



Asylum
Welcome

Annual
Review 2018/19

We're pleased to introduce to you our review of the year 2018-19.

It's been another year of commitment and compassion from our talented team of volunteers and staff. Yet again we saw an increase in numbers of people using our services and we carried out an increased rate of activities. But it was a year of noticeable reduction in funds. We have only survived by cutting expenditure and by working hard to seek new sources of income. We cannot do this alone and we need your support more than ever.

This year we saw a growing need for our expertise in the core areas of work that help people to achieve safe and settled status in the UK. This included providing advice on seeking asylum, help to access and communicate with lawyers and with gathering evidence and documents in support of asylum claims. We also accompanied people to legal appointments and court hearings and challenged instances of children being assessed as adults. We negotiated the release of detainees. We provided hardship money and food to people who are homeless and destitute. Advice-giving is at our core, but our full list of other services are listed in the box on page 5.

We rejoiced to see Campsfield House detention centre finally close in December 2018 but remain concerned for those detained elsewhere.

In uncertain political times, Oxford remains a bastion of tolerance towards new arrivals needing a place to call home.

In uncertain political times, Oxford remains a bastion of tolerance towards new arrivals needing a place to call home. Asylum Welcome is vital and with your support will continue to respond effectively with compassion, respect and expertise.

Kate

Kate Smart
Director

Marcus

Marcus Thompson MBE
Chair of Trustees



Asylum Welcome is a registered charity, number 1092265, and company, number 4361627.

Front cover: Asylum Welcome's Ildephonse Rugema, registered immigration advisor, secures travel documents for a refugee family to visit loved ones.

Trustees

Marcus Thompson MBE (Chair)
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Right Reverend Dr Steven Croft,
Bishop of Oxford

Campsfield's final year

Asylum Welcome continued to provide visits and support services to detainees until Campsfield closed unexpectedly in mid-December 2018.

Since Campsfield opened in 1993, Asylum Welcome worked hard to meet their needs, pressing for improvements in detention conditions and for their release. Recently, chaotic new procedures for allocating solicitors to detainees kept us busy acting as go-betweens. Changes restricting access to accommodation on release from detention meant we needed to be pro-active to prevent ex-detainees from sleeping on the streets.

Access to healthcare continued to be our main concern and we increased the recruitment of volunteer visitors with a medical background. These health volunteer visitors wrote letters of support for bail hearings which contributed to some detainees being released on health grounds. The second report by Stephen Shaw reviewing conditions in detention centres was published in July 2018, raising concerns about healthcare at Campsfield, with Asylum Welcome quoted in his report.

We pay tribute to the hundreds of local people who visited and supported detainees throughout the 25 years of Campsfield's existence. We have produced a booklet about the legacy of our service, and BBC South filmed a report from our offices highlighting the role of our health volunteers.

The last detainees were transferred to centres in other parts of the UK (such as Harmondsworth) and we maintained some telephone support for them. We issued strong public messages welcoming the closure but expressing our ongoing concerns for detainees held elsewhere in the UK. Given our experience and capacity of working in the field of detention we are currently investigating how we can assist with ongoing needs. We are exploring a request to run a visiting service to foreign nationals held at Huntercombe prison in South Oxfordshire, and we are talking to detention-visiting groups elsewhere in the UK about how we can support their work.



"... they were vulnerable human beings with an incredible determination to live their lives without the constant reminder of their tragic past."

Dr Clara della Croce
Campsfield visitor



Sincerely welcome

We make people welcome by offering a Welcome Centre, by providing food and by running a specialist youth club for unaccompanied young people.

Welcome Centre

Our bright and friendly Welcome Centre is a safe haven, offering a relaxed opportunity to socialise. Fruit, snacks, hot drinks and breakfasts are freely available. The centre is busy seven days a week, even late into the evenings thanks to the energies of **refugee community organisations** who use it when our Advice Services are not running. Their activities include music practice, crafts, sharing food, watching films and sports on the widescreen TV, celebrating special occasions and providing mutual support.

Youth Club

Asylum Welcome also continues to run a weekly youth club for young asylum seekers and refugees who arrived in the UK without parents or guardians. Special bonds of friendship are formed at this specialist club which offers food, music, table-tennis, pool and other facilities.



