

**HOST
NATION**

Connecting refugees with host communities

Trustees' Report and Receipts & Payments Accounts

for the year ended 30th September 2023

FRIENDS IN DEED

HostNation Annual Report 2022-23

The trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 30 September 2023.

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Letter from the Chair

It is my pleasure to introduce this report of a year well spent. While it is impossible to ignore the bleak policy landscape in the UK and Europe that forms a background to our work, I draw enormous comfort from the fact that we are providing lasting friendships for refugees.

The toxic political narrative makes me and my fellow trustees all the more grateful for the positive community that has flourished around HostNation, full of trust, welcome and friendship.

The British people are in fact among those with the most positive attitude towards refugees globally; an Ipsos survey of 22,000 people in 29 countries in June 2023 showed 56% of Britons believe refugees make 'a positive contribution', putting us in the top three warmest countries.

This runs counter to the Illegal Migration Act, which we and our sister refugee charities saw pass with deep concern in July 2023. The denial of the UK's obligations under international human rights law and conventions on refugees sets us on a very dangerous path. The determination of the government to offshore asylum seekers to Rwanda in opposition to the UK Supreme Court is alarming. Meanwhile no new safe and legal routes have been provided for people seeking refuge here.

What HostNation is doing in the face of this hostility is true to the long tradition of Britain welcoming those fleeing war, persecution and natural disaster.

We will continue reaching out through our outstanding befrienders. We are humbled by their commitment, enthusiasm and generosity, as we are by the stoicism and humanity shown by our refugee and asylum seeker friends.

My thanks to our staff and our Board of Trustees. It is one of the most creative, friendly, engaged and professional teams with whom I have ever worked. I would encourage you to contact us on info@hostnation.org.uk if you would like to support our work or become a befriender.



DANIEL SILVERSTONE
Chair

“It’s a way of helping a refugee but coming at it from a more joyous perspective.”

CHLOE



“I know there’s someone here who cares about me.”

SHOAIB

Letter from the Director

The theme of this report is 'Friends in Deed'. Our refugee befrienders consistently tell us how much they enjoy the opportunity to make a real difference to someone's life through active friendship.

They introduce their friends to new places and experiences, while helping them participate in local life. We call this being a 'Friend in Deed', and it is what sets HostNation apart. Genuine friendships are built on equality and work both ways. As one befriender said: "It doesn't feel like volunteering, it just feels like hanging out with a mate."

Practically all our befrienders (94%) tell us how rewarding it has been and how much they've gained from the cultural exchange. Meanwhile nine out of ten of our refugee friends say they have had a positive befriending experience. We are very proud of these outcomes.

Alongside our London work, we have had our first full operating year in our two northern hubs – Greater Manchester and Tyne & Wear. We are on target with making matches, with consistently positive outcomes. Word is spreading fast about the value of our project.

We feel well poised to enter our seventh year, with the joy and trust at the heart of what we do beautifully captured in a short flagship film *Friends in Deed*, made for us thanks to City Bridge Foundation and the Media Trust.

This joy was very much present at a number of social events that brought our friendship matches together

to swap stories, share food and build community. These are wonderful occasions for bringing asylum seekers and refugees out of the isolation that many are enduring.

We are delighted to have turned 1,700 strangers into friends over the last six years. We are hugely grateful to our volunteers, who are in the frontline of carrying out our mission of friendship. But we also could not achieve what we do without our donors and are delighted to report that more than a third of our income now comes from major donors and individual donations alongside our institutional funding.

So thank you to all our Friends in Deed: volunteers, funders and donors. You have helped to create many lasting friendships, and that is definitely worth celebrating.



ANNEKE ELWES
Founder & Director



“

“I can open my heart to one person, to hope it makes a difference to their life. You can too!”

LINDA
Befriender

”

Strategic report

Our vision

HostNation believes every refugee deserves a friend.

Our mission

We are a befriending service connecting refugees and asylum seekers to friendly locals.

We tackle the loneliness experienced by those seeking a new home in Britain by making it easier for local people to connect with them via our digital platform.

Our aim is to transform social relations in our communities through small acts of hospitality, inclusion and friendship.

We wish HostNation to become *the* way to befriend refugees in our major cities – online, easy, sustainable and scalable.

Our objectives

Our objectives as defined in our constitution are:

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among those who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants by providing:
 - A local 1:1 befriending service that offers friendship, social opportunities, community connection and support in order to address social isolation amongst asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
 - A service that facilitates intercultural relationships to help prevent the self-exclusion of migrant communities from the wider community.
 - Increased opportunities for social integration and engagement in the local community to enable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to positively participate in society.
 - Increased opportunities to practise and improve the English skills of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in communities in the UK through friendship with native English speakers in order to promote greater social integration.

