



# 5 YEAR iMPACT REPORT

May 2019 - May 2024

## **The social and economic impact of Sanctuary in Chichester**

A report by the Chair and trustees of Sanctuary in Chichester to mark the end of its 5th year as a registered charity, supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the Chichester area.



Proudly supported by The National Lottery Community Fund



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## FOREWORD

**It has been my privilege and pleasure to chair the board of trustees of this amazing local charity since its official recognition in May 2019.**

This report is published to mark the charity's 5th anniversary and to highlight some of the fantastic work carried out by trustees, staff and volunteers over that time.

Importantly, it also records many of the wider social and economic impacts the charity has brought to our local community.

**Social Impact** can be described as: any significant or positive changes that solve or at least address social injustice and challenges. Organisations achieve these goals through conscious and deliberate efforts or activities in their operations and administrations.

**Economic Impact** can be described as a financial effect that something, especially something new, has on a situation or person.

SiC is the only local charity dedicated to supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the Chichester area. It emerged from a small but highly motivated group of local people who came together in around 2017 having spotted that there was no charity locally



**Tony Toynton**  
**Chair of Trustees**

supporting refugees and that state provision was - and indeed remains - seriously limited.

Over its 5-year existence the charity has grown significantly in all aspects as more and more refugees and asylum seekers are housed in the Chichester area by the government.

## FOREWORD CONT'D...

Trustees have decided on two key strategic aims for the charity:

**1. That all beneficiaries are safe and feel safe in their new adopted community.**

**2. That all beneficiaries develop lives independent of state and charitable support to the extent that they are able.**

Our beneficiaries are people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. The one thing they all have in common is that they have felt it necessary to leave their homes and seek safety (asylum) elsewhere.

We know that many have fled war, famine, oppression and/ or severe discrimination and for many their refugee 'journey' has been arduous and traumatic.

We do not ask our beneficiaries to tell their stories but many are keen to, and when they do we listen respectfully. We do not judge.

Due to the stresses and associated trauma of having to leave home, friends and often family to seek refuge in a foreign country, many will inevitably take a long time to settle back into a 'normal' life. The very fact that so much in their new community is different and unfamiliar can make it seem scary and confusing. The temptation can be to hide away and therefore not integrate or benefit from all the UK has to offer.

On the other hand, we know that many refugees are keen to study, to work and to make a new independent life for themselves and their families, and that is where SiC can and does make the greatest difference. The impact data and associated stories in this report indicate that we are having remarkable success.

Our workforce is almost entirely made up of volunteers, supported by four paid members of staff.

Voluntary, unpaid workers they may be but I have seen this workforce operating as professionally and effectively as any other. The charity could not function without people stepping forward and offering their time, care, skills and experience, and they are all - past and present - to be thanked enormously for what they do.

During my time as Chair, the board has seen some trustees leave and others join. At every point in its development the board has been dedicated and effective in ensuring the proper management and governance of this Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

But our trustees are far more than people who simply attend a regular board meeting. Every trustee puts in a huge amount of time and effort on behalf of the charity and many provide significant direct support to beneficiaries. They all bring considerable skills and experience from a wide range of backgrounds and offer it so generously to the charity.

None of the successes identified in this report would have been possible without the enormous effort put in by everyone associated with SiC.

Equally, none of it would have been possible without our generous donors, the support of Chichester District Council, Chichester City Council and West Sussex County Council, along with all of our other local partners. (Much more detail below.) Since the first Syrian refugees arrived in around 2017, the community of Chichester District has proved itself generous, warm, welcoming and kind, and I see no reason for it not to continue as such.