Activities for young people



This year, in partnership with other organisations, we increased the number of activities and trips available for young people:

- Cookery sessions
- Volleyball and football in university parks
- T-shirt decorating with the Freewheeling graffiti project
- A Jazz trio
- African drumming
- A barbeque
- A theatre session with Pegasus Theatre
- A sports day at City of Oxford College
- Bowling at Kassam Stadium
- A trip to Lady Margaret Hall
- Swimming
- Skating
- A seaside trip in partnership with EMBS college

"Everyone I know comes to Asylum Welcome for help. They are a great organisation, they sort out my problems, help me learn English and find me things that I need – thank you!"



Food provision

Our food bank is relied upon by those on the breadline and to meet the ongoing need we secured an increase in donations thanks to the Oxford FoodBank, local supermarkets and many kind individuals and community groups who make gifts.

In 2018-19 the Asylum Welcome allotment also enabled us to supplement our food store.

We also continued to offer weekly a freshly cooked communal meal, grateful to use the kitchen at Magdalen Road Church. In 2019-20 due to the need to reduce our expenditure and the closure of Magdalen Road Church we will look at other ways to provide cooked food.

1240
bags of food
handed out to those
struggling to feed
themselves and their
families



Our Advice Services continue to provide guidance on a wide range of topics including:

- asylum and immigration
- health
- housing
- benefits
- education and employment

In addition, we provide:

- English lessons
- hot meals
- recycled bicycles
- a youth club
- a girls' group
- an allotment
- day trips
- community development for refugee-led organisations
- food bank
- hardship payments
- detention visiting
- access to computers
- interview practice
- volunteering opportunities

Expert care in desperate circumstances

Specialist expert advice and casework services are central to our work.

In 2018-19 our accreditation to give advice on asylum and immigration increased from OISC Level 1 to Level 2.

Our two frontline advice services in the community are the **Adult and Family Advice Service** and the **Youth Service**. They have to cope with competing priorities:

- Regular, confidential advice appointments on a range of topics
- Urgent complex cases need prompt, expert attention
- Requests for help with lengthy immigration form-filling, which incur additional fees if mistakes are made.



Advice Services: most common requests for help

- Finding and negotiating with lawyers for those facing difficulty accessing legal help and enabling asylum seekers to gather or understand important documents.
- Making applications for asylum support and Universal Credit payments.
- Alleviating homelessness by working with Sanctuary Hosting and local homeless hostels, and helping with searches for private accommodation.
- Making referrals to hospitals and GPs and advocating with health professionals to secure necessary treatment as many people we see are sick or have long-term physical or mental health conditions.
- Working with social workers and the Refugee Council's children's panel to promote fair assessments of age in young people. Support for young people who have been assessed to be an adult but claim to be a child.
- Safeguarding the welfare of those who state they are children but have been put into adult systems.
- Completing applications for family reunion, travel documents and citizenship.
- Accompanying individuals to official appointments and court hearings.
- Arranging interpretation.



We support people through good and bad news: some of our hardest work is with young people who arrived as children only to find that they are refused asylum and become destitute. But, with the support of Asylum Welcome and lawyers – sometimes after many years – we have seen some happy endings when individuals finally win *Leave to Remain* in the UK.

We have also helped those who, having arrived hoping for safety in the UK, find themselves in unsafe situations, for example through domestic violence or neighbourhood harassment.

Hardship payments

Payments made from our modest Hardship Fund, for people otherwise destitute, increased significantly and we are frequently reviewing how to keep this expenditure down.

33 new arrivals
were welcomed through the Syrian
Resettlement Scheme, and we continued
working with **54** who arrived in previous years

Resettlement scheme

Oxford City Council fulfilled its pledge to take 30 families (mainly Syrian) under their resettlement scheme. Asylum Welcome met all the families at the airport and ensured their new homes were stocked and furnished. We worked with them intensively for the first few months while they registered with schools and doctors, and then with less contact as they became more independent. By December 2018, Oxford had ceased to take new families so Asylum Welcome wound down its resettlement project – ongoing work with the families has now been incorporated into our existing advice services.

Supporting women and girls

It is common practice in our Adult and Family Advice service to encourage women to make appointments independently of their husbands. We ran a weekly Girls' Group at City of Oxford College during the academic year offering advice and support in group sessions covering topics such as identity, wellbeing and teamwork.

Training

Our teams held daily volunteer briefings and weekly frontline staff meetings to discuss and prioritise complex cases. We strengthened collaborative work with other organisations working locally with asylum seekers and refugees – notably the legal aid firm Turpin and Miller. We are grateful to external trainers who helped maintain the skills of our teams in aspects of law and social work.

Building confidence and talent

Asylum Welcome volunteers continued to provide expert advice and support services focused on education and employment.

Education

We paired 31 English learners with Asylum Welcome volunteer teachers for one-to-one English lessons. These are bespoke lessons based on each individual's interests and abilities.

Qualified and experienced teachers of ESOL (English as a second language) provided advice on how to access adult education, including English courses and a wide range of other subjects. Ongoing help was provided at all levels to aid their studies including submitting university applications.



304 hours
of one-to-one ESOL teaching provided

3428 sessions provided by
Asylum Welcome's different
advice teams
for **564** people (excluding family members)

Employment

Business-people and experienced professional careers advisors provided advice on how to get back into careers that had been disrupted by flight to the UK. This included helping would-be entrepreneurs to register as self-employed and market their businesses. It also included CV writing and interview practice for job seekers. We gave practical support to complete job applications, including working with employers to make application processes more accessible for those who have much to offer but lack experience in the UK or English language proficiency.

Once in a job, our clients continued to need help with ups and downs at work, and we provide support over the phone outside office hours. We supported one client who was being bullied in the (well-paid) job we had helped her find earlier in the year and supported her with leaving and finding a job that better matched her skills, nearer to home.

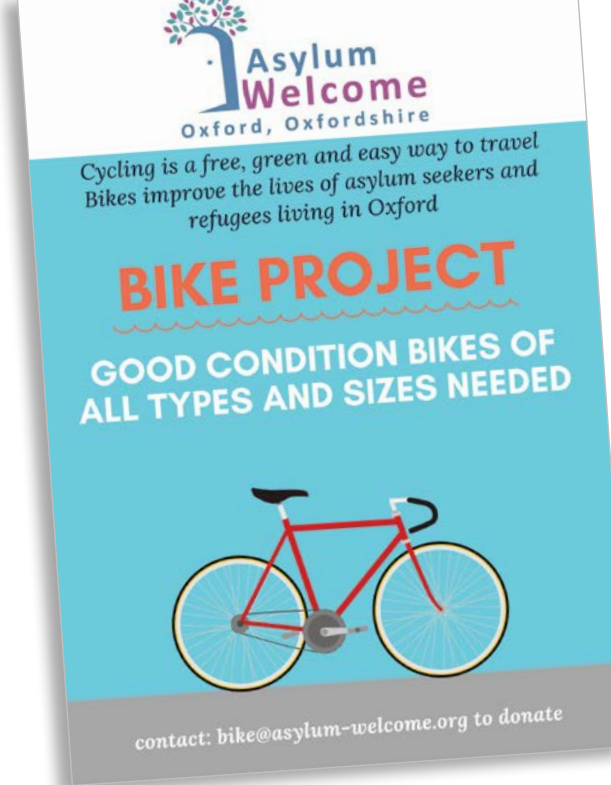
IT support

We upgraded a bank of computers solely for the use of our clients, giving them the tools to find out their own information, communicate with family and friends far away, make online applications and resolve problems themselves. Volunteers with professional expertise in IT were on hand to help with technical queries and to develop their skills.

Free bikes

Our recycled bike service has grown – with an increasing rate of bikes donated and redistributed. Each bike is checked for safety and usability, and we are purchasing new helmets and locks (plus lights if they need replacing). If our volunteers cannot make bikes road-worthy we are paying for minor repairs but the message to supporters is to please only donate bikes in good condition.

We paid bus fares to help with travel to college for regular attendees who cannot get around by bike (for example those with very small children) but have ended these payments for 2019-20 due to the need to reduce our costs.