- Opportunities for positive action by citizens to change the circumstances that have led to social exclusion amongst asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- 2. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit amongst those who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with a view to tackling discrimination, inequality and social disadvantage by providing:
 - Connection and relationships with UK citizens and residents who can treat them equally, identify opportunities for them and help build their sense of self-worth.
 - Meaningful social interaction and inter-cultural relationships between British citizens and asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to encourage greater social cohesion and cultural diversity in communities in the UK.
 - A means by which the public can engage with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants as individuals and people with needs, not simply statistics.

To achieve these objectives, we recruit volunteers via an online database, then screen and train them before matching them with refugees. The latter are referred by refugee service providers and other agencies. We aim to make meaningful matches based on geography, gender, age and interests. We then introduce the new friends and provide guidance and relationship support.

“I’d recommend it highly. Where else do you get the opportunity to do something natural and to help another person? It’s a very low ask to have a high result.”



TIM
Befriender



Outcomes and impact

1. HOSTNATION EXPANSION IN THE NORTH

This was our first full year of having three HostNation hubs up and running – London plus our new operations in Manchester and Tyne & Wear. It has been a solid start, meeting our targets and seeing word spreading among refugee support organisations who send their clients to us.

The need in the north is clear, with the demand for refugee services becoming ever more urgent. There are many new arrivals of dispersed refugees and asylum seekers, and insufficient integration projects.

HostNation Manchester

Set up in 2022, our hub covering Greater Manchester was ready to pick up momentum in 2023. The value of our project is becoming known through local volunteer,

community and refugee networks and we now have 13 local referral partners who send us their clients.

We reached our friendship target this year, making 55 matches, and it has been a joy to see our HostNation ‘family’ in the north west building rich and rewarding relationships.

We have two core refugee referral partners here, Breaking Barriers and Manchester City Council. Our relationship with the council centres on their Ukraine Support Team and Ukraine Response Service, leading to the fact that the top country of origin for our referrals in the north west this year is Ukraine.

Breaking Barriers mostly work with refugees who have been granted asylum, so this gives us a greater number of befriendedees in Manchester with refugee status or humanitarian protection (73% compared with 43% in London and 46% in the north east).

We are also building connections in Manchester with British Red Cross, Refugee Action, Freedom from Torture and Oldham Social Prescribing.

CASE STUDY HOSTNATION MANCHESTER

You saved my life

Waseem and Clare met through us in May 2023. The Libyan refugee and the pink-haired charity worker hit it off straight away.

“It’s just been so easy and life enriching,” Clare tells us. Waseem, who has endured deep trauma, has transformed since meeting her.

“Clare is one of the nicest people I have ever met and made a huge change in my life,” he exclaims. “She feels like part of my family. I don’t know what I would do without her. She helped make me happy and confident. Thanks to you for introducing us. I will never forget your kindness.” Clare has noted the change: “Now his face is lit up.”

They meet weekly to eat, visit the beach or the countryside. Waseem gets along famously with Clare’s husband.

“They watch the footie together and have a right laugh,” she says. “He’ll come to Christmas with us and all of that good stuff. We count him as part of the

family. Definitely friends forever I hope!”

Waseem tells Clare she has given him a fresh start. “Before I met you, I had no desire to do anything, everything was dark in front of me. After I met you, my life changed to much better. You saved my life.”



CASE STUDY HOSTNATION NORTHEAST

Feeling braver now

“I’ve made a good friend with Mehmet,” says befriender Terry, interviewed by BBC Radio Newcastle. “We enjoy each other’s company.”

Mehmet, a former accountant from Turkey, is now an asylum

seeker finding his way in Tyne & Wear.

“When I came to this country first, I think: ‘I must improve my English’. I am happy now with Mrs Terry. I believe we are good friends.”

The two love exchanging stories of their lives over coffee. “We always seem to have lots to talk about,” says Terry, who has met Mehmet’s family and been to community Iftar with him during Ramadan. “We both support Newcastle United!”

Nearly a year after being introduced, they still meet weekly. Regular chats with Terry have improved Mehmet’s English, and his confidence. “This relationship made me more brave,” he declares.

“It’s just something that I like to do,” says Terry simply. “I think refugees and asylum seekers need as many friends as they can get.”



RADIO NEWCASTLE

HostNation North East

Our Tyne & Wear hub, established at the end of 2021, now has a strong resource of volunteer befrienders as well as a solid network of 14 partnerships with the local refugee sector. This year we have made 43 friendship matches, of which an outstanding 83% were positive.

A strong partnership has been built with the Comfrey Project, along with their spin-off organisations the Dialogue Society and NEDES. The first two work closely with the Turkish community, so nearly half of the asylum seekers or refugees referred to us in the north east are from Turkey this year.

