

UPDATE

Summer 2024

**The Refugee Council
Supporter Magazine**

Refugee Council

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Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



**SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING
REFUGEES**

Refugee Council is a registered charity, no. 1014576

Supporting refugees to live in safety



Hi, my name is Tesfom...

Originally from Eritrea, Tesfom has worked for the Refugee Council for 18 years. He manages our asylum programmes, including supporting people living in hotels as they endure months, if not years, of waiting while their asylum application is being processed.

Tesfom said, "Refugees can take a long time to feel at home in a new country, because a home without your parents, your siblings, or your childhood memories is empty. That's how I feel.

I struggled to make a new home, because the home I left behind is always in me."

"For those living in hotels, they feel like they're in limbo. When I was seeking safety, I was staying in an 'induction centre', I was anxious because of the uncertainty. I was waiting, constantly thinking about getting a negative decision and being deported or detained."

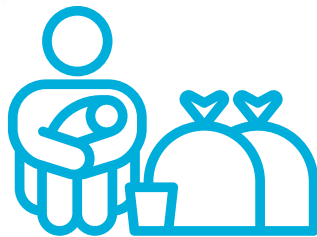
In the hotel project we provide emotional and wellbeing support. We also help people to access education, healthcare and legal services. In 2023 over 1,815 people attended our hotel group sessions.

After such an agonising wait and being finally granted refugee status, people still aren't able to feel safe or secure as they are often given less than a month to leave their asylum accommodation and find alternative accommodation. This 'move-on' process is cruel and unjust, and often leads to homelessness and destitution. Our Keys to the City report highlights this cruelty and calls on our elected officials to take action to end it.

Tesfom

In 2023 we supported 1,815 people living in hotels

186 people were supported with finding a safe place to live.



London Councils report a 234% rise in people rough sleeping

who had recently left Home Office asylum accommodation between Sept 2023 and Jan 2024

Ending refugee homelessness and destitution

One of the biggest issues facing refugees is the cost of homes in the private rental sector. Unable to work whilst seeking asylum, most refugees can't afford the deposit that many landlords demand.

Since 2012, the Refugee Council's Private Rented Scheme has helped refugees overcome this barrier, enabling hundreds of people to secure long-term tenancies. But sadly, we cannot help all those in need.

In the Keys to the City report we call on the Mayor of London and the Government to:

- **Establish a fund** that would cover the cost of tenancy deposits for new refugees, so no one is denied a roof over their heads.
- **Extend the move-on period** to at least 56 days, in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act and the application for Universal Credit.
- **List the Home Office** as a body with a legal duty to refer people at risk of homelessness to local authorities. This would allow local authorities to better plan the support they'll need to provide.

We must see the Government put in place a plan to work with local authorities and the voluntary sector to provide information and effectively manage the move-on process as people move from the Home Office's asylum support system to other forms of support.



Read the report now by scanning the QR code

New Government, new chance for compassion!

While we welcome a new Government, the Refugee Council's commitment to refugees remains the same as it did over 70 years ago when the UN Refugee Convention was formed; ensuring humanity and compassion is at the heart of all policies impacting refugees.

Join us in calling on this Government to:

- **Fully repeal the Illegal Migration Act.**
- **Implement safe routes and reunite separated refugee families.**
- **Uphold the rights of unaccompanied children.**
- **Create a fair and humane asylum system.**

Learn more about our calls to the Government and to sign up to our campaign here:



Weaving themes of 'Home'

Our Resettlement teams are there to offer a warm welcome to refugee families and individuals arriving to the UK via a Government sponsored scheme, from the moment they step off the plane. Once housing has been found, we work to ensure that families and individuals have access to English classes, local healthcare, and therapeutic support so they can begin to manage the trauma they have experienced to feel more at home.

Our community groups and projects help refugees make new friends, become more confident and feel settled.

Our craft group in Sheffield is a place for women to improve their English and find support. Their skills have flourished and so have their friendships. The group's theme this year is 'home'. Here are some of the women and their beautiful pieces of craft.



"They asked us to think of something that means home for us. I thought I'd do a hand – it's the helping hand that I got here in the UK. Although I'm happy here, I miss my home in Sudan, so I wrote in Arabic – 'Sudan, you are dear to me, my homeland.' I'm going to put it on the fabric." Nemat

"I love my previous home in Ethiopia, and my new home – both of them. Coming to this group, I learn things [and] I socialise with new people. I'm thankful to the people of the UK, I'm so happy here."

Ayanto



“My name is Farhad, I’m a refugee medical doctor from Afghanistan.”



Building Bridges: Helping refugee doctors join the NHS

A qualified dermatologist, Farhad spent years practising medicine in Afghanistan.

“Life is tough...but I’m doing everything to be a useful person in this country. Everything I’ve received so far has been a blessing, coming from a war-torn country like Afghanistan and living in London. I arrived in 2021 and shortly after my arrival here the country collapsed to the Taliban.

“I’ve been with [Building Bridges] for more than a year now. I started in 2022 with training and introduction to the NHS, I had help preparing my CV and preparing for exams, registering with the General Medical Council, and passing my exams. **Support from the Refugee Council was essential.**

“I’m preparing for another exam now. I’m hoping that within a few months I’ll be able to pass that exam and start a clinical attachment with a hospital.”

We are so excited about the contribution Farhad will make to the NHS. We can’t wait to hear what he does next.

Fahira Mulamehic, Project Manager for the refugee healthcare professionals programme at Building Bridges, said:

“The programme provides really good value. The NHS struggles to recruit enough medical professionals to fill some roles. The total cost of training a refugee doctor to work in the NHS is just 12% that of training a new doctor for one year. We help refugee doctors to re-qualify to UK standards and find jobs in the NHS.”



For more information about Building Bridges visit refugeecouncil.org.uk/buildingbridges

"It's everything, it's like a dream. I feel nothing when I play football, so when I don't play, I feel everything, like the problems. When I play, the problems go away."

Manar, Fair Shot FC player

Transforming hearts and minds through football

In May, we launched Fair Shot, a brand-new movement and social media campaign that uses football to spark positive conversations about refugees and people seeking protection in the UK.

For Fair Shot's first season, the Refugee Council is partnering with Wolverhampton Wanderers, Sheffield Wednesday and Rotherham United. The clubs will each host friendly 5-a-side matches and other football challenges for their fans and Fair Shot FC, a team of refugees and people seeking safety.

By bringing fans and Fair Shot FC players together we will challenge stereotypes, promote fairness and compassion, and unite people around their shared love of football. It's a footballing adventure like you have never experienced before!

With players from countries such as Namibia, Afghanistan and El Salvador, Fair Shot FC is a goal-scoring dream team.

Join the movement

Please support Fair Shot now by joining the movement and following the campaign on social media. You can find Fair Shot on TikTok, Instagram and YouTube. See you there!



Scan now to join the Fair Shot movement

Feeling inspired?

We have an extensive range of challenge events on offer, everything from half marathons and obstacle courses to swimming challenges and hikes. Get involved today!

Scan here to find your perfect challenge



Good riddance to the Rwanda plan

When the 'Safety of Rwanda' Bill passed in May, Home Office enforcement teams started detaining people to remove them to Rwanda. Our service teams had to mobilise rapidly so those seeking safety had the information and the practical and emotional support needed to ease the widespread panic and fear.

Originally from Syria, 21-year-old Mohammed was detained in May, after attending a routine appointment. Without warning, Mohammed had no time to prepare himself or say goodbye to his family in person.

Hisham, Mohammed's dad, says, "Mohammed was arrested and brought to a detention centre where he was told he will be deported to a third country or to Rwanda."

When Mohammed was detained, Hisham and his wife were so scared for their son's safety that they couldn't eat. They cried every day.

Mohammed's mental health was 'crushed' in the detention centre, Hisham remembers. He feared his son might 'do something to himself'.

We helped Mohammed's family speak out about their situation in the media. Thankfully he has now been released from detention.

Others in the asylum system also suffered in the chaos and although the scheme has now been scrapped, uncertainty is still having a detrimental impact on those we're here to support.

The Refugee Council will continue to work tirelessly to stand up for the rights and freedoms of refugees in the UK. This includes helping people access legal representation and psychological support, as well as advocating for the rights of unaccompanied children.

For more information on our calls to the new Government visit our website.

Hitting the ground running to support refugees

Five fabulous runners took on the London Landmarks Half Marathon for us in April – and they absolutely smashed it!

On the day of the race, friends, family and the Refugee Council's staff took up position along the route, cheering loudly in support of the running team. The atmosphere was electric as we high-fived our runners and celebrated their success afterwards.

Together our fab five raised over £3,600 for our work. We can't thank them enough for their efforts.



You can join in at www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/fundraising

“I’ve been a supporter of the Refugee Council for some years and recently left a gift to them in my Will. I am so glad to know their important work will be remembered and that I can continue my support for refugees in the future”

Lyndall, volunteer at the Refugee Council



Your life, your legacy

Your compassion transforms the lives of thousands of refugees each year. And by leaving a gift in your Will to the Refugee Council, you can continue what you’ve started - and help provide the life-changing services, advocacy and support people need to rebuild their lives in the future.

If you’re considering remembering us in your Will, we have a free guide for you to download. The guide takes you through everything you need to know about leaving us a gift in your Will.

We always encourage our supporters to take care of their loved ones first. And a gift of any size or percentage of your estate will make a huge difference after you’re gone.

Every penny you leave us will help people who have been forced to flee their homes find peace, safety and stability in the UK well into the future. You’ve done so much to help those in need during your lifetime – a gift in your Will can ensure your legacy provides a better future for refugees.

In our guide you can find Will writing support and FAQs as well as more information about how a gift in your Will can change the future for refugees and people seeking protection in the UK. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with our Legacy Manager on **0207 346 1205** or email legacies@refugeecouncil.org.uk. They would love to hear from you.

**Download
your legacy
guide now:**



Our partner Farewill could help you make a Will for FREE today. Visit farewill.com/refugeecouncil-web to get started.

Your support in 2023 allowed us to reach:

6,327

children via
Children’s
Services.

4,994

people through
our Resettlement
programmes.

1,619

people via
Integration and
Employment
services.

1,367

people through
vital therapeutic
support.