



RESTORE

Annual Report

2022

Restore is a project of Birmingham Churches Together, charity number 243931

At Restore in 2022 ...



We received **162** new referrals

51 new befriending matches



115 ongoing befriending matches at the end of the year

103 people attended one of our training courses



88 men came to at least one of our 29 men's group social activities

71 women came to at least one of our 26 women's group social activities



134 people of 15 nationalities came to at least one of our family activities

Restore's Vision

Restore continued to pursue our vision throughout 2022. We are delighted that we were able to do far more in the community following the removal of all Covid-19 restrictions.

**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.

Message from Mauricio Silva, Chair of Restore



As I read about the work done by Restore on behalf of the churches in Birmingham over the past year, I remember with gratitude the thousands of ordinary people who, throughout the years, have generously given Restore their time, money and best efforts. In doing so, they have contributed to make Birmingham and its diverse communities, a place where refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed, valued, and integrated.

2022 was yet another remarkable year for Restore. Having successfully adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic in previous years, the project has been able to strengthen its core services which enable befriending and offer social activities to refugees and asylum seekers. Our committed staff team has also been successful in motivating others for action and working for much-needed systemic changes.

All this impressive work happens because of the ongoing support of the members of the Management Committee, BCT trustees, BCT staff and hundreds of volunteers who pray for, and help Restore in diverse ways. A final word of thanks and congratulations for the excellent work to our dedicated and committed Restore staff.

Befriending

Following the restrictions of 2020 and 2021, our befriending team of staff and volunteers really appreciated being back to consistent face-to-face interactions with refugees and asylum seekers. This made it far easier to work towards the following outcomes:

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

Befriending is a 3-way relationship between Restore, the volunteer and the refugee or asylum seeker. Whilst regular meetings are between the trained volunteer and a refugee, Restore staff are available to offer advice and support. We seek formal and informal feedback and organise a termly Befrienders Get Together for volunteers to provide additional input, training and mutual sharing and support.

During 2022, our referral rates increased. Restore received more referrals in 2022 than we did during each of the pandemic years. We received referrals from 33 agencies, referrals from current or former service users and self-referrals. We not only received referrals of newly arrived asylum seekers but also resettled refugees since Birmingham City Council has pledged to receive 220 resettled Afghans by the end of March 2024.

In 2022, we made 51 new befriending matches, just exceeding our annual target of 50 new matches. At the year-end, there were 115 ongoing befriending matches of refugees or asylum seekers from 27 countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea and El Salvador. Several longer-term befriending matches moved to enduring friendships during 2022, so are no longer part of the befriending scheme as the befriendees are much more settled than at the outset.

What is the impact of befriending?

Refugees and asylum seekers who have been befriended have written about the impact for them.

“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'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.”

“What I love most is the befriending. My befriender is more than a ‘Mum’ to me. She has been really good to me. She’s been like a mentor.”

“My befriender has introduced a cycling routine, which has helped me mentally and physically, to lessen my worries!”

“Meeting my befriender makes some feel less lonely and I am always excited to meet him once in every other week.”

Befriending is mutually beneficial. One volunteer befriender wrote about the impact, **“Being able to 'walk' with my befriender in some of her pain, and talk things through, encouraging her in some of the challenges she faces, I believe lightens her burden a little to enable her to carry on. It is a privilege having such a role.”**

Another befriender wrote, **“My voluntary work has taught me that refugees are here to enrich this country. Also, it helped me, as a retired teacher, to share some of my knowledge and experience and made me feel that I am still able to help my fellow human beings.”**

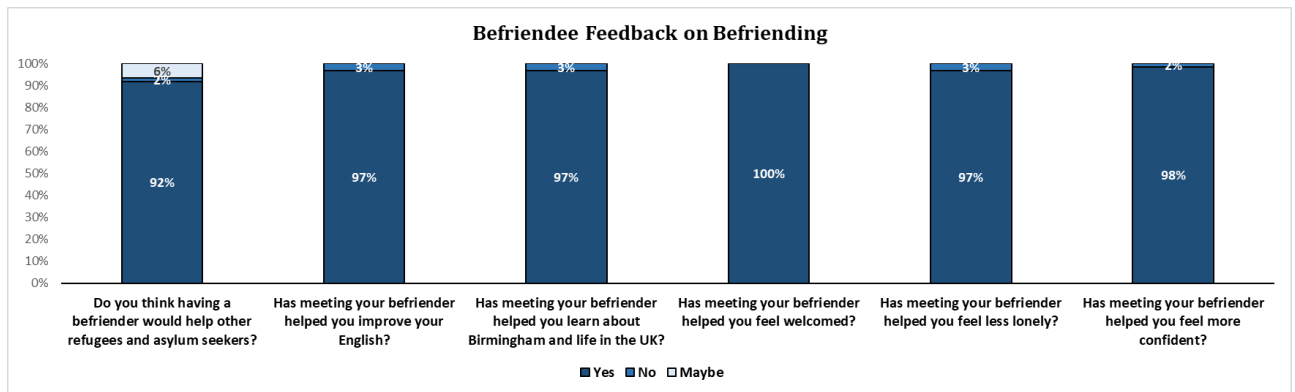
Two further volunteer befrienders described insights into their befriending experiences:

“We’ve met in the city centre and regularly communicate by WhatsApp. Much of our conversation has revolved around practical arrangements for him starting work as a civil engineer, getting to London for a two-day induction course exactly at the time that his child was due to be born. His child was born at 4am on the morning that he was due in London for his appointment at 10am. He was present at both events! The company he works for provided him with a desk and computer to work from home for 2-3 days per week. He would like to rent an allotment as he is a keen gardener.”

“I met my befriender in early 2022 and since then we have become very good friends. I no longer see this as a “volunteering job” but just as if I’m meeting up with my friend for food or a coffee. Some of the things we enjoy doing together are sharing food from each other’s culture, going to the park or for a coffee. She is always so grateful for my time, and I am always happy to help her. Some of the things I have helped her with are booking appointments, understanding letters or emails, and communicating with her daughter’s school. I went to the parents evening with my befriender to support and learnt that her daughter was behind in her reading. So now whenever I meet them, I spend some time listening to her daughter read to help her progress. My befriender misses her family so much and struggles daily with not being there with them. Since meeting me, she’s said she feels like she is no longer alone and that I am her family here.”

During 2022, we worked at improving our evaluation and monitoring, particularly seeking more feedback from refugees and asylum seekers who were befriended. In the autumn, we surveyed befriendeds about the impact of befriending, received 64 responses and the results were very encouraging and indicated that befriending had led to the outcomes we hope for:

- 100% of those who responded indicated that meeting their befriender had helped them to feel more welcomed;
- 98% felt that meeting their befriender had helped them to feel more confident;
- 97% felt that meeting their befriender had helped them feel less lonely;
- 97% felt that meeting their befriender had helped them improve their English;
- 97% felt that meeting their befriender had helped them learn about life in Birmingham and the UK; and
- 92% thought that having a befriender would help other refugees or asylum seekers.



At the end of the year, Restore sought further feedback from befriendees but received a smaller number of 22 responses. Of the befriendees who responded, 96% stated that befriending had helped them in 2022. The survey asked, “how did befriending help you in 2022?” Written responses included all the factors that Restore aims for and repeated themes were help with English, visiting new places and building relationships. Their responses to a question about advice that they would give to a new volunteer befriender included give opportunities to practise English, be friendly, be respectful and speak slowly.

We are delighted that there is more evidence showing that we are meeting our hoped for outcomes through befriending relationships. We applaud our volunteer befriending team on the difference that they make in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers through their consistent, compassionate service.

Our volunteer befrienders are the lifeblood of this relational work and to everyone who befriended during 2022, we say a massive ‘Thank you’.



THANK YOU!

Group Social Activities

2022 was the first year since 2019 that we were able to run a full complement of group social activities for men, women and families. In 2022, 86 men, 71 women and 134 people from families (52 adults and 82 children) attended at least one event.

The aims of all our group activities are similar to the aims for befriending:

- To reduce isolation and loneliness and isolation through building relationships;
- To provide opportunities to develop and practise English Language skills;
- To provide opportunities to learn about Birmingham – history, culture, recreational opportunities;
- To boost well-being and mental health

Both men's and women's group social activities run once a fortnight as another means of building community and combating isolation and loneliness. Group activities provide opportunities for developing conversational English skills. Including an intentional English element to broaden vocabulary, explain the venue or through a multiple-choice quiz has become a feature of our group activities. There was a wide range of activities: 29 for men and 26 for women. Highlights for the men's activities included attending an Opening Ceremony Dress Rehearsal for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and playing table tennis outside Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Highlights for the women included a river cruise in Stratford Upon Avon and lots of amazing concerts through Celebrating Sanctuary. During 2022, average attendance increased with an average of 16 women and 11 men at each activity.



Restore also re-established a programme of occasional group activities for families spread over the year. Activities included Aston Hall, Beaudesert Activity Centre, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Think Tank and Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park.

What is the is the impact of group social activities? The impact of group social activities is encapsulated in this quote: ***“I enjoy learning new things and knowing new people.”*** Here are a few comments relating to men’s and women’s activities:

“I enjoyed the beauty of the garden and many historical items in the museum,”

“I made new friends who were full of energy and made me get energy from them too.”

“I have learned that we can have a good time together regardless of where we come from.”

“I was able to forget what's happening to me personally during the planting exercise and interacting with other women.”

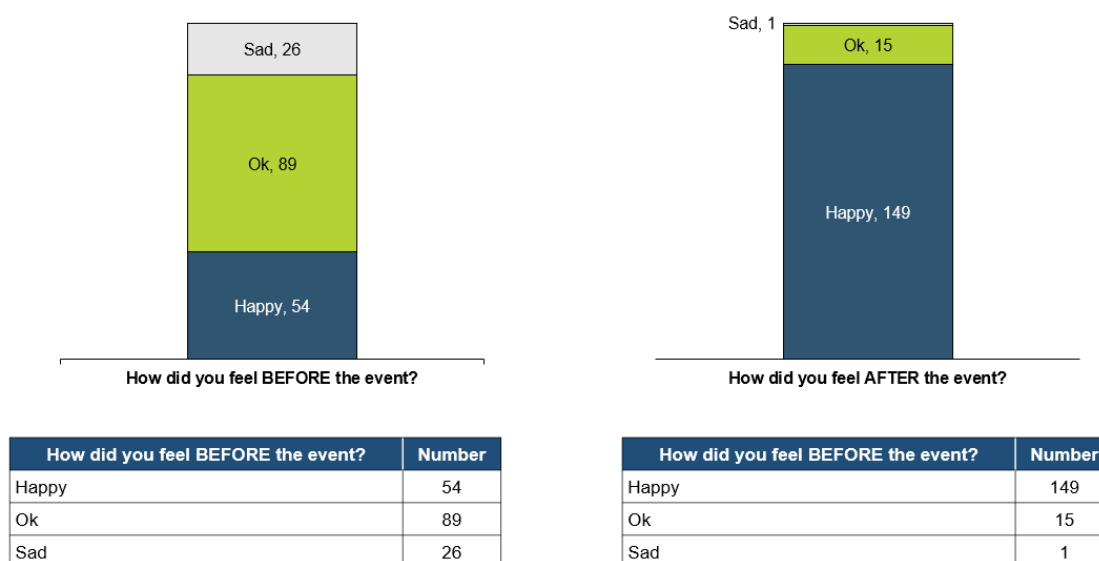
“It relieved the tension inside of me.”

A parent commented after a trip to Beaudesert Park, **“It was great, especially for us because we’d not gotten any holiday or picnic during last 3 years in the UK.”** Another parent wrote about an Aston Hall trip, **“It was great to see the museum and learn more about history. Sharing with the other families with games and food was magnificent.”** After the visit to the dress rehearsal for the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, one man wrote that it was **“Something new in my life, sense of belonging to the United Kingdom.”**



Electronic feedback forms are sent after each event. Whilst not everyone completes them, we do receive some useful information. Of those who responded, 94% (159 of 169 responses) stated that they had met new people and made new friends; almost 87% said they had learnt something new about Birmingham; and 87% (225 of 260 responses) stated they had learnt more English. The following graphs and data show the encouraging and significant change that events had on mood. At the beginning of events 32% of attendees felt happy, 53% were OK and 15% were sad.

At the end of events that had changed to 88% happy, 9% were OK, and less than 1% were sad (and 2% didn't register their mood at the end of the session).



Being granted a Community Welcome Pass for use at Birmingham museums, enabled us to take groups to Aston Hall, Blakesley Hall, Think Tank (science museum) and Soho House free of charge. We are grateful to Birmingham Museums Trust for accepting us onto the scheme. During 2022, this gift in kind was worth the equivalent of almost £2,000 in entrance fees.

We are also grateful to all the organisations who have supported our group activities by providing venues, activities, tours or reduced entry fees or free entry including: Rep Theatre, Birmingham Opera Company, The Exchange, St Mary's Church Moseley, Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham Anglican Cathedral, Selly Manor, Celebrating Sanctuary, The Hive, Near Neighbours (Birmingham), Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Cathedral, Avon Boating (Stratford on Avon), Fatima House, The MAC and PoliNations.

Restore registers our huge thanks to the volunteer befrienders who join us for men's and women's activities. This enables greater welcome and more opportunities for service users to practise their English and for interaction with those from the host communities.

Motivating for Action

Restore ran three training and awareness raising courses via Zoom in February, June and October which were attended by 103 participants, some of whom have applied to befriend. Feedback included, **"Such clear explanations of the processes for those arriving and ongoing processes. Best I have ever heard. Simple and NOT at all confusing."**

"Hearing from a befriender (a refugee) was so useful and helped bring what Restore is doing to life. It definitely helped reinforce why I want to volunteer."

"Superb quality of training – well structured, interactive, empathetic and highly informative."

Those courses were delivered via Zoom and have attracted participants from beyond the Midlands interested in setting up their own befriending schemes including someone from Switzerland.

Restore also raised awareness of refugee and asylum issues through speaking engagements (including two groups of Headteachers from Catholic Schools from across the country; a regional Christian Medical Fellowship refugee and asylum seeker health conference; the retired men's group at Duke Street Church, Sutton Coldfield; Carrs Lane Church on Refugee Week Sunday; trustees from the Roughley, Saintbury and Cole Trusts who were visiting projects they supported; and being interviewed on UCB Radio News), involvement in events (including sharing a stall with Asylum Matters and RMC at a Birmingham Cathedral Common Wealth Table event), social media posts and mailings to supporters.

The Restore Annual Celebration in July felt like a step-change in celebrating as it was the first time, we'd been able to bring the whole Restore community of refugees, sanctuary seekers, volunteers and supporters together at an in-person event for 3 years. We are grateful to St Martin in the Bullring church for their hospitality. Whilst it was great to share about our work over the previous year, the highlight was the buzz from over 90 people interacting over refreshments.

Working for Change for refugees and asylum seekers

Campaigning continued on the provisions within the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill. We work as part of the Together With Refugees coalition particularly seeking

- a) 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) a numerical annual commitment to resettle at least 10,000 refugees; and
- c) permission to work for asylum seekers, if their asylum claim was not determined within 6 months of applying.

Despite support from opposition parties, from a few Conservative MPs on some issues and amendments in the House of Lords, the legislation became law and now affects asylum seekers arriving in the UK after 28 June 2022.

There was campaigning against the Rwanda Plan to send asylum seekers for processing in the Rwandan system. Restore believes that the global refugee challenge requires all, including the UK, to play their part in providing solutions and that an 'offshoring policy' for some asylum seekers was reneging on our responsibilities under the UN Refugee Convention 1951 which the UK helped to write. Campaigning included joining a city centre rally on the evening that the first plane to Rwanda was due to take off. It was cancelled that evening due to Court intervention. We are grateful to all who have joined in campaigning including a Fill the Skies with Hope event at All Saints Church, Kings Heath.



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 and their Opportunities and Communities thematic groups, Birmingham City Council's Migration Forum, Birmingham City of Sanctuary (voluntary) Committee and Birmingham City Council's Working Group for those working with resettled refugees. Restore was a partner in Birmingham's response to destitution through the Hope Projects.

Restore signposted refugees and asylum seekers to the services of other organisations including St Chad's Sanctuary, the Hope Projects, the British Red Cross, the Refugee and Migrant Centre, Brushstrokes, the Bike Project, ESOL Hub and Refugee Action's RTOF employability project and CARE project.

Funding

With group social activities back at full pelt and increased staffing, expenditure also increased in 2022, compared to the two years of the pandemic. We are extremely grateful for the commitment of befrienders and supporters to Restore's work through monthly standing orders and one-off donations and to several churches who also generously donate to Restore.

We give thanks for the service of former longstanding befrienders Heather Le Dieu and Anne Holding (who was also a Management Committee member) who also generously left financial legacies so the work of Restore could continue.

All these strands of financial commitment help 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 and organisations: Barrow Cadbury Trust, Eveson Trust, Blakebank Trust, Birmingham City Council, National Emergencies Trust Local Action Fund, South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust, Roughley Trust, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Cole Trust, Richard Kilcuppe's Charity, Grimmitt Trust, John Avins Trust and Mazar's Charitable Trust and Refugee Action.

Management Committee, Staff and Trustees

Chair of Management Committee	Mauricio Silva
Treasurer	Judy Coulson
Other Management Committee Members	Josephine Houghton, Frank Cole, James Ashley, Elizabeth Baker, Nahla Ibrahim, Fikrie Sinku, Lee Cartwright (from March 2022) and Nana Opong (from March 2022)
Restore Manager	Jeremy Thompson
Befriending Co-ordinator	Catherine Bridgwood
Befriending Men's Worker	Andy Ferrari
Befriending Women's Worker	Nicole Gilmore
Administrative Assistant	Joshua Smith (until March 2022)
Communications & Administrative Officer	Samitha Liyanage (from September 2022)
BCT Ecumenical Enabler	Robert Mountford
BCT Development and Support Officer	Maud Grainger
Trustees of Birmingham Churches Together:	
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham	The Most Revd Bernard Longley
Anglican Bishop of Birmingham	The Right Revd David Urquhart (to Oct 2022)
Free Churches Moderator	Revd Ian Howarth (to August 2022)
Trustee and Chair of Restore	Mauricio Silva
Trustee	Revd Steve Faber
Trustee	Revd David Ellis
Trustee	Revd Jennifer Tomlinson
Treasurer	Katarzyna Kolodziejczyk (to January 2022)

Staffing

Joshua Smith, our Administrative Assistant, secured a full-time role with another organisation and moved on from Restore in March 2022. We are grateful for the new technology, systems and creativity he brought to Restore's work. We welcomed Samitha Liyanage to the staff team as Communications and Administrative Assistant in September 2022.

The part-time post of Befriending Women's Worker had been introduced on a 12-month contract in October 2021. This new post effectively increased the capacity of Restore's work with women service users and families and reduced the workload of the Befriending Co-ordinator. The Management Committee agreed to make the post permanent to maintain that additional capacity and develop the women's work further. This fulfilled one of our aims for 2022.

Looking ahead

We now look ahead to 2023 with a full complement of staff. Key aims will be:

- to reach our annual target of making at least 50 new befriending matches,
- to run men's and women's activities fortnightly and some family activities;
- to continue to motivate for action including hold three training courses for those interested in refugee issues or befriending;
- to work for change and respond to and, where necessary, challenge new Government policies; and
- to continue exploring how to increase the involvement of Experts by Experience (refugees and asylum seekers) in the planning and decision-making processes of Restore.

The Restore Management will also produce a new strategic plan for the next 3 years.



BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER
RESTORE
DETAILED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	General Fund £	Restricted Fund £	2022 Total £	2021 Total £
INCOME				
Grants other	100	35,701	35,801	35,143
Grants - Barrow Cadbury Trust	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Grants - The National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	-
Grants - CAF Resilience Fund	-	-	-	15,286
Grants - Birmingham City Council	-	8,793	8,793	-
Grants - National Emergencies Trust	-	1,005	1,005	5,335
Donations - Individuals	26,869	1,956	28,825	36,305
Donations - Churches	2,401	7,940	10,341	15,513
Gift aid on donations	2,302	2,557	4,859	7,990
Legacies	-	20,310	20,310	1,000
Befriending services	-	4,160	4,160	320
Fundraising	938	-	938	4,903
Bank Interest	566	-	566	14
Other	271	-	271	105
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	33,447	102,422	135,869	141,914
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries & wages				
Befrienders	8,068	80,369	88,437	58,735
Co-ordinator	17,876	23,148	41,024	37,930
Administration	5,933	1,000	6,933	7,868
Employment allowance	(4,255)	-	(4,255)	(3,912)
Office Expenses	8,713	3,367	12,080	11,437
Information and Publicity	936	-	936	1,000
Accountancy Charges	440	-	440	440
Programme Activities	5,611	2,643	8,254	2,063
Training - Staff and Volunteer	680	-	680	720
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	44,002	110,527	154,529	116,281
Net expenditure	(10,555)	(8,105)	(18,660)	25,633
Transfer between funds	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance at 1 January 2022	99,410	57,082	156,492	130,859
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Fund Balance at 31 December 2022	88,855	48,977	137,832	156,492
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BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER
RESTORE
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

	2022 Total £
ASSETS	
INCOME DUE	567
PREPAYMENTS	929
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	138,845
	<hr/> 140,341
LESS LIABILITIES	
CREDITORS	(2,069)
ACCRUALS (PROFESSIONAL FEE)	(440)
INTERDIVISIONAL CREDITORS	0
	<hr/> 137,832 <hr/>
Represented By	
GENERAL ACCUMULATED FUND	
Balance at 31 December 2022	88,855
RESTRICTED FUND	
Balance at 31 December 2022	48,977
Total Funds	<hr/> 137,832 <hr/>

Restore, c/o Jericho building, 196-198 Edward Road, Birmingham, B12 9LX
Phone: 0121 661 4275; email: befriend@restore-uk.org; website: www.restore-uk.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Restore.BirminghamChurchesTogether/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RestoreBefriend> Charity number: 243931