Our hub welcomed referrals from 15 origin countries, with Turkey, Iran and Sudan at the top. Just over 50% were still in the asylum system, while 46% had already received refugee status. The vast majority were under 50, with a preponderance towards males (65%) over females (35%).

2. RECRUITING FRIENDS IN DEED

Over the last year we have welcomed 180 new befrienders to join our existing pool: 69 across Greater London, 56 in Greater Manchester and 55 in Tyne & Wear.

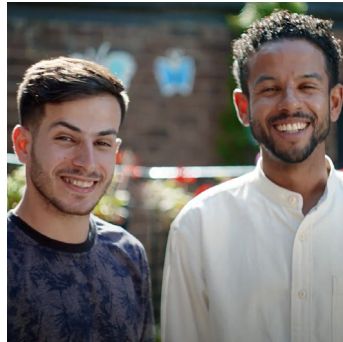
We recruit through many channels, including volunteer portals and in-person events, partnering with councils and community organisations, social media, press stories, and most powerful of all, word of mouth from existing befrienders.

We have a thorough screening process for befrienders, and then add them to our database of checked and trained volunteers who are ready to step up as refugees are referred to us.

The age profile of our volunteers is very similar in London and Manchester with 72% and 73% of new volunteers registered last year being under 40. In the north east there is a wider age range, with 62% being below 40.

“We’ve forged a great friendship and I’m really grateful for that.”

JORDAN



“He was the friend who showed me the way.”

ABDUL



This year saw a 25% drop in new registrations compared with last year, a dip in volunteering that has been reported across the whole charity sector. We speculate this may be due in part to the cost of living crisis.

However, we have worked hard in all three regions to remedy the situation and by the year’s end have made our highest-ever number of friendship matches, having been able to draw on our existing bank of London volunteers.

Training and support

As our befrienders may have no prior experience with asylum seekers and refugees, we offer a solid foundation of support services.

Our interactive training is mandatory. Befrienders learn about the hardships that refugees face in the UK, and explore how traumatic events may impact the ability to develop relationships. We discuss how to create a safe and empowering environment to allow friendship to flourish. We outline potential challenges of befriending a refugee and consider safeguarding and boundaries.

Befrienders are also given written resources to guide them in their journey. Our monthly newsletter lists free activities and opportunities for refugees. We provide signposting resources for local refugee support agencies as well as supplying guides to effective befriending and safeguarding.

3. REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER REFERRALS

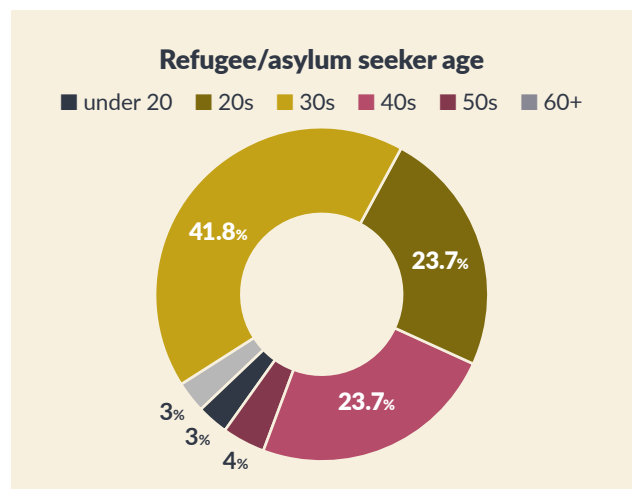
We are proud to have found friends for 226 asylum seekers and refugees across our three regions this year, with 126 in London, 44 in Newcastle and 56 in Manchester.

The word about the positive power of befriending continues to spread around the refugee support sector, with more and more organisations sending their clients to us. There is a growing understanding that people caught up in the UK asylum system need their social and emotional health tended to alongside practical matters of visas, housing and work.

Our top referrers across all hubs by number of people passed to us for friendship were Breaking Barriers, the Refugee Council, Manchester City Council, Hestia and the Comfrey Project (Newcastle).

Half of those referred to us have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection and around one third (35%) have been in the UK for three years or longer. Many are still lonely after spending years here, and do not have friends outside the diaspora of refugees or their own nationalities. So a local befriender has enormous value.

The majority are young, aged in their 20s and 30s (65%). This year the proportion of male referrals has increased to six in ten (from 55% to 59%).





“I think HostNation is an amazing service. It is essential to help our clients improve their English language skills and confidence to speak, socialise in a safe environment and explore their cities and the British culture.”