Success stories

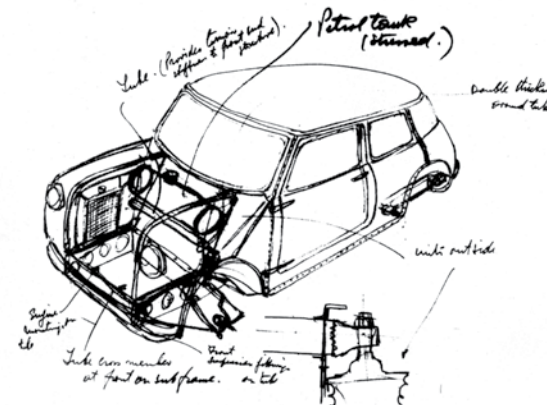
- One client has a passion for agriculture so we arranged a work placement for him on a halal farm. After two months this became paid work, and both farm and client are pleased.
- Another is a skilled pastry chef and we helped him to register as self-employed, secure a professional kitchen and set up market stalls.
- We paid for individuals to have their former professional qualifications assessed and recognised in the UK, including a teacher and an engineer.

An important part of Oxford

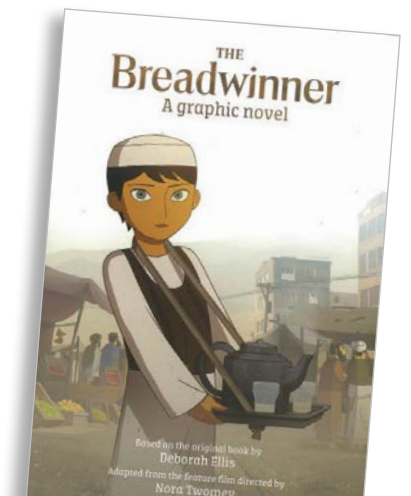
Increasingly refugees have roles as volunteers and staff in many different teams at Asylum Welcome, and we continue to support refugee community leaders. We ensure that refugees are represented at relevant external meetings and events.

We promote positive attitudes to refugees across all sections of the local community:

- We met with leaders of several Mosques and ran a stall at Oxford Central Mosque during Friday prayers.
- We worked with several groups of young teenagers for their National Citizen Service charity experience.
- We produced a postcard celebrating exile Alec Issigonis who designed the Morris Minor which was built at Oxford Cowley works, and later designed the Mini.
- We were central to an event organised in April 2018 by 'Church Concern for the World' aimed at rural refugee supporter groups.
- Asylum Welcome volunteer and documentary maker Dai Richards held a wonderful event for us in North Oxford, with music, food and a sale of photos.
- We attracted local media coverage (for example BBC South, Radio Oxford, Oxford Mail) throughout the year.



- We organised a day of consultation with refugees called the *Oxford Refugee Assembly* – Oxford City Council pledged to base their new refugee action plan on the findings of the Refugee Assembly.
- We continue to be members of the Oxford 'Stronger Together' advice partnership, the Oxford Advice Agencies Alliance and the Oxford Homelessness Forum.
- We met and gave presentations to Oxfordshire County Councillors for the Oxford locality.
- We have been part of a county council working group involving service users in 'co-production' of council services.
- We chair the inter-agency forum on unaccompanied minors, and play a key role in local inter-agency groups on refugee employment and on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
- Our Youth Co-ordinator Helena spoke at the county council's conference on unaccompanied minors. She is also part of ongoing inter-agency discussions to look at ways to support young people away from being involved in knife and drug related activity, whilst continuing discussions with the young people.
- Our Director Kate and Syrian refugee Nuha delivered workshops at a conference for social workers.
- We worked with writers Marina Warner and Kate Clanchy to promote creative self-expression among refugee children and young people.
- Our Frontline Services Manager Navid spoke at the Oxford University Press launch of graphic film *The Bread Winner*, set in Afghanistan.



Finances

2018-19 has been a tough year for Asylum Welcome financially, despite intense fundraising we did not meet expected income levels and so have made some prudent cutbacks. We have sought new funding avenues to sustain our work and have some exciting opportunities for 2019-20.

Statement of financial activities

for the year ended 31 March 2019

	2019				2018
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
<i>Income from</i>					
Donations & Legacies	257,084	129,360	–	386,444	450,622
Investment Income	86	–	–	86	80
Total Income	<u>257,170</u>	<u>129,360</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>386,530</u>	<u>450,702</u>
Expenditure					
<i>Expenditure on</i>					
Raising funds	69,142	–	–	69,142	51,955
Charitable Activities	204,380	147,724	–	352,104	394,631
Total Expenditure	<u>273,522</u>	<u>147,724</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>421,246</u>	<u>446,586</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	(16,352)	(18,364)	–	(34,716)	4,116
Transfers between funds	(50,000)	–	50,000	–	–
Net movement in funds	<u>(66,352)</u>	<u>(18,364)</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>(34,716)</u>	<u>4,116</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	200,802	18,364	–	219,166	215,050
Total funds carried forward	<u>134,450</u>	<u>(0)</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>184,450</u>	<u>219,166</u>

Balance sheet

at 31 March 2019

	2019		2018	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Office Equipment, Furniture & Fittings		2,478		3,303
Current Assets				
Debtors	18,772		53,969	
Cash on Deposit	171,899		164,329	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>4,445</u>		<u>12,305</u>	
		195,116		230,603
Current Liabilities				
Creditors: Falling due within one year	<u>13,144</u>	(13,144)	<u>14,740</u>	(14,740)
Net Current Assets		181,972		215,863
Total Assets		<u>184,450</u>		<u>219,166</u>
Represented by:				
Unrestricted Income Funds		134,450		200,802
Designated Funds		50,000		–
Restricted Income Funds		(0)		18,364
		<u>184,450</u>		<u>219,166</u>

Future plans: A responsive organisation

Asylum Welcome is highly responsive to both the changing needs of individuals and the impact of the political environment on our services. None more so than at present.

In the coming year we need to be prepared for even greater destitution and fewer safeguards for asylum seekers, a more restrictive welfare state, huge political upheavals related to Brexit and a greater acceptance of racist comment in public life. Asylum Welcome is committed to decision-making that involves clients and volunteers (including the former Campsfield volunteers) with regular surveys, small group meetings and annual planning days. We are responding swiftly to immediate challenges but also embarking on careful strategic planning for the years ahead.

2018-19 saw some turnover of staff and trustees and Asylum Welcome takes seriously the work of recruiting high calibre individuals to continue to create a dynamic, expert and close knit team who enjoy each other's company. A fundraising goal is to increase the hours of part-time staff because the combination of part-time volunteers and part-time staff makes consistency harder.

We have not yet been able to move to larger premises so, thanks to Syrian carpenters volunteering their time and skills, we are building additional confidential interview spaces in our Welcome Centre. We also increased the capacity of the telephone system to handle more calls, and we are making steady progress in improving our IT.

A key request from refugee communities is the need for telephone advice to reach those who cannot come to our offices. This may be because they are living in rural Oxfordshire, because of caring responsibilities, or because they are working very long hours. If funds allow, we will consider this in the coming year.

Europa Welcome

In the last year we had more enquiries from non-refugee migrants, including those who worry about the impact of Brexit. In response, Asylum Welcome has accepted a role with the EU Settlement Scheme so we can provide advice and support to people with EU nationality or with dual nationality who are struggling with the registration requirements. We feel this is a humanitarian response to avoid hardship for those who have made the UK their home, and it is a role which we are well placed to fulfil due to our track record of providing immigration advice. We are calling the new service Europa Welcome.



Thank you

With our limited funds we simply could not function without our amazing team of 150+ highly committed volunteers and the very generous support of all the wonderful people and groups that continue to support and organise fundraising events. We would like to thank every individual, organisation and group that has contributed to Asylum Welcome over the last year and although we do not have space here to list them all, we are truly grateful and all are equally appreciated.

