

New Beginnings Impact Report

2018/19

New Beginnings Project

The New Beginnings project welcomes refugees and asylum seekers to Sheffield, supports them to integrate and empowers them to access opportunities that will improve their well-being and increase their independence. The Big Lottery is the main funder with Sheffield City council contributing around 10% of the total cost with a grant of £15, 660.

Our staff and volunteer team provide a range of connected services at VAS and support people to access other support with partners in Sheffield. Our primary work is to support refugees and asylum seekers to better integrate in life in the city, by supporting them to access:

- Education and training opportunities, (including ESOL)
- Volunteering opportunities
- Employment opportunities.
- Mentoring and social activities

When a refugee starts volunteering, accesses a course or gets a job, they are also developing skills and building new connections that enable integration to take place. We support organisations to involve refugees and asylum seekers either as learners on education courses or as volunteers and employees delivering services. New Beginnings is a VAS project and contributes significantly to VAS' aim to maximise the impact of voluntary and community sector organisations in the city and beyond.

Our impact in numbers



We supported 540 refugees and asylum seekers

Read Peace and Abdul's story on page 6



We supported 79 organisations to involve refugees

Read about how Portland Training, SheffCare and The Sanctuary involved refugees on page 7 and 8

Our focus

This report sets out our impact between April 2018 and March 2019, how refugees, asylum seekers and partner organisations have benefitted from the New Beginnings Project. Below are our funded outcomes and key achievements.

Outcome 1	Outcome 2
Refugees and asylum seekers improve skills and reduce isolation through volunteering and work	Partner organisations benefit from involving vulnerable migrants
Vulnerable migrants have increased: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language and communication skills • Confidence and wellbeing • Are less isolated and more integrated • Have increased skills and more successful in the labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host organisations benefit from a diverse volunteer base • Employment and training partners benefit from access to New Beginnings participants
Achievements	Achievements
540 Refugees and Asylum seekers supported 72 Nationalities supported 163 New clients to the service	70% Had not involved refugee volunteers before our project helped them 75% Involving refugees and asylum seekers has increased diversity 75% Increased knowledge of other cultures
134 Start education courses 85 Start volunteering roles 45 start paid jobs	17 Involved refugee learners 33 organisations involve Volunteers 23 employed refugees
Summer Activities Program delivered including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walks to the Peak District, • 49 people to Scarborough • Social evenings • Family fun day in Millhouses Guided tour of Yorkshire Sculpture park	Successful funding applications to support refugees and asylum seekers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big Lottery funding to continue and enhance the project for 3 years - EU funding to develop new partnership services model with 6 organisations in Sheffield

The New Beginnings project approach:

We develop a relationship of trust with our clients: by trusting them we build trust in us. This is an intentional approach to combat the impact of the disbelief and suspicion that often comes as a result of living in a 'hostile environment' created through the asylum process.

Our 1-1 support coaches people through the personal barriers (language, confidence,) and the structural barriers (unfamiliar systems, processes) to enable them to access opportunities and help them to develop.

We engage closely with organisations working with volunteers, employers and training providers to help them to understand the needs and barriers that refugees have and support them to involve refugees in a way that is mutually beneficial.

Core to everything we do is our approach to cohesion. This happens through our project because people who would never normally meet, find themselves collaborating side by side to achieve a common goal. This enables different people to view one another as colleagues, collaborators and fellow humans rather than other, different and threatening.