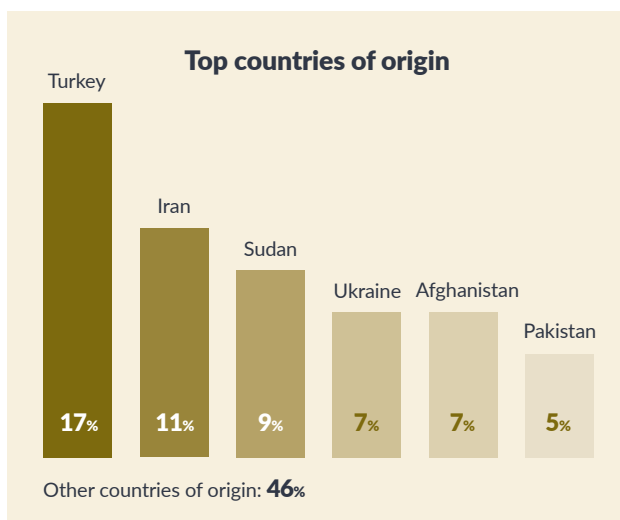
REEM OTHMAN

Senior Employment and Integration Adviser at Breaking Barriers in Manchester

The percentage of London referrals based in ‘temporary’ accommodation (mainly unsuitable hotels), was 32%, slightly lower than 37% the year before. This reflects government promises to stop hotel placements, but this policy has also led to new problems of people finding themselves turned out onto the streets without alternative accommodation.

Our top countries of origin have altered since 2021-22 when Iran topped the list and Turkey was fifth. This year we have seen fewer refugees and asylum seekers from Syria than the year before; instead we had more from Ukraine, due to visa schemes which brought numbers larger in scale than any other single forced migration flow to the UK in recent history.

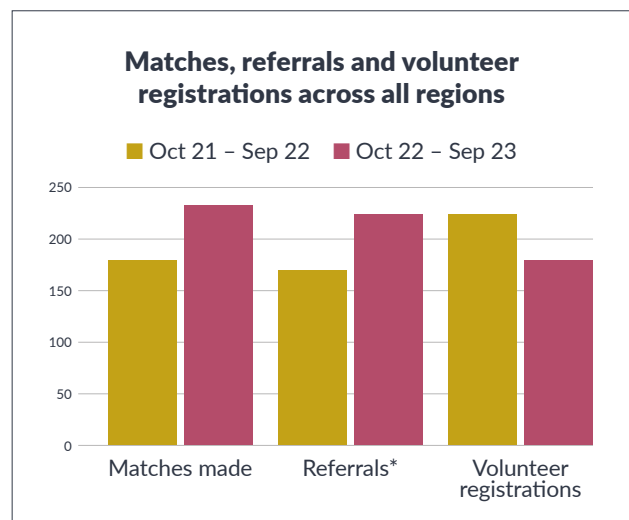
Referrals from Sudan doubled as conflict increased there, those from Pakistan were also up, while those from Afghanistan stayed at a similar level.



Our top origin countries differ from Home Office figures for total arrivals across the UK, where Ukrainians represent the highest number of refugees and Afghans the highest number applying for asylum. This is due to the pipeline effect of referrals who arrived over a year ago, as well as our partnerships with refugee organisations who may support more of one particular community than another. In London we had most referrals from Iran, in Manchester from Ukraine and in Newcastle from Turkey.

4. FRIENDSHIP MATCH OUTCOMES

In an encouraging result, referrals and matches across our three hubs are up by one third compared to the previous 12 months. This gives us our best-ever year for the number of friendship matches achieved, despite a drop in volunteers.



*Not including archived or deleted

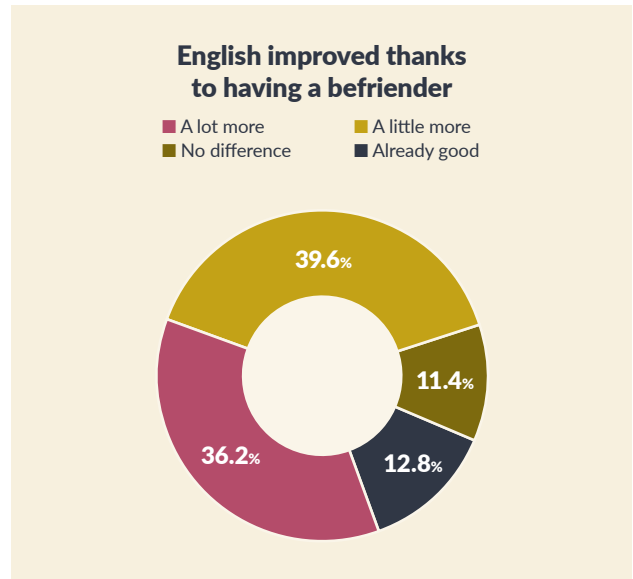
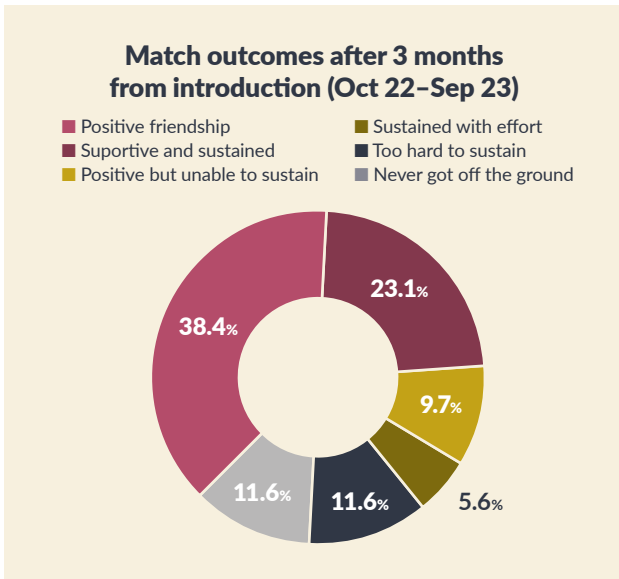
Positive experiences and meaningful relationships remain our priority, however, rather than quantity, and this informs our impact assessments. Three months after introduction, we interview both sides of our friendship matches and record qualitative outcomes.

88% of refugees reported improved wellbeing

93% of befrienders found it a rewarding experience

75% of refugees said their English had improved

When balancing the results from both sides, seven in ten of all introductions had a good outcome. More than half told us that genuine friendship had resulted and also includes those we judge to be supportive and sustained and a small number of those which



both sides found positive but could not be kept up beyond three months (often because their refugee friend was moved away).

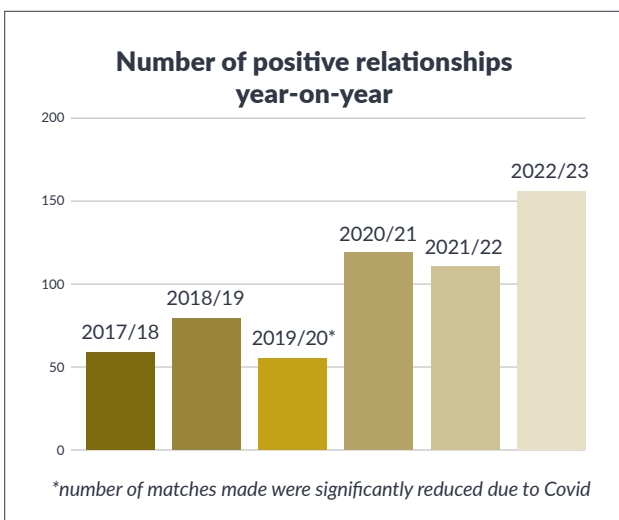
The prevailing reasons for matches that never got off the ground, were too hard to sustain or sustained with effort are similar, and include feeling overwhelmed, fragile mental health and poor English language skills.

We are immensely encouraged that in London nearly half our matches are still in touch a year after being introduced, despite the initial commitment period being just three months.

Just over 75% of refugees said that thanks to their befriender, they now know more about British culture and had improved their English.

The number reporting that their English skills had improved 'a lot' rose significantly from 23% to 36% compared with the previous year.

Of course, it is not only our refugee friends who benefit from befriending. The vast majority of our volunteers, 93%, told us that befriending a refugee was a rewarding experience, and 82% reported that it had helped them to broaden their cultural understanding.



“We just have so much fun together.”

ELISSA AND YULIIA



5. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

The primary purpose of our communications is to promote values of welcome and compassion for refugees and asylum seekers, celebrating all they bring to their new communities here.

We use our platforms to encourage more volunteers to become friends, and refugee agencies to bring their clients to us. This year saw a wonderful bonus with the award of a professionally-directed film made about HostNation, thanks to our funder City Bridge Foundation and the Media Trust who implemented the project.

We launched *Friends In Deed* at a screening event in the autumn, together with our new website and Youtube channel. The short film perfectly captures the joy of refugee befriending. Our partner Breaking Barriers also showed a film on asylum seekers, featuring two of our HostNation friends.

Such stories matter, against a negative narrative towards asylum seekers driven by the government. We support the campaigning efforts of our referral partners including Care4Calais and the Refugee Council across social media, and work to amplify the voices of real people at the heart of the refugee story.

“Wow! I don’t believe I have ever seen a more beautiful and heartwarming video on any charity website, well done!”

MICAEL SHAM KYRIAKAKIS
Cotton Tree Trust
(formerly at Breaking Barriers)



The 25th annual Refugee Week brought coverage on ITV and the BBC in Newcastle, with HostNation friends describing the positive impact of meeting. In Manchester, two asylum seekers (including Waseem whose story is on p6), bravely told the Manchester Evening News of their traumatic experiences and the huge difference that their HostNation befriender makes. We also ran our own filmed testimonies from many refugees explaining the support they find in their new friendships. “He’s my family now,” as one said.

CASE STUDY HOSTNATION LONDON

The most important gift

Sheila fled terrible experiences to seek refuge in this country. At first she was fearful about getting around London by herself, but her befriender Sabrina changed all that.

The two women clicked at their first meeting. “Sabrina just ran towards me and gave me a big hug, like we’d already met for a long time,” says Sheila. “She is very vibrant and energetic.”

Their story features in our film *Friends In Deed*, about the joy of befriending. “Friendship is the most important gift I have to offer,” says Sabrina in the film.

Sheila has regained confidence, and is now very involved in local community activities. “Sabrina has introduced me to so many hubs,” she explains. “My week is full:

I have joined a choir, I am in a dance and yoga club, she has helped me to meet other African poets. The centre of my world has grown bigger.”



HostNation supper clubs

Social integration is essential to our mission and this year we have brought our friendship matches together for food, music and celebration.

We have a new bi-monthly supper club in central London thanks to our excellent partnership with the American

International Church, who host events for those of all faiths and none.

In September we had a very successful supper club in Tyne & Wear to mark having made our first 60 matches in the region, with one for Manchester planned in the next financial year.

Our refugees and their befrienders welcome these opportunities to meet other matches in a relaxed setting.

We are delighted to be back to these in-person events to celebrate friendships, build connections and nourish our HostNation family.



“

“Nina filled a void for me. She is so amazing! She is like a sister to me. Meeting her is divine.”

”

VICKIE
Refugee friend

Financial review

Our funding position in 2022-23 was strong. Income was up by a third on 2021-22, with increases in grants, individual giving and major donors. This gave us the opportunity to increase the hourly rate we pay our staff and freelancers (87% of our costs), upgrade our digital platform and website, and increase hardship payments to our refugee friends.

We are also in a position to carry over substantial unrestricted funds to our next financial year, exceeding our cash reserves target and supporting project delivery and planned activities in 2023-24, such as further social media support and regular social events to build a sense of community across all three hubs. It also gives us additional financial resilience as some of our grants come to an end and the current funding landscape remains volatile.

FUNDING PARTNERS

We are immensely grateful to the following funders:

City Bridge Foundation (restricted to London)

City Bridge Foundation support London communities. They have a funding stream for rebuilding the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the capital. We have finished our initial three years of funding (£96,000) from the foundation and this financial year we received £33,000 to support our London hub. A further two years of continuation funding has been granted and will take us to 2025.

Trust for London (restricted to London)

Trust for London work towards a fairer city by prioritising the reduction of poverty and inequality. They support pathways to resettlement, connected communities and good neighbourhoods. They have supported our London hub for five years; this financial year was the final year of continuation support with a £20,000 grant.

The Henry Smith Charity

The Henry Smith Charity helps people and communities at times of need to bring about positive change. They fund HostNation through their Improving Lives programme. We were granted three years funding (£135,000) in April 2023. As this was halfway through our financial year, it was agreed that we would receive £20,000 this financial year, with the rest of the grant accounted for between October 23–April 2026.

Hilden Charitable Fund

The Hilden Charitable Fund made us a grant of £10,000 over two years. Both payments (£5,000 p.a.) were made in this financial year, one in October 2022 and the other in September 2023, so they are being accounted for in the same year.

The Mila Charitable Organisation (restricted to North East)

Mila is a small family charitable trust that supports projects in the North East. The funding was restricted to project delivery in Tyne & Wear for 12 months from November 2022.

Other funding

We received over £40,000 unrestricted funding from other major donors (corporate, charitable and individual). We have raised a further £15,000 unrestricted funding from both one-off and recurring individual donations (including Gift Aid). We now use JustGiving as our primary donations platform.

CASH RESERVES

The trustees continue to take a risk-based approach to reserve targets, as in previous years. Since we operate as a digital platform, fixed costs and forward financial commitments are minimal. However since our unrestricted income has increased, we feel we can support a higher level of cash reserves and at the end of this financial year our trustees agreed to increase our cash reserves to £30,000, which covers three months predicted running costs and gives us a bridge should there be any discontinuities in funding.

COSTS AND BUDGETING

As a charity we are governed by the Charity Commission's financial regulations. Our costs are predominantly staff related, with 87% of our expenditure in 2022-23 relating to directly employed and freelance staff (including HMRC payments). Expenditure on staff and freelancers reflects the increase in the hourly pay rate introduced in April.

Our financial statements reflect a full year of running our hubs in Newcastle and Manchester and making matches. Our managers in these cities are engaged on a self-employed basis and paid as freelancers, thus the increase in freelance costs this financial year as opposed to the previous financial year when we were still in the 'start-up' phase. The remainder of in-year spend (13%) relates to hardship payments to our refugee friends, professional services, travel and

hospitality expenses, digital costs, community events and other direct costs.

Running costs are kept close to 10% of total expenditure, which includes staff time on fundraising and communications, IT systems, maintenance, web hosting, insurance, payroll and accountancy.

This year 12% of our expenditure is core running costs and 88% is direct project delivery. These are 'volume-related' matching costs across our

three hubs, i.e. staff time spent sourcing referrals; recruiting; screening, checking and training befrienders; making matches; liaising with referrers; safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation; media and reporting.

As we still make most matches in London, our project delivery expenditure was nearly half in London (49%), with Manchester coming in at just under a quarter (23%) and Newcastle a little over (28%).

Strategic review by AMBS (Alliance Manchester Business School)

Our trustee and AMBS alumnus Mo Massoud put HostNation forward as the subject of the not-for-profit module for the MBA students at Alliance Manchester Business School. As a result, a cohort of international students analysed and reviewed our strategy at the end of 2022.

The team took both a wide-angle view of the UK refugee sector and focused on HostNation staff and referral partners through 18 qualitative interviews.

Their competitive mapping concluded that we are unique. There is no other specialist,

multi-city befriending service in the UK.

They recommended that we strengthen our referral partner model through a structured program of meetings and communication with organisations offering integration rather than crisis support. We are acting on this and now have a bi-monthly newsletter for 250 referral and refugee sector contacts. We also produce various language versions of our refugee leaflets for their service users.

The students identified Glasgow as the next possible location

for a HostNation hub, based on low competition, high refugee population, suitable referrers and the potential size of the volunteer pool. However their advice was to consolidate our achievements and partnerships in our two northern hubs in 2023-24 before considering expansion.

Finally, they examined our funding model and confirmed that institutional funding will always be our main donor source as refugee causes do not have mass appeal, which will inevitably limit individual donations. We are hugely grateful for their hard work on our behalf.



“HostNation’s niche service and presence in various cities in the UK gives it an organisational focus, a track record, and experience that other providers do not have.”

**GROWTH STRATEGY FOR HOSTNATION REPORT
AMBS**



HostNation team and MBA students.

Risk management

In 2019, our trustees devised a register of risks. A three-stage traffic light system was adopted:

RED High risk (business critical)

AMBER Low risk (potentially constraining)

GREEN Negligible/low risk (no action)

In 2020 our risks were amended to include public policy and we set out four risks we would review regularly.

Risk	Mitigation actions
Insufficient resources – human or financial – leading to an inability to achieve our objectives and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of budget, funding strategy, staffing levels and ability to meet demand for services. • Maintain close relations with existing funders.
Reputational damage caused by being seen to act unprofessionally or in a manner inappropriate to a charity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of our training procedures, financial and safeguarding policies.
Governance risks – failure by the trustees to carry out their functions in accordance with best governance practice & charity law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review of our Board to ensure we have a balance of the skills required for effective governance and financial oversight.
Public policy and external environment risks leading to an inability to achieve our objectives and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close monitoring of the changing environment in which we operate.

All risks have been on green for 2022-23, apart from public policy and external environment which was placed on amber in May 2021 and has remained at higher risk ever since. The hostile environment, the use of unsuitable temporary hotel accommodation by the Home Office, the Illegal Migration Bill and the pervasive anti-refugee rhetoric, have all combined to

affect the stability and mental health of our refugee friends.

With no recourse to public funds or the right to work, they face considerable challenges which can impact on the sustainability of befriending relationships. We have considered moving this risk up to red and will continue to review it at every trustees' meeting.

Structure, governance & management

Organisational structure

HostNation incorporated as a charity (CIO) and registered with the Charity Commission in September 2018.

As of October 1st 2022–30 September 2023, there were seven trustees – four women and three men – who work on a voluntary basis. Two of our trustees, Dina Nayeri and Emiljan Gega, are former child refugees. Our Chair, Daniel Silverstone, was CEO at both the Commission for Racial Equality and Interights. The board meets quarterly.

Our two most recent trustees, appointed in December 2021 – Mohamed Massoud and Lucy Gould – one with a charity finance background and the other with business strategy experience, have helped HostNation become financially resilient.

We have a lean operational team, who all work from home, so our overheads are low. All staff and freelancers are paid an hourly rate that is twice the minimum wage. Three of the management team are on PAYE. We employ six freelancers on a part-time, self-employed basis: our three regional hub managers; a London operations manager, a communications manager and a designer.

Public benefit

The trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidelines on public benefit and consider these measures when carrying out the charitable objectives of this charity.

Safeguarding

In 2023 we updated our safeguarding policies and procedures, having consulted widely to make sure we were up to speed on best practice.

All our staff, our Chair and our trustee safeguarding lead have attended safeguarding training for those working with asylum seekers, refugees and people who have been trafficked. This endorsed our current processes, and helped us make them even more robust.

Our management and trustee safeguarding leads also attended the NCVO training for charity safeguarding leads.

As a result we have developed a full safeguarding policy with reporting processes, new safeguarding guidelines for befrienders and a screening and checks policy (all available on our website), which we will review annually.

We have also updated the safeguarding training that is delivered to new volunteer befrienders by our safeguarding lead every month.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 20 January 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



DANIEL SILVERSTONE

Chair of trustees

Date: 20 January 2024

Independent examiner's report to the HostNation trustees

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of HostNation (the charity) for the year ended 30 September 2023, which are set out on pages 18-21.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provided payroll services to the charity. I confirm that as a member of the

ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act;
- or
- (2) The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by:

Alison Godfrey

ALISON GODFREY FCA

Member of the ICAEW

Date: 20 January 2024

For and on behalf of:

Godfrey Wilson Limited

*Chartered accountants and statutory auditors,
5th Floor Mariner House,
62 Prince Street, Bristol,
BS1 4QD*

Receipts & payments account

Receipts & payments account

For the year ended 30 September 2023

RECEIPTS	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Grants		83,000	13,008	96,008	73,500
Individual giving		-	12,852	12,852	8,978
Gift aid		-	2,608	2,608	2,289
Major donors		-	40,820	40,820	33,054
Total receipts		83,000	69,288	152,288	117,821
Payments	1	93,092	31,769	124,861	99,086
Net receipts / (payments)		(10,092)	37,519	27,427	18,735
Cash funds at 1 October 2022		10,092	50,273	60,365	41,630
Cash funds at 30 September 2023	2	-	87,792	87,792	60,365

Statement of assets and liabilities

As at 30 September 2023

CASH FUNDS	2023 £	2022 £
Cash at bank and in hand	87,792	60,365
Total cash funds	87,792	60,365
Restricted funds	-	10,092
Unrestricted funds	87,792	50,273
Total cash funds	87,792	60,365

Approved by the trustees on 20 January 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



DANIEL SILVERSTONE
Chair of trustees

Notes to the financial statements

1. TOTAL PAYMENTS	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Staff costs	59,201	55,236
Freelance fees	49,137	32,075
Travel and subsistence	2,975	1,953
Workshops, events and training	2,891	1,014
Hardship fund	4,043	3,448
Digital and other direct costs	4,154	2,960
Professional fees	2,460	2,400
Total payments	124,861	99,086

2. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	At 1 October 2022 £	Receipts £	Payments £	At 30 September 2023
Restricted funds				
Manchester SuppHer Club	450	-	(450)	-
Paul Hamlyn Expansion	4,576	-	(4,576)	-
City Bridge Fund	2,066	33,000	(35,066)	-
Trust for London	3,000	20,000	(23,000)	-
The Henry Smith Charity	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Mila Charitable Trust	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Total restricted funds	10,092	83,000	(93,092)	
Unrestricted funds	50,273	69,288	(31,769)	87,792
Total funds	60,365	152,288	(124,861)	87,792

Purposes of restricted funds

Income and expenditure are restricted by geographical location. HostNation manages three hubs across the UK: Manchester, Newcastle, and London. The donors listed below provide funding restricted to use within specific hubs.

Manchester

SuppHer Club provided funding specifically for the Manchester hub.

Paul Hamlyn Expansion provided initial seed funding for the hubs in Manchester and Newcastle.

Newcastle

Mila Charitable Trust is a family trust that supports HostNation in the North East.

London

Trust for London provided a final year of continuation funding under their grant to reduce poverty and inequality in the capital.

City Bridge Foundation provided a 3-year grant starting in 2020, for the purpose of helping rebuild the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in London.

The Henry Smith Charity provided support to HostNation through their 'Improving Lives' programme. The grant was given for three years' running costs from 2022.

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 30 September 2023

Charity number

1180004

Registered office and operational address

23 Lawford Road
London
NW5 2LH

Trustees

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Emiljan Gega
Lucy Gould
Mohamed Massoud
Olivia Petie
Daniel Silverstone
Dina Viegutz
Joanna Winterbottom (resigned 15.11.2023)

Bankers

Metro Bank
One Southampton Row
London
WC1B 5HA

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD



“I’m so glad I got involved in the process, it was so rewarding and I learnt so much.”

JOSH



“I had no friends, no family, no one at all. I won’t forget him.”

BAHAA

