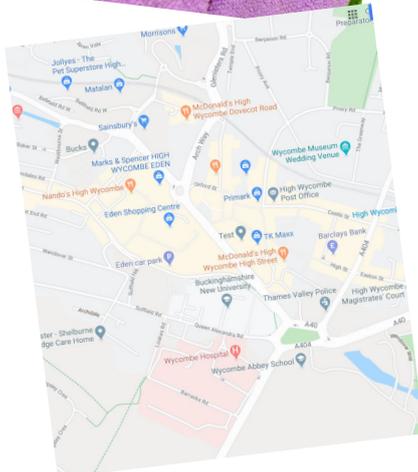
Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year (August 2018 – August 2019)

During and after the renovation of Mellor House, our half-way house for newcomer refugee families, we took the opportunity to review the activities of the charity. In turn, we have adjusted our model to ensure more comprehensive support for our beneficiaries and the volunteers who support them.

Rather than resettling multiple families at the same time, we decided to resettle one family at a time. We now move a family into our half-way house for at least two months before supporting them to find private accommodation. This change in our model increases the attention and improves the support given to each family. It also reduces the workload of volunteers with an aim to improve volunteer retention.

We have created and piloted a new role, the 'Family Support Coordinator' who will be appointed to each newcomer family. The family support coordinator oversees the volunteers working in different teams who are supporting the same family. They work with our part-time administrator to organise meetings for the volunteers to discuss the family's progress and any issues. They also check on the family at various intervals to ensure that they feel supported. This new role enables better communication and support for our beneficiaries and the volunteers who work with them.

The Human Resources Coordinator and English for Speakers of Other





Languages [ESOL] Lead developed a befrienders guide. This is an important document to train befrienders, clarifying the definition and expectations of the role.

The part-time administrator helped improve the publicity, security and operations of the charity. Our new website has been developed and events have been coordinated to promote our work. The website has a private section where volunteers can log in to access a team space with resources as well as an online diary for volunteers working with newcomer families. A google drive has been created for the trustees and core group to share documents and resources securely. Processes have been put in place to better monitor the charity's outcomes and ensure that all volunteers receive a generic induction and are Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS] checked when necessary.

With our new model in place, we welcomed the first family into Mellor House in May 2019. The family were allocated befrienders who orientated them around High Wycombe and helped them to register with the GP and Dentist as well as buy school uniforms. They were also appointed a member from the welfare team who supported their Universal Credit application updates. The education team offered temporary home tuition to the children until they found them local school places. After three months we supported the family to move into private accommodation and coordinated for it to be fully furnished through donations from our supporters.

We have continued to offer support to the families that are already settled in High Wycombe.

The befriending team has continued to support seven of these families. With the charity's needs-orientated approach, this has involved help in an array of areas. One family was guided through pregnancy, with befrienders advising and signposting nutrition and antenatal care, which increased their understanding of the UK health system and reduced the anxiety of the mother. They were also supported to move to a new home, which involved liaison with the landlady and consultations regarding the rental contract. One family member was supported through her Professional and Linguistics Assessment Board [PLAB] exam, a volunteer with relevant experience coached on exam techniques. After passing these exams, she was assisted with applying for jobs in the NHS. Another family faced homelessness with their house benefits being stopped when the parent's leave to remain status expired. The charity provided financial support and signposted them to receive appropriate legal advice. Members of four families have been offered work support to gain employment, volunteering positions or apprenticeships. All of this guidance has helped families to improve their confidence and understand various systems in the UK.

The Education team has found five school places for children and offered post-sixteen education support to two teenagers. They have also offered ongoing education home tuition to children from three families. By being helped to navigate the correct pathways for children at various stages, from pre-school through to sixth form, families have gained an understanding of the UK education system in Buckinghamshire. The families have been assisted with school and college applications and

PART 3 EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

13. Please state:
- Name and Employer's Name
- Address of employer

14. Why did your employment end?

15. Did you get a P45?

16. Did you get a P46?

17. Did you get a P47?

18. Do you have any other employment?

19. Do you have any other employment?

20. Do you have any other employment?





Above: A WRP volunteer information session, May 2018

Below: Autumn Gala dinner, November 2019

Bottom: WRP Annual General Meeting, August 2019



have been bought necessary uniform and school equipment. School meetings have been attended with families to build good cooperation and understanding between the charity and the schools. Children who have difficulty accessing UK education are offered ongoing support, particularly with language, and families have gained confidence from the knowledge that they have constant, professional support from empathetic and experienced educationalists on the WRP team.

The ESOL team has provided regular home tuition to four people from families and signposted ten adult family members to access English language classes in the local area. This has helped to increase the confidence and reduce the isolation of these families. They have grown in confidence to travel to their classes by bus or walking; they have been able to make their own genuine friends in the community through the classes; and have been responsible for communication with their teachers. The home tuition has helped individuals progress when other options were not available for them.

We have continued to work with other refugee support groups. Over the year we have connected four of our beneficiaries to Marlow Refugee Action and RefuAid, who have formed a collaboration to enable refugees in the local area to access free English language classes and employment advice. This has strengthened our working relationship with Marlow Refugee Action and RefuAid for referring more refugees in the future. The classes are English as a Foreign Language [EFL] and not ESOL and are more academic which suits some of the participants better as preparation for the workplace.



www.wycombe-refugees.org



contactus@wycombe-refugees.org



0845 643 2873



Refugees Welcome in Wycombe