1 – Refugees and asylum seekers improve skills and reduce isolation through volunteering and work

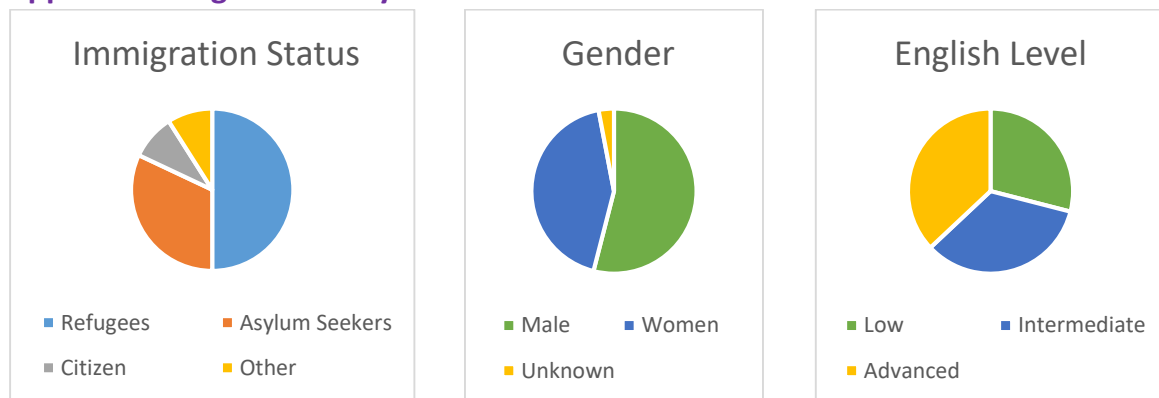
Highlights in numbers

2018	2019	
498	540	- Refugees and asylum seekers supported
268	163	- New clients to the service
49	72	- Nationalities accessing our service
101	134	- People starting training courses (98 people completed courses)
96	85	- People starting volunteering opportunities
40	45	- People in to paid work.
192	61	- Buddy appointments (joint visits to an appointment where a volunteer or staff member attends with a refugee)

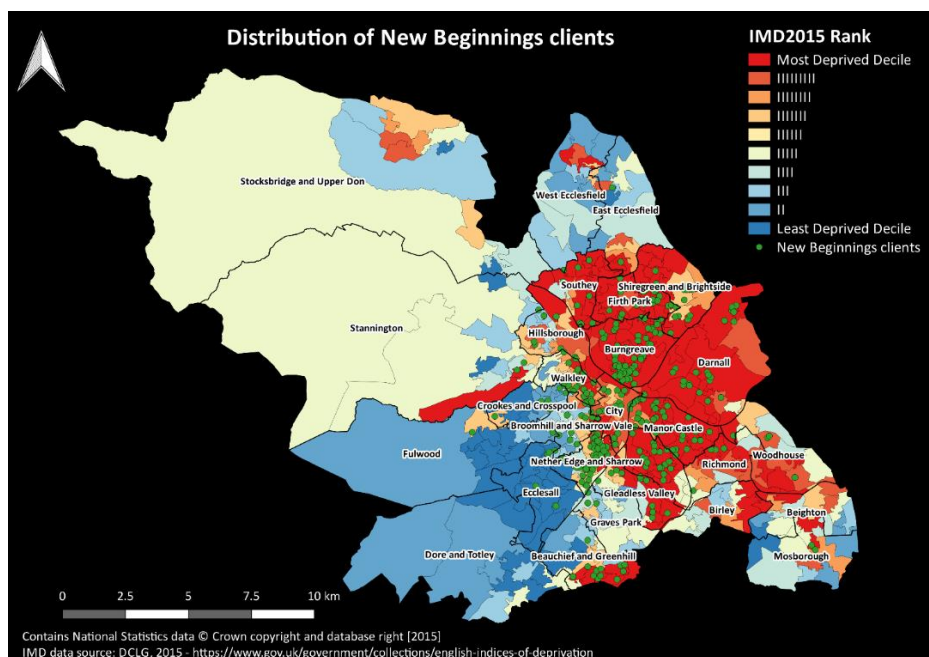
Our clients reflect the refugee communities in Sheffield

We work with people who are vulnerable as a result of their experience of fleeing their countries and their experience of the asylum process. In addition, they often face additional barriers to integration. Our engagement and the trust we have developed with refugees means our clients are representative the refugee community in Sheffield.

