



2021 Annual Report

Welcoming,
valuing and integrating
refugees and people who are
seeking sanctuary from persecution.

Restore is a project of
Birmingham Churches Together.



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Charity Number 243931

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Restore, c/o Jericho Foundation

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Birmingham, B12 9LX

At Restore in 2021...



We received **101** new referrals



50 new matches



124 ongoing befriending matches at the end of the year

96 people attended one of our training courses



62 men came to at least one of our **26** men's group social activities

25 women came to at least one of our **7** women's group social activities since they restarted at the end of August



39 came to one of our family activities, which were restarted on a small scale

Restore's vision

Restore continued to pursue our renewed vision that was launched in autumn 2019.

**Restore's vision is for a society into which
all refugees and asylum seekers
are welcomed, valued and integrated**

Restore will work towards that vision by:

Building relationships and equipping for integration

- through befriending, group social activities and employability training.

Motivating for action

- through raising awareness of refugee issues and opportunities to make a difference.

Working for change

- through partnering and campaigning with others to improve systems and services that affect refugees and asylum seekers.

However, we hadn't expected 2021 to start with another lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Befriending

We built on our experience of adapting befriending to lockdowns during 2020. Once again, our team of trained, compassionate and DBS-checked volunteer befrienders reverted to remote interactions using video calls or phone calls for the first part of 2021. As restrictions eased, we gradually opened up befriending again. We first gave the option of meeting face-to-face outdoors then from the summer left it to the discretion of volunteers and their befriendees whether to meet face-to-face or to continue remotely.

Befriending aims for the following outcomes:

- reduced loneliness and social isolation;
- increased friendships and social connections with people from Birmingham;
- improved communication skills in English, particularly conversational English; and
- increased intercultural competence through greater understanding of and adaptation to life in the UK.

What is the impact of befriending?

One asylum seeker recently wrote, **"My Befriender turned out to be the best friend I ever had in my life. She is very kind-hearted and takes very good care of me. She is always ready to listen to me at any time and has helped me to regain my self-confidence by her kind support.**

Another wrote, **"Befriending provided me warm welcome and untiring love. My emotions are at ease even if I miss my family. My mental health has improved immensely."**

A befriended resettled refugee wrote: **"Meeting my befriender helped me a lot during the lockdown when we had weekly video calls to chat and it was amazing how we had so much in common. We even lived in the same area so it was easy to go for walks when lockdown eased a little bit. We now meet in person and we share a lot about our culture and daily life. This definitely helped me with knowing more about the city and improved my English. I always have her when I wanted to know about anything: places to visit, things to do in the city and so on. I'm really grateful for the opportunity to have a befriender and appreciate all the work that Restore does for refugees that makes starting a new life in a completely different country a lot easier."**

A volunteer befriender wrote about motivation, **“I wanted to do my bit to make Birmingham a welcoming place for asylum-seekers and refugees, all who have been through horrendous experiences, very often cut off from family and trying in very difficult circumstances to make a new life for themselves in Birmingham. What is special about Restore is that befriending allows for a more informal relationship to develop, which is greatly appreciated by both sides.”**

Befriending also impacts the volunteer, as another volunteer wrote, **“I have learnt so much, he has provided me with a broader insight and understanding of other cultures and befriending has made me more compassionate and empathetic of others.”**

A befriender wrote about the emphasis on helping with English, **“Befriending is a great opportunity to provide informal advice about English. All three of the men whom I have befriended through Restore have been very interested in developing their English language skills and in integrating, and I have learnt a lot also in the process.”**

During early 2021, most of our new referrals were asylum seekers or refugees who had come through the asylum application process. That changed later in the year, when the UK Resettlement Scheme restarted and with the arrival of resettled Afghan refugees. Through partnership with Refugee Action, we have been referred Syrian and Afghan resettled or relocated refugees. We continue to offer our services to asylum seekers.

In 2021, we met our annual target of **50 new befriending matches** just before Christmas. This was despite the constraints of the pandemic. At the end of the year there were **124 ongoing befriending matches**.

We ran two training courses on Zoom in June and October. Some participants from Manchester and London joined us to inform their new befriending work. One of those participants wrote, **“Thanks so much again for allowing us to attend your training and see how you approach it. And for your generosity with your materials and time. We appreciate it so much, have learnt from it and it will be hugely helpful as we go forward.”**

Research has been published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, that being in synchrony [by meeting, talking and sharing] with others increases social connection and positive thoughts about others, and also lifts our spirits. It can also reduce stress and boost our resilience – our ability to stay positive and healthy despite facing adversity (Morgan, Fischer and Bulbulia, 2017). Befriending increases social connection with others, lifts spirits and improves resilience. Using a recently developed spidergram tool to evaluate impact, all befriended asylum seekers reviewed after a 6-month befriending period showed an increase in community involvement and understanding of life in the U.K. and 75% felt they had improved their English skills.

All this befriending work enables us to work towards our vision for a society into which all refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed, valued and integrated.

Restore couldn't run this vital relational service without the involvement of our dedicated team of volunteer bendifenders. To everyone who befriended a refugee or asylum seeker in 2021 we say a huge and heartfelt...

THANK YOU!

Group Social Activities

As we have more female volunteers than male volunteers, resulting in fewer male refugees being matched to a befriender, we had been running Men's group social activities on Zoom since June 2020. However, from June 2021, we moved these back to face-to-face events. Being mindful of the Covid crisis, over the summer the focus was on the great outdoors, particularly appropriate after the last 18 months of lockdowns! We pioneered several of our own city centre walks as well as enjoying the tranquillity and peace of Edgbaston Reservoir, the vastness of Sutton Park and crazy golf at Cannon Hill Park. Whilst Zoom meetings had been greatly appreciated, witnessing conversations and the forging of new friendships in person was very precious. People make unexpected connections like two men who discovered that they were from the same area in their capital city and then chatted animatedly about life back home!! One man wrote: **"I found myself connecting well with fellow asylum seekers and our esteemed volunteers. I found myself opening up and regaining more confidence."** During the autumn, we moved to indoor venues again. There were 26 men's events in 2021 - 16 in the community and 10 by Zoom and 62 men attended at least one session.



After a long break since March 2020, Restore's women's group social activities restarted at the end of August, initially once a month. It has been extremely encouraging to see the group form and gel very quickly as it meets a need. As with the men's work, these activities build community, reduce isolation, help with conversational English and understanding the city – its history and cultures – as well as being fun! Women's activities increased to twice a month from November. There were 7 events from August 2021 onwards and 25 women attended at least one of those sessions. The year ended with a joint men's and women's trip to The Rep theatre.

We also organised a couple of small-scale family activities to Birmingham Botanical Gardens for 39 participants in August which included a treasure hunt and exploring the adventure play area.



Motivating for Action

Restore ran two awareness raising and training courses via Zoom in June and October attended by 96 people. Feedback included: **“I've learnt so much just from the information session, it was really effective”**, **“Thanks so much introducing us to a befriended refugee and for all you are doing to make the UK a friendlier place for those seeking asylum”** and **“It was also encouraging to see how many people you had attending and interested in exploring Befriending, a reminder that there are good people in the world who share our vision and hope!”**

Restore raised awareness of refugee and asylum issues through Zoom speaking engagements (including to a group of trainee midwives at Birmingham City University as part of a module on global health and to two regional Amnesty International meetings), social media posts and mailings to supporters. The Restore Annual Celebration in July was an opportunity to gather the Restore family and showcase our work but, we were disappointed this was via Zoom rather than face-to-face.

Working for Change for refugees and asylum seekers

When the Government produced its New Plan for Immigration and then its proposed Nationality and Borders Bill, the refugee support sector galvanized opposition to the punitive measures and the Together With Refugees coalition was formed. Restore joined that movement and campaigned for changes, particularly:

- a) that asylum seekers would not be treated differently according to how they travelled to the UK but assessed on their need for protection from persecution
- b) for a numerical annual commitment to resettle at least 10,000 refugees; and
- c) to allow all asylum seekers permission to work if their asylum claim is not determined within 6 month's of applying.

The symbol of the coalition was the orange heart which featured prominently during the Day of Action in October linked to the Bill going to the House of Commons.



Restore also engaged in working for change through active participation in meetings of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership's Voluntary Sector Working Group, Birmingham City Council's City of Sanctuary Partnership Board, the Migration Policy and Practice - Birmingham and the Black Country Board, Birmingham City Council's Migration Forum, Birmingham City of Sanctuary (voluntary) Committee, Birmingham City Council's Working Group for resettled Syrians and resettled Afghans and the refugee support sector's Destitution Steering Group. Restore was a partner in Birmingham's response to destitution through the Hope Projects.

We signpost to the services of many other organisations including St Chad's Sanctuary, the Hope Projects, the British Red Cross, the Refugee and Migrant Centre, Brushstrokes and the Central England Community Law Centre – Birmingham.

Funding

We are extremely grateful for the generous commitment of befrienders, support of groups, offers in-kind and donations from churches. We are also very grateful for the commitment to Restore's work through monthly standing orders and one-off donations from supporters. Run4Refugees, a key source of community fundraising before the pandemic, was unable to proceed again in 2021. However, several people took up the Captain Tom 100 Challenge (an initiative of the London Marathon to help charities replace lost income due to the cancellation of large public events) and raised funds for Restore. All these strands of financial commitment provide a diverse funding base which is often looked on favourably by grant making trusts.

During the year, we were hugely grateful to receive financial support from the following grant-making trusts: Barrow Cadbury Trust, Charities Aid Foundation (Coronavirus) Resilience Fund, National Emergencies Trust Local Action Fund (match funding via a Crowdfunder scheme), South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust, Roughley Trust, Allen Lane Foundation, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Cole Trust, David Budenburg's Charity, George Henry Collins Charity, Richard Kilcuppe's Charity, Grimmitt Trust, Share My Language Digital Fund, John Avins Trust, Joseph Hopkins Charity and Mazar's Charitable Trust.

Management Committee, Staff and Trustees

Chair of Management Committee
Treasurer
Other Management Committee Members

Mauricio Silva
Judy Coulson
Sarah Dixon (until November 2021), Josephine Houghton, Frank Cole, James Ashley, Elizabeth Baker, Nahla Ibrahim, Fikrie Sinku (from May 2021)

Restore Manager
Befriending Co-ordinator
Befriending Co-ordinator
Befriending Men's Worker
Befriending Women's Worker
Administrative Assistant

Jeremy Thompson
Rachel Dale (to early January 2021)
Catherine Bridgwood (from April 2021)
Andy Ferrari
Nicole Gilmore (from October 2021)
Joshua Smith (from February 2021)

BCT Ecumenical Enabler
BCT Development and Support Officer

Robert Mountford
Maud Grainger

Trustees of Birmingham Churches Together:
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham
Anglican Bishop of Birmingham
Free Churches Moderator
Trustee and Chair of Restore
Trustee
Trustee
Trustee
Treasurer

The Most Revd Bernard Longley
The Right Revd David Urquhart
Revd Ian Howarth
Mauricio Silva
Revd Steve Faber
Revd David Ellis
Revd Jennifer Tomlinson
Katarzyna Kolodziejczyk

As Geraldine Hunt retired as part-time Admin Assistant at the end of December 2020 and Rachel Dale, Befriending Co-ordinator, moved on to another organisation in January 2021, Restore embarked on recruitment processes. We appointed Joshua Smith as Administrative Assistant in February. Josh has greatly improved our website content and social media presence and updated many of our systems. We appointed Catherine Bridgwood as Befriending Co-ordinator and Lead Befriending Women's Worker in April. Catherine has brought experience from other refugee support roles and has built new pathways for referrals. Lockdown, staff changes and induction of other new staff delayed the appointment to the new post of part-time Befriending Women's Worker. Nicole Gilmore took up that role in October and we are already benefitting from increased capacity for our women's work.

Looking ahead

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and staff changes in 2021, Restore continued to offer services, especially befriending at a time of heightened loneliness and isolation for many. This provided invaluable relational support.

We now look ahead to 2022, we will continue with a target of making at least 50 new befriending matches.

We hope to make the Befriending Women's Worker role a permanent post, subject to funding, so that we can consolidate and develop the women's work further.

We will review our longer-term administration, communications and fundraising support needs.

Having restarted men's and women's group activities in the community in 2021, we will develop and consolidate those services.

We will organise more group activities for families than was possible in 2020 and 2021 and encourage families who have arrived more recently in Birmingham to attend and benefit.

We will continue to work for a fairer, more compassionate approach to refugees in the UK and we will embrace campaigns and coalitions for change.

Whilst we are grateful for our current strong financial position, we would ideally like to see more longer-term grant agreements in place to provide more stability and security. We will continue to develop a diverse funding base with individual donors, churches and community fundraising augmenting income from grant making trusts.

As the pandemic wanes, then we will return to strategic planning for the future. We look forward to partnering with volunteers, supporters, churches, other agencies and funders, to meeting more refugees and asylum seekers and to working together towards fulfilling our vision of a society into which all refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed, valued and integrated.



Birmingham Churches Together – Restore
Financial Statement - for year ended 31 December 2021

	General Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
INCOME				
Grants other	6,393	28,750	35,143	52,450
Grants - Barrow Cadbury Trust	-	20,000	20,000	21,000
Grants - The National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	20,836
Grants - CAF Resilience Fund	-	15,286	15,286	-
Grants - Heart of England Covid Resilience Fund	-	-	-	3,000
Grants - National Emergencies Trust	-	5,335	5,335	-
Donations - Individuals	31,355	4,950	36,305	29,017
Donations - Churches	10,517	4,996	15,513	20,424
Gift aid on donations	3,047	4,943	7,990	6,616
Legacies	-	1,000	1,000	10,400
Befriending services	-	320	320	1,360
Fundraising	4,903	-	4,903	6,925
Bank Interest	14	-	14	68
Other	105	-	105	0
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	56,334	85,580	141,914	172,096
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries & wages				
Befriending	25,320	33,415	58,735	62,715
Manager	9,645	28,285	37,930	36,878
Administration	6,868	1,000	7,868	8,386
Employment allowance	(3,912)	-	(3,912)	(3,869)
Office Expenses	6,062	5,375	11,437	10,261
Information and Publicity	1,000	-	1,000	936
Accountancy Charges	440	-	440	584
Programme Activities	1,573	490	2,063	1,263
Training - Staff and Volunteer	720	-	720	251
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	47,716	68,565	116,281	117,405
 Net expenditure	 8,618	 17,015	 25,633	 54,691
Transfer between funds	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance at 1 January 2021	90,792	40,067	130,859	76,168
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Fund Balance at 31 December 2021	<u>99,410</u>	<u>57,082</u>	<u>156,492</u>	<u>130,859</u>

Birmingham Churches Together – Restore
Balance Sheet - for year ended 31 December 2021

	£	£
<u>ASSETS</u>		
INCOME DUE		1,558
PREPAYMENTS		1,330
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		154,587
		<u>157,475</u>
<u>LESS LIABILITIES</u>		
CREDITORS		-543
ACCRUALS (PROFESSIONAL FEE)		-440
INTERDIVISIONAL CREDITORS		0
		<u>156,492</u>
<u>Represented By</u>		
<u>GENERAL ACCUMULATED FUND</u>		
Balance at 31 December 2021		99,410
<u>RESTRICTED FUND</u>		
Balance at 31 December 2021		57,082
		<u>156,492</u>

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RestoreBefriend> Charity number: 243931