



## ANNUAL REVIEW 2024-25



### THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

In 2024-25, Asylum Welcome directly supported 2,087 people across Oxfordshire – offering advice, practical help, and hope to those seeking safety.

Against a backdrop of uncertainty, hardship and policy change, we continued to provide essential services: advice on navigating the asylum process; food for hungry families; laptops, bikes and bus passes; and emergency accommodation when there was nowhere else to go.

Refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Oxford face multiple and often urgent needs. **We've been able to respond with compassion, creativity, and a deep understanding of the practical and emotional challenges our clients face.** This is thanks to the unique breadth of support we offer and the dedication of our team.

We also saw moments of extraordinary community strength. When anti-migrant threats reached Oxford in August 2024, hundreds of people turned out to show solidarity, surrounding our offices and local hotel with warmth, welcome, and defiance.

We're proud to have helped hundreds of people over this last year move from fear and isolation to stability, safety, and success. **None of this would have been possible without our incredible supporters, funders, and volunteers.**

With your support, we will keep going. Because welcome is not just a word. **It's action. It's community. It's all of us.**



### MONEY MATTERS

Where our money came from

**£1,574,386**



● Trusts and Foundations: **£516,170 (33%)**

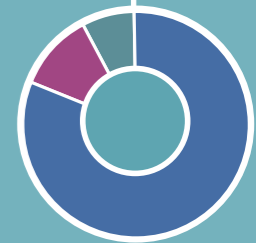
● Statutory agreements: **£617,706 (39%)**

○ Individuals and Communities: **£285,990 (18%)**

○ Corporate, Partners and Other: **£154,520 (10%)**

How we spent it

**£1,649,588**



○ Service Provision: **£1,344,657 (82%)**

● Support and Governance costs: **£182,240 (11%)**

○ Raising Funds (direct): **£122,691 (7%)**

For full financial information, please download our *Report & Accounts* at: [www.asylum-welcome.org/accounts](http://www.asylum-welcome.org/accounts)

## FATIMA'S STORY

Fatima is a young single mother staying at an asylum hotel with her seven-year-old son and elderly parents. Her son, who is autistic, struggled with the hotel-provided meals due to sensory sensitivities, which made mealtimes distressing.

To help manage his condition, their GP prescribed Omega-3 supplements – but these weren't covered by the NHS. Fatima couldn't afford them, and she worried about her son's health and her family's wellbeing.

Recognising the urgency, our Outreach team enrolled her in our supplementary feeding programme. This enabled her to buy food her son could tolerate and access the vital supplements he needed.

The support offered relief, reassurance, and the feeling that she was not alone.

**709 people** were supported by our **Adult & Family Service**

**673 people** were supported through **Hotel & Housing Outreach**

*"For the first time in weeks, I didn't feel helpless. You helped my son when no one else could."*

**89 asylum hotel residents** and **31 individuals** in dispersed accommodation received **dietary support**, including **23 pregnant women**



**In 2024-25...**

Our **Schools Advocacy programme** supported **23 families** and worked with **20 schools**, helping parents navigate the UK education system and ensuring **89 children** were fully supported.

## LAYLA'S STORY

*"My journey with Asylum Welcome started after a very dark period of my life."*

Layla was homeless in Oxford, having survived the stillbirth of twins and an attack while sleeping rough. Referred by Crisis and supported by Asylum Welcome's immigration team, she was hosted through our Sanctuary Hosting service.

Layla was carefully matched with experienced female hosts outside Oxford. The move gave her a chance to recover physically and mentally. *"My first host made me happy. Her house was big, warm and a perfect atmosphere; she made me feel like I was at home. Then I went to my next host, who was also very nice. She was very helpful and was there for me whenever I needed anything."* The safety and care of her hosts gave Layla the strength to begin rebuilding.

Now recovering, she says, *"Everyone who works with Asylum Welcome is amazing... people with big hearts doing an amazing job for everyone."*

**429 people** received immigration advice in the last year

*"I was homeless and had no hope for life until I was informed about the help that Sanctuary Hosting offered."*



**In 2024-25...**

**4,633 nights** of accommodation were provided through **Sanctuary Hosting** for **49 guests** at risk of homelessness.

## AYAAN'S STORY

Ayaan, 17, arrived in Oxford after a long and difficult journey from Syria. He had lost contact with his family and was placed in shared housing before being moved to a hotel. Isolated and anxious, Ayaan struggled to adjust.

Our Outreach team referred him to the Youth Service, where he was warmly welcomed at our Friday drop-in and youth club, Venda. At first, he barely spoke. Over time, with gentle encouragement, he began to join in – especially enjoying table football and cooking nights.

With our support, Ayaan received a bus pass and a refurbished laptop. He started attending college and joined our football project. He began to find structure and friendship again.

Today, he is confident, engaged, and excited about the future.

**431 laptops** were distributed through our Digital Inclusion programme

He hopes to continue studying English and one day become a translator – so he can help others the way he was helped.

*“At Venda, I found friends who feel like family. It’s a place where I can laugh and play games again.”*



**In 2024-25...**

Our **youth football programme** ran weekly sessions for over **40 young people** – with seven matches and a special tournament during Refugee Week.