We supported refugees and asylum seekers from 72 nationalities in Sheffield



Our clients live across the whole city



Making a difference

We are here to bridge gap between the client and organisation, to support, motivate, inspire, reassure, give hope and empower our clients through the time, empathy, care, compassion and opportunities we offer. We have gone through the same experience our clients are going through which cements that trusted relationship. Moses Lutakome, Volunteer Co-ordinator

We are one of the few projects that provide support to asylum seekers integrate and develop their life in Sheffield. Our support means that when they get refugee status they are better placed to take a full part in life in the city, including to get work.

Our support enables people to access education, volunteering or employment opportunities that refugees say they cannot access without New Beginnings Support. They are able to find a purpose, and contribute to life in the city.

‘When I lived in Middlesbrough, I was trapped in my house. Finding New Beginnings in Sheffield I have come out of my shell. They helped me volunteer with the hospital, I have made friends, I am happy. Thank you’

Refugees report positive impact of support over 12 months

Volunteers who are not directly involved in service delivery run quarterly well-being interviews with refugees. Sessions allow time for people to talk, making the interview itself a form of therapy where refugees can reflect on and process the journey they are on. The results demonstrate how the project is making a real difference to people’s lives.

The light green and medium green bars significantly increase showing that over the course of the year, the support from our project makes a real difference to people in all areas. People are allowed to skip questions so the bars are not 100% for all questions.



Key – How significant our support was to the increases refugees have seen in English, confidence, integration in their community and skills development

Has support from our project improved ...	Interview 2 (3 months)	Interview 4 (12 Months)
Confidence speaking English		
How confident you are to go where you want in Sheffield		
How included you feel in the community or area that you live in		
The skills you need to volunteer and work		

Case studies – Integrated support enables life changing outcomes

Peace came from Nigeria and lived in Britain for more than seven years before she was granted 'leave to remain' in 2017. With a BA from Nigeria, she aspired to complete her university education and become a social worker but did not know where to start.

New Beginnings support.

We supported her to volunteer with Sheffield Carers Centre so she could demonstrate UK experience for her university application.

We matched her to a mentor at Sheffield Hallam University to give her guidance on applying to university.



Outcome:

Peace used her volunteering experience and support from the mentor to apply for a two year MSW Social Work Masters programme. She is now on the course and progressing towards her long term goal.

The volunteering experience has been great!! The people they are caring and warm and this experience has prepared me for University.

Support from my mentor was really beneficial as I had the opportunity to ask questions that really prepared me for the course. It helped me arrange details of childcare and to plan for when I would need to get a job alongside studying at the university.'

'I cannot thank you all enough for gifting me such firm foundation'.

Abdulrahman came from Syria and he and his family were granted leave to remain, in March 2016. He worked as a chef and butcher in Syria wanted to continue this work in the UK. However, he could hardly speak a word of English and was very low in confidence when he came to our project.

New Beginnings support:

We supported Abdul to get involved in the food events at the Sanctuary where he was the lead chef. He joined our event planning team, actively participating in the meetings and supports others cooking their speciality foods.



Outcome

- Abdul's confidence, wellbeing and English have improved dramatically. He is now able to express himself and at the Syrian food event he gave a speech about the food to 40 people.
- Our Employment support enabled him to get a job as a butcher

'My life is very different now because of the many opportunities that New Beginnings Project has given to me'

Outcome 2- Partner organisations benefit from involving vulnerable migrants

We worked with 79 organisations to either support them to involve refugees or enable refugees to access their services.

Our model of building partnerships and connecting refugees to the best opportunities in the city enables organisations to involve refugees and benefit from what they can bring to Sheffield.

Feedback from partner organisations show how the project enables access and the benefits this brings.

- **70% had not involved refugee volunteers before**
- **75% said involving refugees and asylum seekers has increased diversity**
- **75% said their knowledge of other cultures increased**

Diversity helps to improve the service we offer to our clients, helps us focus on individuals strengths and value everyone – volunteer co-ordinator

Examples of impact - Education and Training organisations:

Portland Training delivered a functional skills (maths/English) course, in partnership with VAS in 2018. New Beginnings recruited clients in need of these skills and filled the course.

“We were able to work with both asylum seekers and refugees over a period of 13 weeks in what was a very rewarding programme. We are glad to report we had a 100% achievement rate on the course and look forward to working with Michele and the team in the future”

WEA work closely with New Beginnings and we support them to fill their Skills for Volunteers, Health for life and Community Interpreter courses. This year we also supported them to run an Active citizens project.

Following the WEA training course one client has set up his own interpreting business.

Examples of impact - Volunteering:

Refugees expressed an interest in working in the Care sector so we work closely with Kathryn at SheffCare to enable them to build up or demonstrate these skills. We identified suitable people and then matched them to the roles, working closely with Kathryn, the volunteer co-ordinator who says:

*At **SheffCare**, it is essential to have a caring attitude, and interact with older people in a way that shows respect and enables them to maintain their dignity. Volunteers recruited via New Beginnings have demonstrated the ability to do this so very well. Many have limited English, but they have been keen and friendly and want to give something back to the community that has given them a chance of a new life.*

Partnerships case study: The Sanctuary

In 2016 a needs analysis report identified the need for improved co-ordination of support between agencies and an aspiration for a one stop shop for refugee services in Sheffield.

City of Sanctuary opened The Sanctuary on Chapel walk in January 2018 and VAS has worked closely with them to make it a success through:

- Delivering New Beginnings activities and events at the Sanctuary
- Delivering outreach support at the Sanctuary
- Leading the SPRING partnership to improve co-ordination of refugee services.

Activities delivered:

New Beginnings Sewing Group. This is an opportunity to ‘make and mend’, but also a chance to recycle materials into useful items. Some of our clients are naturally creative and have an eye for detail, while others are starting with basics and are quickly encouraged by their own progress

Cultural Food Events. We organised and delivered three food events at The Sanctuary involving refugee volunteers to plan and cook cultural meals. These included a cultural / food exchange during Christmas, and an amazing evening of Syrian food.

International Women’s Day was celebrated at the Sanctuary with a party hosted by the New Beginnings Project. The achievements of famous Sheffield women were admired and there was much conversation over a delicious lunch. Our ladies were given opportunities to try various crafts, dancing, yoga and aerobics. Each lady was given a lovely gift to take home.

Outreach support -

New Beginnings Job Club – Running three days a week. The Job Club offers a drop-in space for clients to access support to update CV’s, apply for jobs, update their Universal Credit journal and generally improve their employability.

SPRING Partnership

VAS worked with City of Sanctuary to bring together a partnership of refugee support agencies to apply to an EU integration fund. VAS took the lead partner and contract management role and successfully wrote a bid that has brought in over £500,000 of funding to help tackle priorities identified in the 2016 needs analysis, including supporting The Sanctuary as a one stop shop for service delivery.

Conclusion

The ethos of the project is to empower people, and for the service to be directed by and for those who access it. This year we have done that more than ever and this report gives an insight to the impact that the project has on the 540 people we support to access education, volunteering and employment opportunities.

The stories and quotes included here reflect the regular feedback the team receive highlighting both the quality of work delivered, but also the barriers to integration and accessing services that refugees and asylum seekers face. Our project makes a huge impact but there is a challenge to maintain Sheffield's place as a welcoming City of Sanctuary in the current political climate. This year we have seen an increase in refugees experiencing public displays of racism highlighting the need for ongoing support.

Thankfully, the grant from Sheffield City Council (£15, 660) towards the New Beginnings project enabled us to successfully bring over £1 million of funding to Sheffield from two different applications. First, from the Big Lottery to continue the New Beginnings project for three years and second from the EU AMIF fund for a two-year partnership project to increase integration provision for refugees.

This relatively small grant from the Council has enabled us to not only deliver significant impact to the lives of refugees in Sheffield but it has also enabled us to bring significant funds the Sheffield that will help address the strategic plans for refugee integration.

Thank you to our funders:

