

Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants



Draft Strategy 2022-25

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1. CONTEXT

At the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants we work with people who have been displaced by war and conflict and come to the UK seeking sanctuary and a better life. Our mission is to offer people the emotional support, practical tools and sense of community they need to build a decent, happy life in the UK.

This year we are working with 178 people from 39 countries world wide.

We offer activities and services:

ONLINE through Zoom, phone calls and social media

IN-PERSON at our Centre on Wednesdays in Cross Street and on Tuesdays at Christ Church, Highbury

1) We help refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with their problems

2) We offer English lessons

3) We offer support packages for asylum seekers

4) We provide activities such as art and writing, a choir, sport and much more

5) Our Centre in Islington is a safe space where refugees and asylum seekers come from across Greater London for hot food, advice, to relax and feel welcomed.

We have a team of eight staff and forty volunteers who worked hard to help all our clients

We are working with our board of trustees, guided by Victoria Rae, to develop this three year strategy to ensure that we continue to help our clients in the best way possible.

2. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision

We envisage a world where refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are integrated fully into their new communities with equal access to opportunities to progress their lives and fulfill their potential.

Mission

Our mission is to offer people the emotional support, practical tools and sense of community they need to build a decent, happy life in the UK.

Values

At the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants, we welcome people, talk with them, listen to what they need and respond to that. Whether someone tells us they need English lessons, advice on housing, accessing healthcare, applying to college or any of the many challenges of being a migrant in London – we are here for them.

Our Core Values are:

- Offering a warm welcome to all who come to us
- Working together to put the client first
- Care and compassion
- Respect and dignity for all
- Learning and improving our working model from our own learning
- Showing grit and determination to be here for our clients

These values underpin our work and have been identified through practice and self review. These are the values that we have built our model on and the values that have ensured commitment from funders and the successes attained by the clients.

They are derived from direct experience from the clients and are openly and often presented to us by the clients in response to the practical work we do with them.

It is these values that motivate the commitment of the staff, volunteers and wider supporters of the charity.

3. WHAT WE DO

At the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants, we provide a range of activities and services to people who come to us in need. We welcome refugees and migrants who have been displaced from their countries of origin, wherever they have come from, whatever has happened in their lives.

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Our Clients

Our clients are refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who have come to the UK seeking sanctuary. Each year we work with between 130 and 180 people. This year our clients originate from 43 countries around the world including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Turkey, Syria, China and many others.

Clients live across London, either in hostels, with friends, in Government accommodation or with refugee hosts. A large number of the people we work with each year are asylum seekers, some of whom have fallen into desititution because of their immigration status. For example, we currently have 178 clients, 127 are asylum seekers and of those 79 are destitute.

As clients become part of our community, we build a relationship of trust and they feel empowered to ask for help from our Support Service.

The Activities and Services we currently offer

We offer a hybrid service of online groups, sessions, classes and support which run throughout the week and in-person support at the Centre on a Wednesday. Services include:

- **A Warm Welcome** at our Centre every Wednesday.
- **English Language Lessons**
- **Support Service**
- **Support Packages**
- **Online and In-Person Activities**
- **Digital Inclusion:**
 - Providing phones/laptops to those without equipment
 - Online help people to use phones, computers and IT in general
 - In-person IT help at our Centre every Wednesday with digital issues
- **Individualised support through a Group Leader**
- **Hot food**
- **Donations**
- **Access to sanitary products**

4. OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

We've identified 3 main objectives highlighted in green as follows:

1) Develop a Strong Organisation to underpin the work and enable the Centre to be the best it can be

To achieve objective 1 we will...

- Develop the Board including reviewing our effectiveness and recruiting new trustees, improving diversity and including lived experience.
- Have in place a Trustee development and succession planning policy.
- Create an HR policy for staff including remuneration scales, training and development and annual appraisals, consulting with an HR specialist as needed to help us implement and develop HR for our growing team.
- Review our organisational structure to ensure it works most effectively both strategically and for day-to-day operations.
- Professionalise the way we gather information for **monitoring and evaluation**, including further developing our Service User Involvement and implementing a new database CRM, Lamplight.
- Review our premises to ensure we are able to deliver all our in-person activities and services.
- Build capacity within our fundraising in order to secure and diversify our funding base and allow us to continue to develop in a responsible, sustainable way. Recruit an additional part-time fundraiser.
- To **review how we engage with volunteers** and ensure we are creating the best possible experience.
- To develop our Theory of Change to include the **Client Journey**, the impact of the Centre's work and the change we want to see

Client Journey outline:

1. Welcome
2. **Access activities and services**
3. Build their role in our community
4. Form relationships
5. Build trust
6. Open up
7. Identify problems/issues
8. Support Service 'Flow' diagram - resolve clients' issues, make referrals
9. Receive 'Welfare Call'
10. **Back to Number 2 above:** Access activities and services

2) Provide Activities and Services for our clients to help relieve the issues they face and enable them to reach their potential

To achieve objective 2 we will...

- Support clients through **insecure Immigration Status**
- Improve and nurture **communication** skills
- Relieve **isolation and loneliness**
- Relieve and prevent **poverty**
- Encourage **physical wellbeing**
- Nurture and support **emotional wellbeing**
- **Empower** clients with practical knowledge and skills
- Develop our English Language learning opportunities

To do this we will:

- Offer a range of activities and services both online and in-person.
- Offer a Support Service to help clients overcome barriers to learning and personal development.
- Apply for OISC status.
- Offer a range of English based classes and develop an individualised English language programme to engage clients in goal based learning
- Provide a range of therapeutic based enrichment activities in response to client need and request.
- Link with partner organisations to give opportunities to clients to experience life in the UK
- To increase our in-person Centre Days from one a week to two a week whilst maintaining our online work which proved so effective during the pandemic.
- Secure funds for our Support Package programme.
- Continue to develop our Digital Inclusion Programme.
- Consult with clients to create a feedback loop that enables us to confidently be delivering what clients want and need.
- Review the possibility for a solicitor or legal adviser.

3) Build our profile and our partnerships to share the work we do and to increase support to carry it out.

To achieve objective 3 we will...

- Link with Partnership Organisations to share and present the work we do and help others to understand the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers
- To cross refer with organisations who can offer services we cannot.
- Build relationships with existing and new Charitable Trusts and Grantors to attract support to fund the work we do on a multi year basis.
- To develop our digital strategy to increase awareness of the work we do and attract new donors.
- Hold events to celebrate and share the work within our community.