**Putting all of the information together for this report has given me great joy and optimism and I recommend it to you.**



# INTRODUCTION

Sanctuary in Chichester (SiC) provides practical, social and pastoral support to refugees and asylum seekers in the Chichester area (the District). The charity:

- **Provides paid employment for 4 people**
- **Has 125 active volunteers plus 10 more who act as trustees. Most of these volunteers live within the local area, and one trustee, Waleed Hussein, came to the UK as a refugee and is now our 'Lived Experience Ambassador', gathering and representing the voices and views of those we support.**
- **Supports c.200 refugees (70 families) living in the community, including people housed as part of the Asylum Dispersal Scheme (various nationalities).**
- **Supports c.200 asylum-seeking refugees housed in a local hotel whilst awaiting a decision on their application for asylum.**
- **Supports c.20 Ukrainian refugees (Homes for Ukraine).**
- **Since May 2019 it is estimated that SiC has actively supported a total of 600 refugees.**

Chichester District is a mainly rural area with small towns and the cathedral city of Chichester, situated in the south of England with a population of 124,100. It is the least densely populated of the 64 local authority areas in the South-East of England (census 2021).

The resident population is almost entirely 'white British' and a significant percentage are over 65.

People living in the district who are non-white are predominantly employed in the NHS, residential care and horticulture, many of whom will have a work permit and visa

allowing them to be in the UK for a certain period of time, provided the work they came to do continues. This does not give them leave to remain.

Most migrants working in the horticulture industry will be seasonal workers only. Whilst some clearly do move to a level of integration with the local community, many are unlikely to and there is very little incentive for them to do so.

## SANCTUARY IN CHICHESTER'S BEGINNINGS

In 2017, a fledgling group calling itself Sanctuary in Chichester was established to provide assistance to refugees arriving on the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

In 2019, the (new) Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) called Sanctuary in Chichester was formed and registered with the Charity Commission for the purposes of 'providing practical, social and pastoral support to refugees and asylum seekers in the Chichester area'.

# DEFINING THE NEED

Research in the UK has found that people from ethnic minority backgrounds have higher rates of loneliness, and that new migrants, asylum seekers and refugees face significant social isolation.

The effects of social isolation are intensified in many cases by the significant trauma and associated mental health issues experienced by asylum seekers and refugees before arriving in this country. Limited language skills and racial, ethnic or other discrimination exacerbates feelings of isolation and lack of safety.

The effect of social isolation and loneliness on mortality is comparable to that of other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity.<sup>3</sup>

In Chichester District the population is 99% white British, 'Christian' and with a large percentage over 65, whereas a significant proportion of the refugees and asylum seekers supported by Sanctuary in Chichester are non-white, under the age of 40 and observe other faiths.

Most local politicians are white British. Of West Sussex County Council's 70 members, four are non-white. Of Chichester District Council's 36 members, one is non-white.

There is currently very little real evidence of integration of the refugee community into the rest of the population. Whilst the school age children of all SiC's beneficiary families are in full-time education, parents generally are yet to engage with schools in any meaningful way. (More details below.)

In the past two years a number (fewer than 30) of SiC beneficiaries have found regular employment locally and therefore remain too few to make them any more than a visible minority.

SiC's Nations United football project for older boys and young refugee men brings them to the University of Chichester to train, learn and play on a weekly basis and they have competed in matches against other local teams. This has had a positive impact, but again their activities remain largely separate from the wider community.

SiC's experience of working with refugees has shown us that many individuals and families acutely miss the support networks they left behind, along with the familiar cultural aspects they represented. These support systems included extended families and friends, or perhaps the local mosque, temple or gurdwara community. There are currently none of these religious establishments in Chichester.

Many refugees on arrival in the UK speak little or no English and even fewer can read or write in English. A significant proportion, especially of the women, are illiterate in their own languages, making learning English a huge uphill battle.

As with most people who set up home in a new country, they have little to no understanding of local systems, infrastructure, cultural norms, behaviours and expectations.

They simply don't understand how to 'navigate' their new environment and can't tell who they can trust. This makes newcomers very vulnerable to exploitation and other abuses.

People don't know what areas are safe, especially at night, nor do they know whether local services such as public transport are safe for everyone to use.

2. <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/barriers-to-belonging>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2019/6/20/why-are-british-ethnic-minorities-more-likely-to-be-lonely>

3. <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/social-isolation-and-loneliness>

## DEFINING THE NEED CONT'D....

Many have a poor understanding of the world of work in the UK, what is expected by employers or what can be expected of employers in terms of working conditions, rights and responsibilities.

The majority of refugees we have met have no or a very limited CV, and even CVs that do have valuable qualifications and work experience on them can appear practically meaningless to local employers. A simple example: a Syrian man has extensive experience as an interior painter and decorator but his portfolio contains only examples of work carried out in mosques and other Islamic buildings.

Qualifications and experience gained in other countries are often not directly transferable to the UK workplace. Even for simple things such as driving licences, those gained outside Europe are often not recognised in the UK, so people must start again with an online theory test and then a practical driving test.

The benefits system in the UK (Universal Credit etc) is complex and very difficult to understand, particularly without a strong command of English!

Asylum seekers housed and supported under Section 95 within the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, have financial support removed 28 days after notification of approved refugee and leave to remain status. Shortly afterwards, they receive eviction notice from their accommodation and the expectation that they will be able to fend for themselves in immediately finding paid work (having not been allowed to work apart from in a limited choice of shortage occupations while seeking asylum) and accessing affordable housing, while also registering for benefits, paying initial bills and generally feeding and putting a roof over their families' heads is totally unrealistic.

The adage 'No address, no job. No address, no bank account. No bank account, no job' is very pertinent to the context of refugees in the UK. Tackling this hurdle forms a very important part of SiC's support to every asylum seeker and refugee who registers with us.

Any and all of the difficulties and barriers to independence outlined above can lead to refugees not engaging with their new adopted community, because they do not feel safe to do so or indeed understand how they could engage.

# OUR WORK

**In carrying out its remit to support refugees and asylum seekers Sanctuary in Chichester provides:**

## **BEFRIENDING**

On arrival everyone is met and 'welcomed', generally by a member of staff initially, to establish their early needs and whether they want to register for the charity's support.

Once registered, every effort is made to provide any practical help needed, including with registration with local GP medical centres and schools, and introduction to public transport and shopping facilities. Through a coordinated network of support, generally in collaboration with other local charities and churches, basic needs are met with the provision of items of clothing, food, furniture and kitchenware. For those families with children, everything from baby clothes to pushchairs to security devices are provided.

When necessary, SiC funds are used to provide items that cannot be sourced free of charge. SiC also ensures that all families have access to the internet, a mobile phone and a television.

As soon as possible, volunteer befrienders are recruited and allocated to new arrivals. In addition, where requested, a volunteer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor is assigned.

Volunteer befrienders provide a huge range of practical support in the first few months after arrival. This will include ensuring accommodation is fully furnished and equipped, help with understanding utility services and bills, help and advice on shopping, finding medical services, and understanding how public infrastructure works, especially transport.

Being a relatively rural area, public transport is limited and can be prohibitively expensive. SiC staff therefore coordinate a lift bank and often befrienders provide transport to essential appointments, food bank visits and other important activities that would otherwise not be accessible.

All of this work is designed to ensure that new arrivals feel welcomed and that they feel and indeed are safe in their new community.

As early as possible, staff and volunteers will start drafting a Family Plan to agree with beneficiaries, that documents how people want to be supported and how they would like to see their new lives in the Chichester area develop. These plans include a number of goals, such as improving English or perhaps passing the driving test, all of which is later incorporated into individual Pathways To Independence plans (covered later), established between SiC and individuals once they have started to settle in their new environment.

So that we can monitor our performance towards our strategic aim that refugees should be and feel safe in their new surroundings (the Chichester area), we ask people during family reviews if they feel safer since they have been supported by Sanctuary in Chichester. Of the 33 individuals who responded to this question since we started asking it in 2023, 32 reported that they do feel safer, with only one saying that they did not feel any safer.

## WEEKLY DROP-IN

SiC has always provided a weekly drop-in social event to welcome new arrivals and provide a safe environment for conversation and making new friends, and somewhere to get help and advice from volunteers. Open to all at a local church community hall, this acts as the charity's 'front door' and a haven for those seeking company and support. We often meet new refugee arrivals for the first time at the Drop-In, when, having heard about the sessions, they come along to find help.

## ESOL (ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES) TUTORING

The single biggest obstacle to integration and independence is lack of English language skills. SiC has a cohort of 28 ESOL tutors who mostly provide one-to-one tuition, but also teach some classes and support the ESOL efforts at the Drop-In and at the hotel. All our volunteer tutors are qualified to teach English to speakers of other languages, and a good proportion of them have many years' experience in this field, both in the UK and overseas.

As a measure of the contribution this makes, in 2023 tutors provided 650 hours of tuition to individuals. Coupled with the classes taught by SiC that year, this equated to roughly £21,500 at current market rates for ESOL teaching.

## WEEKLY WOMEN'S GROUP

SiC has been running a weekly group exclusively for women since 2021, and in 2022 funding was awarded by WSCC for a creche at the group. Currently the women's group provides; social activities, including a craft table and group discussions; English lessons at beginner and intermediate levels; hand massage and aromatherapy; and the creche for under 5s run by qualified early years helpers.

Around 20-25 women regularly attend the group, with up to 10 children in the creche. The women's group provides a safe space for women to meet and socialise, play with their children, and - importantly - practice English. Friendships and solidarity have developed between women at the group who have no other common language.

The creche is important for ensuring that women are not additionally isolated due to childcare responsibilities, as we previously found this to be a significant barrier to accessing language classes and to any kind of socialising outside the family home.

## NATIONS UNITED FOOTBALL

Nations United is a football team and a football-based project, supported by the University of Chichester, that brings together around 30 young refugee men each week to train and play together. Many players are or were Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who live in the area in the care of West Sussex County Council, and they often continue to train and play with the team after they become adults and move out of care into the local community. With the influx of so many new asylum seekers, the project has expanded to welcome individuals living at the hotel, providing an social outlet and a valuable community activity away from the constraints of their accommodation. The University provides use of their pitches and classrooms, along with the time and skills of student coaches.

## SUPPORTING THOSE GAINING LEAVE TO REMAIN

Whilst being granted leave to remain is a significant positive milestone for beneficiaries, it is also very stressful, with almost immediate removal of Home Office support, which has generally been relied upon for a significant period of time

- sometimes a number of years - whilst awaiting the asylum and leave to remain decision. Home Office financial support is removed 28 days from the date of the decision. This often coincides with eviction from Home Office accommodation, notice for which can be anything from seven to 28 days from receipt of the Biometric Residence Permit card, which follows notification of refugee status. At this point, refugees are expected to find new affordable accommodation, a job and to navigate the complexities of the UK benefits system. SiC volunteers do all they can to prepare refugees for this transition, sorting out National Insurance numbers and bank accounts ahead of the decision, and Universal Credit and local housing registration immediately after, working closely with Chichester District Council. It still often comes as a shock, though.

## **SUPPORT AT THE HOTEL HOUSING ASYLUM SEEKERS**

The hotel houses around 200 people awaiting a decision on their application for asylum. SiC provides a full-time Volunteer Coordinator who provides the initial meet and greet service, assessing needs and providing a welcome and practical support. Once established in the hotel, the most pressing needs are providing help and advice on the asylum process (form filling, attending interviews etc) and preparing people for the time when they achieve their leave to remain.

## **ASYLUM SUPPORT GROUP**

With a diverse cross section of asylum-seeking individuals and families accommodated and transitioning through the hotel, many at different stages of the asylum process, SiC has established a weekly support group comprising a small cohort of experienced volunteers and staff. The aim of the group is to provide reassurance and to assist with advice on the asylum process, associated documentation and to signpost individuals and families to legal support and alternative sources of help.