Statutory Funding

The Education and Skills Funding Agency
Home Office – UK Visas & Immigration for EUSS grant
Oxford City Council
Oxfordshire County Council

Trusts and Foundations

A B Charitable Trust
ARM Trust
The Barnsbury Charitable Trust
Beatrice Laing Trust
Bernard Morris Charitable Trust
The Bromley Trust
The Calpe Trust
The City of Oxford Charity
Henry Smith Charity
Ian Mactaggart Fund (together with Mactaggart Third Fund)
John Ackroyd Charitable Trust
Leigh Trust
Lloyds Bank Foundation
North Street Trust
Odin Charitable Trust
Oxfordshire Community Foundation
Pennington Manches Foundation
Persula Foundation
Red Cross Destitution Fund
St Michaels & All Saints Charity
Society of the Holy Child Jesus CIO
SLG Charitable Trust
Swan Mountain Trust
The Tolkien Trust
The Westward Trust
29th May 1961 Trust

Oxford University Colleges and Museums

Balliol College
Brasenose College
Christ Church College
Keble College
Lady Margaret Hall
Lincoln College
Mansfield College
New College
Somerville College
St Clares College
St Cross College
Wadham College

Schools

Headington College School
Magdalen College School
Manchester College
St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
Tyndale Community School

Music groups and artists

Buster's Jazz Appreciation Society	Karima Brook and Michele Tallack
Common Books	Manchester University Brass Band
East Oxford Community Choir	Music at Oxford
Folk@Snells – East Hendred	Improvise
Marhaba Confluence Collective	Skeleton Crew
	The Mad Marston Hares

Faith Groups

Bath Street Mosque	Oxford Jewish Congregation
Central Oxford Mosque	Oxford Mosque Society
Christ Church Abingdon	Oxfordshire Quakers
Church of the Holy Family	Portsmouth Diocese
Cowley St John	Quakers of Oxfordshire (including Burford, Faringdon and Witney)
Convent of the Assumption	St Helens & St Katherines
Convent of the Incarnation	St James' and St Francis' Churches
Didcot All Saints Church	St Margaret's Church
The Emmanuel Church	St Mary's Cogges Witney Parish
Eynsham Baptist Church	St Michael and All Angels
Headington Quarry PCC	St Michael at the North Gate
High Street Methodist Church	St Peter's Church Wolvercote
Holy Family Church	St Swithun's Church
Holy Trinity Church	Trinity Church Abingdon
Medina Mosque	Wantage Methodist Church
The Methodist Church	Woodstock Methodist Church
New Road Baptist Church	
Oxford Diocese	

Community groups

Charlbury Refugee Action Group	Key 2 Futures
Highfield Residents Assoc.	Oxford Advice Agencies
	Stronger Together
	The Oxford Food Bank

I'd like to support Asylum Welcome

I would like to donate: £

MY DETAILS

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Telephone:

Date:

I'd like to support Asylum Welcome regularly by standing order:

Please speak to your bank, and give them our bank details:

Asylum Welcome – Co-operative Bank plc, Salford M5 2QP
Account number: 65026773 Sort code: 08-92-50

I'd like to be a member of Asylum Welcome:

Membership is free, simply tick to show you agree with the following statement:

☐ I subscribe to Asylum Welcome's vision for asylum seekers, refugees and detainees:

- they feel welcome, respected and understood as members of a caring community
- they live in dignity with hope for the future: they can exercise their rights and have their cases fairly considered,
- they can access services to meet their needs, and have opportunities to develop and share their talents.

As a member of Asylum Welcome I will do what I can to achieve this vision, to promote these values, and to support Asylum Welcome's activities as a donor, volunteer, fundraiser or advocate.

I'd like Asylum Welcome to claim Gift Aid on my donation:

giftaid it

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made ☐ today ☐ in the past 4 years ☐ in the future (Please tick all boxes you wish to apply). I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Signature _____

☐ I authorise Asylum Welcome to store my details and consent to occasional mailings from Asylum Welcome. Details will not be shared with third parties without written permission.

Thank you!

Donate online at:
www.justgiving.com/asylumwelcome



We are delighted that Cllr Craig Simmons the incoming Lord Mayor of Oxford has chosen Asylum Welcome as one of his dedicated charities for 2019-20.



Asylum Welcome, Unit 7,
Newtec Place, Magdalen Road,
Oxford, OX4 1RE
Tel: 01865 722082
Fax: 01865 792582

Email:
office@asylum-welcome.org

www.asylum-welcome.org

 @AsylumWelcome

Photos by Asylum Welcome staff and volunteers.
Design: www.goodthinkingcommunications.net

Asylum Welcome is a registered charity,
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Please return this form to:

Asylum Welcome, Unit 7, Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE