



The Newsletter for Refugees Welcome, Cheshire East January 2026

A QUICK UPDATE

Refugees Welcome, Cheshire East, is continuing to support Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, who live in our area. Our volunteers support the families in their homes and run English classes and Conversation Cafés. It is thanks to the generosity of our donors to the Boundless fund that we have been able to establish and maintain our support networks for all the groups of refugees.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

Current information can be found by emailing refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com. Or through the Refugees Welcome website. – refugeeswelcome.co.uk.

In this edition of Boundless you can find out about the dynamic nature of our organisation. There are articles about our 10 years of Refugees Welcome Events, about our English classes, about fundraising and about individual refugees.



Registered Charity Number
116990

Refugees Welcome aims to support, integrate and empower refugees in every possible way, from sourcing furniture and equipment, to helping with access to medical care and education, interpreting and English learning. We acknowledge the huge contribution which newcomers - including displaced people - have always made to our society. We are committed to helping newly arrived people fulfil their potential as independent members of the community, enriching it with their skills, culture and unique perspective.

Refugees Welcome 10 Years.



We did it. The second Event to mark 10 years of Refugees Welcome Cheshire East happened. November 15th was booked at Macclesfield Methodist church and finally the date arrived. Two stalwarts from the church led our teams preparing for the Event. Julia Tibbles led the refreshments team and Ruth Linde led the sound system team. We would like to thank them specially, because they knew where everything in the church was hidden and how everything worked, so we could avoid major disaster!

Beforehand, we were plagued by the usual questions, such as, would there be enough food, would any of the speakers be prepared, would musicians remember their instruments, and, above all, would anyone actually turn up?

The answer was “Yes” to all these questions. The tickets said we would begin the formal event at 2.30pm, but people were still arriving, so we had to delay a little. I’m delighted to say that the worship area was full – full of the people we really wanted to be present. There were Syrians, Afghans, Ukrainians, Chagossians and Sudanese. There were trustees, volunteers and donors and there was a whole row of people wearing gold chains. The ages of the people ranged from babies to those in their 9th decade. In all there were almost 200 people present.

As Chair of trustees, I introduced the proceedings, but speeches of thanks were given by representatives of the Syrians, the Afghans, the Ukrainians, the volunteers and the trustees. There were instrumental contributions from Ukrainians; there were Chagossian and Ukrainian singers and the Afghans danced. Following the more formal part of the afternoon we joined together for afternoon tea, sampling cakes and biscuits made by all our refugee groups. The atmosphere was one of joy and unity. Thank you to everyone who came and shared the occasion.



There were almost 200 people in the church.

The refreshments looked fabulous:



A special cake baked for us.



The trustees

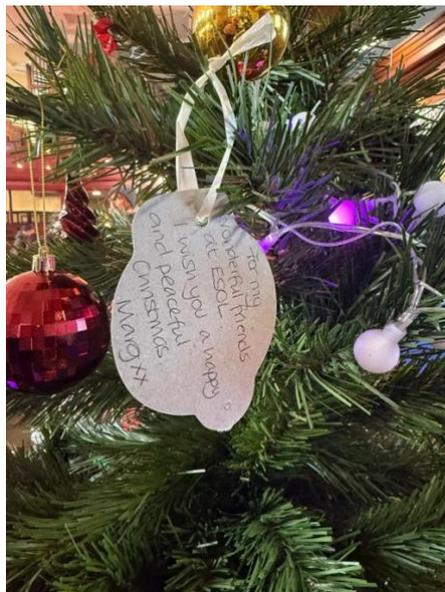


Macclesfield English Group News

The Macclesfield Tuesday morning English group had an outing to the local Christmas tree festival. This has become a tradition for the group. Christ Church in Macclesfield is filled with undecorated trees, which it invites local people to come to decorate.



Members of our group were happy to take part



Their tree and one of their messages.

They also had a session practising writing Christmas messages and sharing beautiful designs.



Our dear teachers!
Sending warm wishes for a wonderful
holiday and a prosperous New Year.
May your home be filled with the magic
and joy of the season.
With love and warm wishes
English class students Methodist Church.

Tamara Lutsenko
Tamara I
Halyna
Inna
Olexa Bondarenko
Olexandra
Ola Al Kurdi

Candlemaking.



Ammar, originally from Syria told us how he makes candles. He buys big bags of soy wax - made in China - online (everything is bought on line!);he carefully melts it in a "bain marie". He adds colour, fragrant oil (various aromas including lavender and rose), and then while the wick is held in position using a metal frame he pours the wax into a mould made of gypsum or silicon. For more fancy candles he will add decorations - such as petals or leaves moulded separately at this stage. Everything is left to cool and solidify. Job done!



One of his finished candles.

Afghan Entrepreneurs.



On December 19th Sayed Sadat, one of our Afghan refugees was very excited to be able to open a shop at Thornton Square in Macclesfield. The picture above shows the brief opening ceremony. We wish him the very best of luck with his new venture.

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Do not forget that on January 30th Rory Bremner will be performing at Clonter Opera, Congleton, in aid of Macclesfield Ukrainian Aid.
Tickets from TicketSource <https://share.google/xxAbVjayQdj5dMU3s>

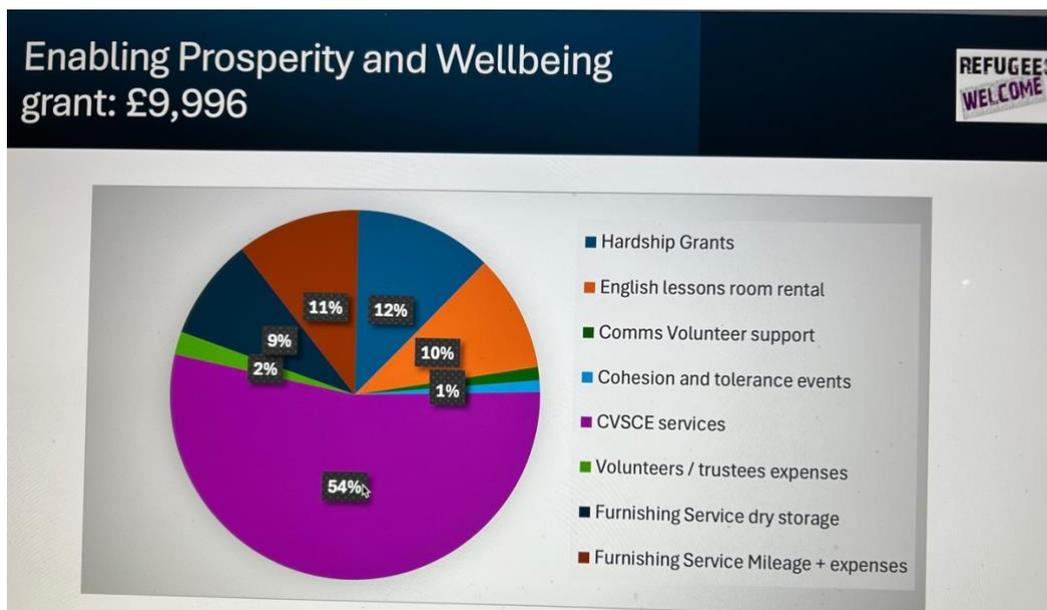
We have recently had success with raising funds from various organisations.

We are delighted to report that we have received grants from a number of different sources. These are detailed in the table below. We have sent official thanks to the sources, but we will share this edition of Boundless with them so they can witness how happy we are that they are helping us with funding.

Update on RW funding

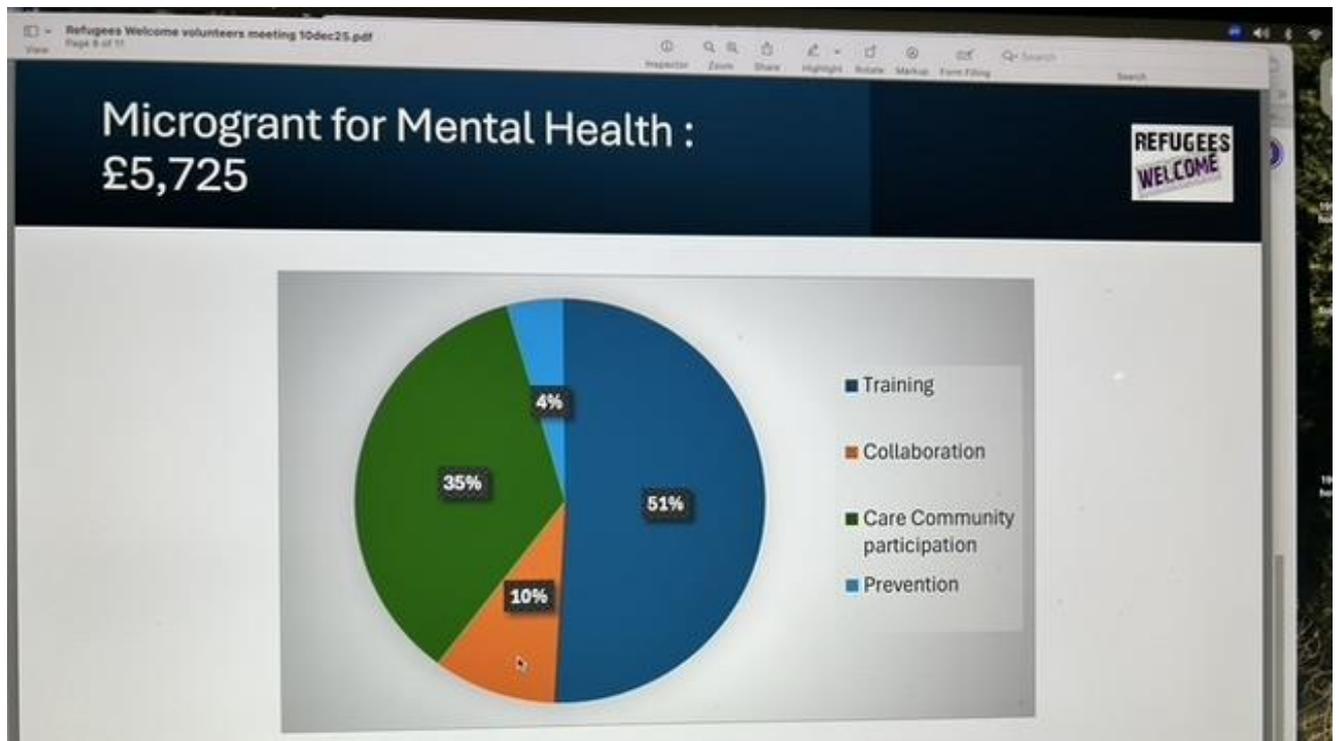
Successful and pending grant applications for 2025:

Organisation	Grant	Amount (£)	Status
CEC	Enabling Prosperity and Wellbeing in Cheshire East	9,996	Won
NW RSMP	English Language Community Grant = 1:2:1 lessons	12,700	Won
CVS	Microgrant for Mental Health	5,725	Won
NW RSMP	Young Person's Informal English Language Grant	3,600	Won
Bollington Town Council	Facilities grant	1,000	Pending
Total		32,021 + 1,000	



This pie chart shows by percentage how the money from this particular grant has been apportioned.

This pie chart shows similar information for another of our grants.



Evolving our English teaching

Young Person's Informal English Language Grant £3,600

REFUGEES WELCOME

Overview
Track your learner activity and English progress.

Activated learners 23
Speaking time 23h 44m
Longest streak 36

Activity
Total lessons 438

Lesson Type	Count
Classic	298
Role-play	91
Read and talk	74

Lesson days

Day	Count
Mon	55
Tue	45
Wed	37
Thu	48
Fri	36
Sat	7
Sun	13

Lessons

Weekly	Monthly
14	25
21	35
18	28
15	22
22	30
29	38
17	26
24	34
31	42
19	27
26	33
33	41
20	29
27	36
34	43

- 20 licenses for AI English teaching tool @ £96 / person / year
- Pilot for 16 – 29 yr olds
- Measuring improvement with AI tool
- Evaluate different mixes of actual 1:2:1 lessons + AI tool
- Report sharing results
- Will impact our English lesson strategy

English teaching has a huge impact on our refugees, so the grant we have received to enable AI input is a fascinating new development in this field.

Refugees Welcome on Social Media



We are particularly pleased to be able to share our new ventures into social media.



Special announcement – decision made at today's trustees meeting – we are going to revamp our website!!!!!!!!!!

We would like to thank a very generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous.

The English language group, who meet at Macclesfield Methodist Church desperately wanted a whiteboard. We have been able to use a donation to provide one.... even though its construction has been a challenge. Thank goodness one of the students spotted they were doing it upside down!!!!





And again, a heartfelt message of thanks to everyone!

You can support our work by setting up a standing order for a regular monthly donation - £5/10/20 or whatever you would like to give (see next page).

This will go directly towards:

- Supporting English training for all the refugees who need it.
- Insurance for volunteers working with families
- Professional help to select, train, deploy and oversee volunteers.
- One-off needs – for example extra equipment required when a family sets up home.

Your payment should be made to:
ACCOUNT NAME: Refugees Welcome
SORT CODE: 01-05-41
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 45946426
REFERENCE: BOUNDLESS
Please make sure that your name is clearly written on your BACS payment.

Go to www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk for more details or email refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com

Please send donations / standing order mandates to:

Alan Brown (Treasurer), Refugees Welcome, 13 Lea Drive, NANTWICH CW5 5JS

Refugees Welcome, c/o Macclesfield Methodist Church, Westminster Road, Macclesfield, SK10 1BX

Many, many thanks for your support.

All the trustees of Refugees Welcome Cheshire East

REFUGEES
WELCOME

Data Protection. *Refugees Welcome is committed to protecting your privacy and will process your personal data in accordance with current Data Protection legislation. Refugees Welcome collects information to keep in touch with you and supply you with information relating to our work. A full data privacy statement for financial donors is available from Refugees Welcome on request.*





Standing Order Mandate. Registered Charity Number 1169909

Instructions to your Bank Manager.

Name of your bank. _____
Branch Address. _____
Town/City. _____ Post Code. _____

Please pay to Refugees Welcome

Sort Code: 01-05-41 Account number: 45946426

The sum of £ _____ (in numbers) £ _____ (In words)
On the ____/____/____ and each week month year

Until further notice and debit my account accordingly.

Name of account to be debited: _____

Sort Code ____-____-____ Account Number _____

Signature _____

Date _____

My Details

Title: _____ Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email address: _____

Mobile number: _____

Tick here to boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you give. *giftaid it*

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box.

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I might make in the future or have made in the past four years to Refugees Welcome.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is required to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

Please notify Refugees Welcome if You:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient income/capital gains tax.
- If you pay Income tax at higher or additional rate and want to receive additional tax relief must include all donations on Self-Assessment Tax form to adjust tax code.



Some more information about how we operate.

Refugees Welcome Cheshire East started 10 years ago, when the Syrian war was at its height. Syrian people were seeking refuge from their war and were living in camps in neighbouring Lebanon. The British government agreed to take a number of vulnerable families under the VPRS (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme). 5 Syrian families were welcomed to Cheshire East early in 2017. Two further Syrian families have settled in Cheshire East more recently under Community sponsorship schemes and another Syrian family has joined us more recently.

More than four years ago, the Taliban dramatically took over Afghanistan, making life extremely difficult and dangerous for people who had worked in any capacity with UK or US institutions. Many hundreds of people had to leave Afghanistan very quickly. Afghan refugees have been welcomed to the UK under schemes such as the ARAP (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy) and the ACRS (Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme). For the past 4 years 5 Afghan families have lived in permanent accommodation and many more have lived in temporary accommodation locally. Recently 4 more Afghan families have come to our local area.

The invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 meant that huge numbers of Ukrainians became refugees. Many Ukrainians are living in Cheshire East.

So.... Who are the people who work for Refugees Welcome?

6 of us are trustees of the charity. That means we run the charity. We make the decisions about policy, activities, finance and how the whole charity operates. Our treasurer works alongside us.

We have meetings, along with our treasurer (a very important person!) approximately every 6 weeks. All of us are retired (among us are a psychotherapist, a counsellor, a teacher a Chartered Engineer, a person, who worked in banking, a large project charity worker and one who is a very experienced business man). We all work in a voluntary capacity. We work closely with a team from Cheshire East, although we no longer have a contract with them. We have to report on our activities to the Charity Commission every year.

There are about 54 volunteers who work directly with the refugee families in a wide range of supporting roles. The volunteers also help at the conversation cafés and assist at the English classes. Our website is run by our volunteers. We are pleased to welcome several of the Ukrainians as new volunteers. The only person who is in a paid job with our organisation is an employee of CVS (Council for Voluntary Services).

We are fortunate enough to be able to work with other organisations in Cheshire East, who are supporting refugees.

We welcome more volunteers and trustees. Please contact us through our website, if you are interested in working with us. We would especially welcome someone who would like to work on the next edition of Boundless!

Nicky Campbell (Chair of trustees)

Registered Charity 1169909