## HUSSEIN'S STORY

Hussein arrived in Oxford from Iran in 2024. He had fled after his relationship with another man was discovered – a risk that carried the threat of imprisonment or death under his country’s laws.

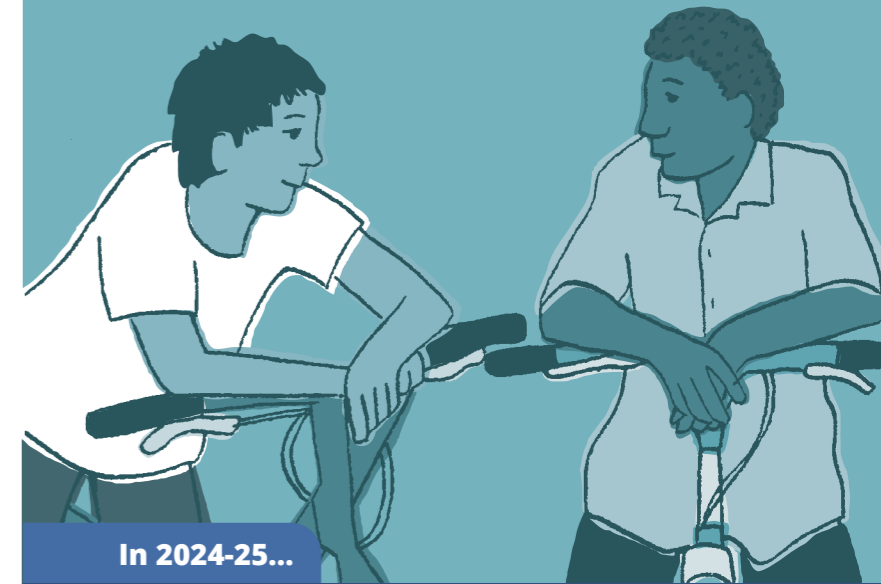
He was placed in asylum accommodation, where being openly gay felt unsafe. But through our Hotel Outreach team, Hussein discovered Asylum Welcome’s LGBTQ+ peer support group, known as LOCS (LGBTQIA+ Oxfordshire Community Support).

At first, he was cautious – but the group offered a space where he could be himself. Over time, he became a core member and a supportive

figure for others. Since being granted refugee status, he has begun volunteering and building a new life in Oxford.

**17 LGBTQ+ asylum seekers** found connection, safety, and community through our peer support group

*“When I’m in the hotel, I can’t be myself. But here, I can speak, be seen — and feel safe.”*



**In 2024-25...**

**281 people** received **free bus passes** and **255 people** received **bikes** – reducing isolation and helping people reach school, medical appointments, volunteering, and vital community spaces.

Every day, people arrive at our door seeking safety, support, and a chance to rebuild their lives. People like you make it possible for them to find help, advice and hope.

See a list of those who have helped us this year:  
[asylum-welcome.org/thanks](https://www.asylum-welcome.org/thanks)

Look inside to see the difference your support makes

Stand with people seeking sanctuary

Please donate today at:  
[www.asylum-welcome.org/donate](https://www.asylum-welcome.org/donate)

@AsylumWelcome

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Asylum Welcome is a registered charity, no.1092265, and company, no.4361627.

Cover image: Hira, herself an asylum seeker, began leading art workshops to support her own healing and that of others. With Asylum Welcome's support, her creativity became a source of connection and strength for everyone involved.

Design: good-thinking.info

In 2024-25, we worked with 200 young people from all over the world.

After long and difficult journeys, these young people arrived alone in Oxford carrying hopes, ambitions, and the weight of everything they've survived. At Asylum Welcome's Venda youth club, they find friends, support and space to be themselves. Here's what that means to them.

Map shows the number of young people from different countries we've worked with this year.

3 El Salvador

**Ali** (age 18, from Syria)  
“I make friends with different nationalities, improve my spoken English language, and have fun listening to music.”  
Ali came to the UK aged 16, after travelling through Syria and Jordan.

**Amin** (age 17, from Sudan)  
“Venda is about making friends. Playing. They have helped me.”  
Amin arrived in the UK alone aged 15, after travelling through Chad, Libya, Tunisia, Italy and France.

Oxford

5 Albania

Syria 21

6 Iran

10 Afghanistan

Iraq 24

Kuwait 2

4 Egypt

Libya 1

61 Sudan

44 Eritrea

Ethiopia 7

12 Vietnam

**Omran** (age 18, from Syria)  
“Venda has helped me meet new friends, have fun, and improve my English.”  
Omran's journey took him through Turkey, Greece, Bosnia, Italy, Germany and France. He arrived in the UK aged 17, after months on the move.

**Ashraf** (age 18, from Sudan)  
“To me, Venda means a chance to develop my communication skills, meet like-minded individuals, and have fun with friends from diverse countries and backgrounds.”  
Ashraf fled Sudan and spent over a year travelling through Ethiopia, Libya, Italy and France before reaching the UK aged 16.