## **EXTERNAL SUPPORT COORDINATION**

Individuals along with local charities, churches and clubs offer support to hotel residents (for example, provision of clothes and toys or cooking facilities) and other beneficiaries (household goods, clothes, children's car seats and much more), and SiC's staff coordinate all of this.

## **SUPPORTING SCHOOL CHILDREN**

One of SiC's key ambitions is to support our beneficiary children and their parents to help them thrive in the school system and enable them to take full advantage of the UK's education provision.

Many of the refugees supported by SiC are young families, with parents under 45 years of age, and often several children in full-time education.

Beneficiary families living in our community have some 93 children, 64 of whom are attending local schools. Children are arriving with very little English and often with no history of structured education.

Some schools have just one refugee child enrolled, others far more. The schools are stepping up to the challenge but it is difficult for them to give each individual child what they need, and sometimes they struggle to establish relationships with the parents, who themselves have no real concept of what is expected of them in the English education system.

The children may be from cultures which do not value education or extra-curricular activities in the same way – particularly for girls. Parents can be quite fearful of what their children are experiencing when they are not there to protect them.

There is often little money to buy school uniform and sports equipment, fund school trips and buy books. SiC can

provide some financial support for such items, to ensure beneficiary children do not miss out or feel additionally 'different' to other children.

SiC provides support to Bishop Luffa and Chichester High schools by providing a team of volunteers (10 at present and growing). These are largely retired teachers, experienced ESOL tutors and/ or experts in working with traumatised children. They attend the school each week for one scheduled lesson and provide one-to-one support for refugee children. This intervention is teacher-guided and may consist of pre-learning, help with homework, or basic reading support.

Through our relationships with schools, we can intercede and support where issues arise e.g. handling behavioural issues, homework not being completed or perhaps addressing health needs.

SiC is expanding this evolving model and is already in talks with two further high schools.

## PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE

To achieve one of its key strategic aims - i.e. that all beneficiaries develop lives independent of state and charitable support to the extent that they are able - the charity employs a Programme Manager who works alongside volunteer befrienders and/ or directly with beneficiaries to develop personal Pathways to Independence plans.

Our Pathways to Independence (PTI) programme was launched at the beginning of 2023. By the end of the first year, 51 individuals had agreed a personal PTI plan with their befrienders and the Programme Manager.

The focus is on helping people access education, training and employment by identifying individual opportunities and challenges, and providing group training workshops.

More detail on the impact of this and on all of our projects follows in the next section.

## MEET EYAD

**Eyad had built up a thriving street food restaurant in his hometown of Homs, Syria, before it was destroyed in the war.** "I have been cooking for a long time," he explains. "I worked hard in Syria and my aim has always been to make customers happy with my food."

Sanctuary in Chichester supported Eyad and his wife Joyhana to establish E&J Syrian Cuisine, serving delicious Syrian food from their popular stall at local markets, and providing catering for events. Setting up their own business in the UK has been transformative for the family after several years of struggling to get on their feet. Eyad describes the feeling as "stepping into the light from the dark".

Find E&J Syrian Cuisine on Wednesdays at Chichester market and Saturdays at Southampton market.



***"This is my dream. Thank you, Sanctuary in Chichester, for your unwavering support." - Eyad***

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

## The benefits brought to the Chichester District by Sanctuary in Chichester and its beneficiaries are extensive.

It is clear to all members of the charity that without our direct support, many of the widely-acknowledged benefits of inward migration would not manifest locally, due to the multiple challenges beneficiaries face when they arrive.

## THE LOCAL ECONOMY

According to The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), inward migration benefits the economy in the following ways:

### Labour markets

Migrants account for significant increases to the workforce.

### Public purse

Migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits.

### Economic growth

Migration boosts the working age population.<sup>4</sup>

A total of **£405,420** has been raised in the form of grants from charitable trusts and The National Lottery Community Fund to Sanctuary in Chichester since 2019, almost all of which has been spent in Chichester District, either in employing local people and purchasing goods and services directly, or the purchasing of goods and services by the beneficiaries themselves through grants from SiC.

## THE WIDER IMPACT

To illustrate how far-reaching and wide-ranging the impacts of our work are, the rest of this section is dedicated to success stories that we believe were achieved thanks to the charity's direct intervention and support.

The **University of Chichester** hosts an innovative bridging course called '**From Adversity to University**', designed to assist those from disadvantaged backgrounds to access higher education. SiC has worked with the University of Chichester to sponsor 10 students on this course, all of whom successfully completed it.

The students have benefited enormously from attending the University and participating in the course, gaining self-confidence and motivation to pursue further studies or explore other new opportunities. One student was particularly moved at the award ceremony as it was the first certificate he had ever received.

In 2023 **Chichester Cathedral hosted a fundraising concert** on behalf of the charity in partnership with **University of Chichester Conservatoire**, a music project that performs almost entirely on campus. The exposure the Conservatoire received at this event not only raised their profile but has partly provided the basis for a funding bid to enable them to welcome more people from the local community into their concerts and events.

Our **Nations United football project** has seen some 112 young men participate since 2018. In addition, a small number of **University of Chichester** sports science students have developed their CVs by providing coaching and other support to Nations United.

4. <https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf>

## THE WIDER IMPACT CONT'D...

**Nations United was initiated by Jelani, a young Somalian refugee who was living in foster care with a SiC trustee at the time. Now a young adult, he has a CV that shows how he developed within the project to becoming Team Captain, Deputy Manager and finally an accredited SiC volunteer. By the end of 2023 he had moved into his own rented flat, he does not receive any state or charitable support and he holds down two jobs to support himself.**

**The project has also helped three young refugees gain a coaching qualification from the Football Association.** Many participants have not just improved their playing skills but have learned about coaching, team work, conflict management, personal fitness, and health and safety - all of which opens up more opportunities for their future.

**Chichester Cathedral and many of the local churches have been both welcoming and generous to SiC and its beneficiaries of all faiths.**

In turn, some local churches and the Cathedral have seen their congregations increase with the presence of refugees and asylum seekers having been 'signposted' by SiC volunteers, and congregations have also benefited from the increased diversity. In addition, many churches have organised local cultural events to raise funds for us.

With SiC's and St Paul's Church's support, a group of Ukrainian refugees have established **Volya Choir**, that now frequently performs in local churches and at musical events, including at some church fundraisers.

**Chichester Cathedral** is a regular venue for world class art exhibitions. During June, July and August 2023 it **hosted a bespoke exhibition called Resilience in Clay**, featuring sculptures of refugees by local artist and SiC volunteer Kate Viner.

Kate - who had previous experience of producing creative opportunities for our community members - worked with SiC beneficiaries and a volunteer with a refugee background as subjects to create portraits in clay and the Cathedral hosted a number of satellite events involving refugee participants. The Cathedral's Dean was quoted as saying "Resilience in Clay challenges the dehumanising and harmful rhetoric that is currently invoked about some of those seeking sanctuary in our nation."

During the period of the exhibition the Cathedral recorded a 16% increase in visitor numbers compared to the same period in 2022. A survey identified that 53% were first time visitors. This also resulted in an increase in general visitor donations to the cathedral of £17,000 and a dedicated SiC donation box by the exhibition raised an additional £1,786.

Kate was awarded a grant from **Arts Council England** to produce the exhibition.

SiC has developed a partnership with Pallant House Gallery in Chichester for the benefit of those we serve, the gallery and the wider local community.

Between 6th October 2023 and 4th February 2024 **Pallant House Gallery** hosted an exhibition called **Sanctuary Selects**. A small number of SiC beneficiaries and volunteers were given access to the gallery's print collection and invited to select pieces for the exhibition. These participant-curators provided descriptions of why they had chosen the prints, which were then displayed alongside the pieces.

The exhibition was funded jointly by the gallery and an individual benefactor who provided a sizeable grant.

17,135 people visited the gallery while the exhibition was running.

Additionally, one of SiC's Syrian beneficiaries is a member of the gallery's community access forum, thus enhancing the **diversity of voices** in the programme and making it more effective.

## THE WIDER IMPACT CONT'D...

**A new business for Chichester** - One success story came after a Syrian couple, Eyad and Joyhana, were helped by Pathways to Independence Manager, Kerry Foster, to achieve their dream of starting a new food business, having left a successful restaurant when it was destroyed in the war. See 'Meet Eyad', p11.

After four years of being supported by SiC to improve their English sufficiently to establish a business, the additional impetus provided by Kerry saw them gain the knowledge, certificates, bank account and website they needed for the new business. This enabled them to initially launch in 2023 as a home-based Syrian food delivery service. Then in January 2024 they evolved to offering freshly cooked Syrian food sold from their popular stall at local markets. Their long-term goal is to have their own restaurant in the Chichester area.

**This new business has not only increased the diversity of the food offering in the city (theirs is the first Syrian food business), but the owners purchase their raw materials from local suppliers on a weekly basis.**

**16 beneficiaries have been supported to become involved in volunteering:** four asylum seekers living in the community, three refugees (with leave to remain) and nine asylum seekers housed at the hotel.

**St Wilfrid's Hospice** currently have three SiC beneficiaries volunteering with them, two working in charity shops and one supporting their e-commerce operations. All three have told us that they are enjoying their volunteering and described what a difference it has made to their wellbeing, as well helping them to **feel valuable members of the community and improving their employability.**

One commented, "As an asylum seeker, suddenly out of work and in a new country without the right to work, I felt I was wasting

my time and skills at home and was very bored. It has been a great way to refresh my skills and keep me up to date with the latest ways of working in my area of interest. It has lifted my mood since I started volunteering and I have discovered I have transferable skills and something I can offer others."

Four beneficiaries volunteer at **UK Harvest's** community food hubs. This experience is clearly supporting their integration into the community through meeting local people, working as part of a team and improving their overall employment prospects, as well as being able to contribute to the local community.

Two beneficiaries regularly volunteer with **My Sister's House**, a local women's aid charity.

Six beneficiaries are volunteers with **Stonepillow**, a local charity supporting homeless people.

### Volunteering for Sanctuary in Chichester

**The charity has 135 active volunteers** including 10 trustees. It is widely acknowledged that volunteering brings a range of benefits to volunteers,<sup>5</sup> including:

- Acquiring new skills and valuable work experience
- Social connection and making new friends
- Better physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Improved self-worth from 'giving back'
- Improved self-confidence
- A sense of connection to others in the community
- A sense of achievement from contributing to community development

SiC's regular training sessions and guidance provides volunteers with the new knowledge and skills needed to effectively support beneficiaries, and this is almost always an environment they have not worked in before.

5. <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-national-survey-volunteer-experience/volunteer-impacts/>; <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/why-volunteer/benefits-of-volunteering/>

## THE WIDER IMPACT CONT'D...

During the Covid crisis (2020/21), all face-to-face support for beneficiaries had to stop. SiC's cohort of befrienders and ESOL tutors responded magnificently, swiftly moving everything online.

In so doing, many had to quickly **learn new skills and adapt to a new normal**. They learned how to use the various apps that emerged to allow home working, homeschooling and virtual social gatherings.

**Testimony to our volunteers' capabilities and dedication came from a local headteacher;** soon after his school reopened following lockdown, he told us that he and his staff had noticed that the children of SiC beneficiaries had coped as well - and in some cases better than - every other pupil facing the challenges of homeschooling. This is a huge achievement, as refugee parents struggled to support their children's learning due to lack of English, and the children had to adapt not only to an alien curriculum but also to receiving all their education online.

We funded a number of tablets and laptops in the early days of lockdown to help with the change, as schools and local authorities took time to plug the gaps.

In late 2023, a former refugee, Waleed Hussein, now settled with his family in Chichester, became a trustee of the charity, having previously been supported by SiC to gain work experience at a local school, which resulted in a teaching qualification and a job. **Waleed's presence on the board means the trustees are provided with valuable insights when evaluating and planning services.**

**He is also helping the charity develop new ways for beneficiaries' voices to become integral to everything the charity does.**

**Other people Sanctuary in Chichester has supported have become volunteers with us, helping to welcome new arrivals and assisting with our operations. We feel this demonstrates how valuable they found our community to be when they were in need of us.**

## CENIA'S STORY

**Having fled violence and repeated gang raids at their home in El Salvador, Cenia and her partner Angel arrived in the UK in 2020 to seek safety.** When Cenia found she was pregnant a year later, she was very worried as she didn't know how she would be able to manage in an unfamiliar country without knowing the language. A turning point was when her newborn baby became ill and Cenia's lack of English meant she was unable to call for an ambulance or a taxi. *"I made the decision that I couldn't live like this, I had to learn English to take care of my daughter to the best of my ability."*

She also faced isolation, loneliness and postnatal depression, but through dogged determination and hard work, Cenia now speaks English well. This means she can express herself, benefit from counselling and make friends. Through Sanctuary in Chichester's support she is studying at the University of Chichester to achieve her ambition of being a teacher; *"Sanctuary has helped me so much. Today, I feel so happy - I have the opportunity to be the best person I can be. I felt like an asylum seeker before; now I feel like Cenia -*

***"I can fit in, be part of and give back to the community."***



# FUNDING

**Sanctuary in Chichester is very grateful for the generous financial support of many individuals, some of whom give regularly and others by making one-off donations.**

A number of local organisations and churches regularly hold fundraising events and some donate church collection proceeds.

Our largest source of funding comes from charitable trusts, some of whom have made more than one grant, while others - most notably The National Lottery Community Fund - have given us multi-year grants that contribute significantly towards our general running costs.

**Grants have been received from the following charitable trusts:**

Albert Hunt Charitable Trust	The Henry Smith Charity
The Allen Lane Foundation	The Hendy Foundation
The Arnold Clark Community Fund	The Homity Trust
The Bassil Shippam and Alsford Trust	The National Lottery Community Fund
The Bernadette Charitable Trust	Postcode Society Trust
Charles Jacob Charitable Trust	The R G Riddell Charitable Trust
Chichester Welfare Trust	E A Sneller
Garfield Weston Foundation	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
The F Glenister Woodger Trust	Sussex Community Foundation
The Golden Bottle Trust	The Weinstock Fund
The Greenhalgh Family Trust	The Wickens Family Trust

**We must also thank the following for their generosity both financial and in kind:**

Chichester Cathedral	My Sister's House
Chichester District Foodbank	Revelation Family Church
Chichester Quaker Meeting	Rotary Club of Chichester
Grace Church	Stonepillow
Harbour Churches	St Paul's Chichester
Midhurst Methodist Church	St Richard's Church

# CHALLENGES FOR 2024 AND BEYOND

As a board of trustees we know that we have to address the following challenges:

- Recruiting sufficient volunteers to support the ever-increasing number of refugees arriving in the area.
- Helping the growing number of asylum seekers receiving their leave to remain decision. Whilst clearly seen as a success for them it creates its own challenges not least as they only have seven days in which to find somewhere to live and establish the means to support themselves..
- Developing the 'voice' of our beneficiaries. Trustees are committed to the principle of 'Nothing for me without me' and need to involve beneficiaries a lot more in developing our services and support offerings.
- Building on the successes of our Pathways to Independence programme to increase provision of practical, individualised support for people to integrate into their new, adopted community and live independently.
- Continuing to raise the money we need for ensuring our services and support are sustainable.

The next five years are likely to bring new challenges too, but we know that we can count on the community of Chichester, our partners and supporters to help us meet them and provide a better future for refugees and asylum seekers in the Chichester area.



Tony Toynton  
31st May 2024