

IMPACT REPORT 2024





With thanks to our supporters



Marie-Louise von
Motesiczky
Charitable Trust



TRIVERS.
SMITH

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Refugees at Home is a registered charity, no. 1177765

INTRODUCTION

2024 was an unprecedented year for Refugees at Home.

We started out with a huge boost following the success of The Guardian's Winter Appeal, which raised £1.42m for three charities, including Refugees at Home.

We also launched our ambitious new strategy which will see us increase the number of guests we can host and improve the quality of support we offer hosts. We are aiming to host 2,000 guests simultaneously by 2027 and are heartened by recent milestones – crossing 630,000 total nights of placements and an incredible 6,000 people hosted.

In October, The National Lottery Community Fund awarded us £436,349, our largest grant to date. This will enable us to provide an even better service for our guests and hosts, as well as boosting the number of people we reach.

With a targeted response in three key regions – London & the South East, the North West, and Yorkshire & Humber – our team will be able to devote more time to areas where we're needed the most.

The year wasn't without its challenges. Over the summer, the country was gripped by far-right, racist violence that terrorised many of our guests, hosts, and staff, and underlined the necessity of a future where everyone can live in safety and with dignity.

In this report you'll see some of the ways we've worked to make this happen.

We wouldn't be anywhere without our hosts and supporters, and we hope you enjoy this snapshot of just some of the things we've been able to achieve thanks to all of you.

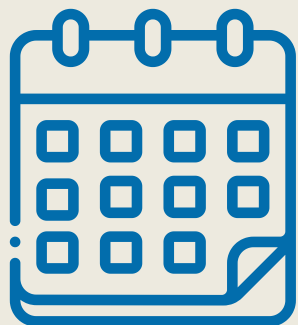
Thank you



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

1,183

GUESTS HOSTED

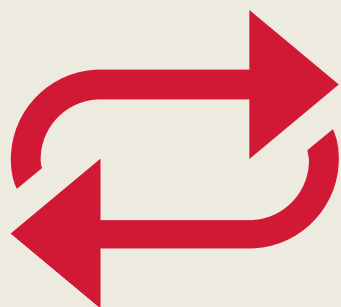


153,142

PLACEMENT NIGHTS

869

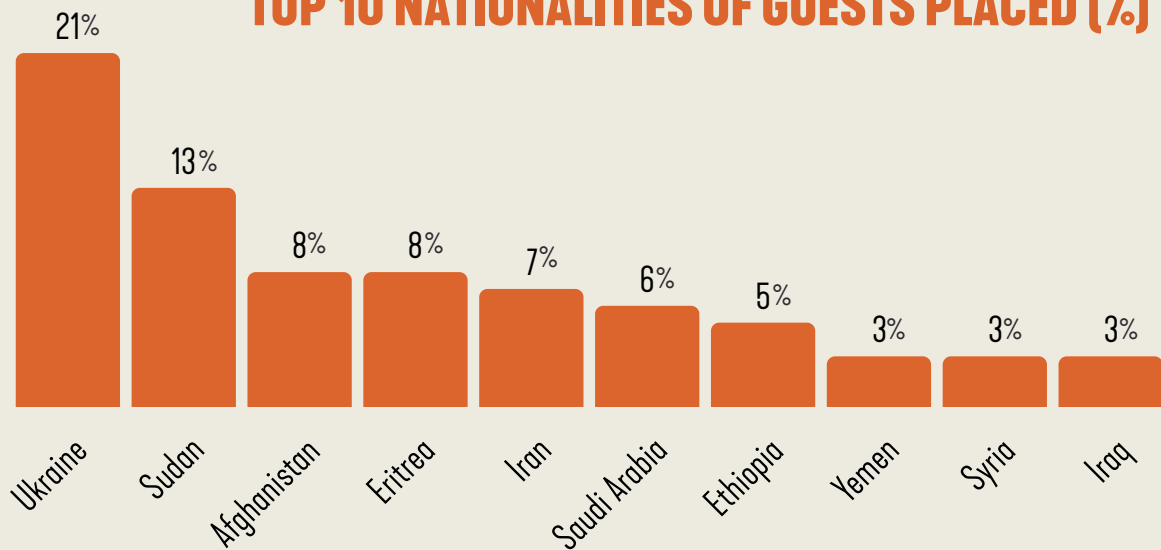
PLACEMENTS MADE



41%

REPEAT HOSTS

TOP 10 NATIONALITIES OF GUESTS PLACED (%)



84%

of hosts would recommend
hosting to a friend

87%

of hosts were satisfied with
the support we provided

98%

of guests felt respected in
their placement

97%

of guests felt supported by
Refugees at Home

230km



total distance run by
our fundraisers

“When 22 asylum seekers in a Margate hotel were told they had to go to the Bibby Stockholm barge, one of my first thoughts was ‘how can we stop this?’”

Rob Yates is a member of Thanet District Council. From May 2023 to May 2024 he served as the Mayor of Margate and organised several protests supporting the rights and dignity of people seeking asylum.

“I first heard about Refugees at Home in 2015,” said Rob. “I was involved in setting up Swindon City of Sanctuary but I wasn’t able to host. Then when I moved to Margate I got a two-bed flat, had the space, and hosted a couple of times.”

In 2024, the Home Office informed some of those staying in the hotel that they were to be sent to the Bibby Stockholm.

In addition to campaigning against this, Rob got in touch with us about hosting Salman, a young man from Pakistan and one of those at threat from the Home Office’s decision.

“I couldn’t ask for a better guest,” said Rob. “He was involved in several different voluntary organisations in Margate, all while preparing to go to university.



“He pushed me to become a better person because he was really interested in trying new things – whether that was playing the guitar or learning more about the farm he volunteered at. He ended up teaching me things I had no idea about – including a lot about Pakistani music.

“Salman had a very close friend in Margate who was also from Pakistan. They came to the UK at the same time and would cook and go on walks together. For some reason he wasn’t told to go to the Bibby Stockholm and suddenly, after facing living in completely different locations, keeping them together seemed like the right thing to do and Refugees at Home were brilliant in making that happen at short notice.”



Rob with his guest Salman (second from left)

Now, Salman’s asylum application has been granted and he’s on the International Foundation Programme at the University of Reading. He and Rob are still in touch and often meet up when he visits Margate.

“Hosting gives someone the opportunity to put their words into action. You get to be part of a movement showing that British values are welcoming and generous. From my experience, what you get back from hosting is even more than what you put in.”

For Rob, a friend’s recent experience showcases the difference grassroots support can make: “She was on a train and a stranger asked where they were from. When she said Margate they replied: ‘Oh, that’s the place where you’re nice to refugees!’

“As a politician who is trying to create change, that was really nice to hear.”



From avoiding the Bibby Stockholm to cooking for Tracy Emin, Rob's guest Salman found his placement gave him the time needed to start rebuilding his life.



At the start of 2024 I was living in Home Office housing in Margate. In April many of us got a letter from the Home Office saying we would have to move to the Bibby Stockholm barge.

A lot of people were upset about it and Rob helped us a lot during this time – even organising protests against us having to move. The Home Office was insistent, and eventually said that I had to go or I'd lose my housing.

I hadn't heard much about the Bibby Stockholm before I got the letter but then I looked into it and wasn't happy. In Margate we felt like we were part of the community but if we moved to the barge we'd be cut off. It seemed like a prison boat.

Staying with Rob was great – it was really nice of him to offer because when I was told to go to the Bibby Stockholm, my situation was quite uncertain. My asylum case was being processed and I had no idea what was going to happen.

When I arrived in Margate I started volunteering at a lot of places and the training kitchen, The Perfect Place to Grow, was one of them.

Me and two other guys also from Pakistan volunteered together often. Tracy Emin, their patron, tried our Pakistani food, loved it, and asked if we'd cook for the opening of her exhibition at the White Cube Gallery. She also sponsored our whole visit to London.

It was one of the greatest experiences of my life. The best thing about it was how much people liked our food.

At the end of the dinner, Tracy Emin invited us to the front, told people about us, and everyone applauded.

While I was living with Rob I got accepted for a sanctuary scholarship at two universities, one of which was at the University of Reading where I'm studying now.

I couldn't believe it because it was highly competitive and hundreds of students had applied. It covers all of the fees, accommodation, and living expenses.

Right now I'm studying the International Foundation Program there and next year I'm going to start my degree in pharmacy.



**Left: some of the food Salman prepared for Tracy Emin's event.
Right: Salman and other members of the catering team.**



Clare Jones is the CEO of Polarsteps – a travel app that helps its 14 million users plan, track, and share their trips. When she's not working from the company's office in Amsterdam, Clare volunteers as one of our emergency hosts, opening her south London home at short notice to guests in need of a place to stay.

“

It's been an amazing experience, and I've met so many different types of people from around the world who have had these incredible journeys and have so much to give.

The last person to stay with me was an artist and I got to hear all about the mosaics they made. Another guest was a baker who offered to bake, and I also hosted an activist couple from Yemen who were just so amazing and brave.

I love to stay in touch with my guests, but I'm also not offended if they don't because they're living their own life – I'm just a stop in their journey. I try and let it be led by them so that it doesn't feel like they're forced to do anything. I don't want them to feel obliged in any way.

Often they'll get in touch if they've had a major life event – a new job, or finishing their studies. A couple who stayed with me when they were pregnant sent photos of the baby and another who got their own flat texted to invite me for dinner.

Hosting has been one of the best things I've ever done and I want to carry on doing it for as long as I can. I haven't had a single bad interaction and it's genuinely added so much to my life. I feel so lucky to be able to do it.

”



From left: Mohsen with hosts Stephen & Andrew

“Their kindness will never ever be forgotten.”

Having worked as an electrician in Iran since 2004, Mohsen didn't want to abandon his career and so he set out to get the qualifications he needed to continue working in the UK.

He took out a loan to pay for a Level 2 & 3 Diploma in Electrical Installation, but being in London – too far to commute from Portsmouth where he was staying - Mohsen needed a place to stay for the two-month course. We were able to quickly place him with hosts Stephen and Andrew in London.

Mohsen said: “It wasn't just accommodation; it was a university. They are incredibly wise people, so educated. It was one of the best experiences that I've had in the UK and I will always appreciate it.”

After getting his diploma, Mohsen moved to Poole at the end of 2024. He's currently setting up his own electrician business and studying for an NVQ.

“My stay with them helped me get on the course. I put in a lot of work, but it wouldn't have been possible without them and Refugees at Home.

“We are still friends, and we catch up on video calls. Their kindness will never ever be forgotten.”



Image credits: Top - Tom Bradley
Middle and bottom - Philip King

Greenbelt Festival 2024

In 2024 we made our debut at Greenbelt Festival – an annual celebration of art, faith, and activism in the grounds of Boughton House, Northamptonshire.

The festival brought together our friends from Refugee Support Europe, Heart & Parcel, and Asylum Speakers in the 'Table' cookery tent. We invited hosts, staff, and our Chair of Trustees, Daniel Gerring, to the stage, giving the crowd the chance to listen, learn, and taste as we prepared beloved foods from around the world.

Over the course of the weekend, we welcomed 2,880 participants keen to learn more about our work. To date we've recruited more than 40 hosts from the event, as well as significantly boosting our profile among attendees.

We're thrilled to have been invited to the 2025 event, and are working hard to make it even more of a success.



Daniel Gerring, Chair of Trustees

“With love, compassion, and loving your neighbour as key tenets of the Bible, support for refugees goes hand in hand with the Christian faith.

As a Christian, a host, and a Trustee with Refugees at Home, as well as a regular Greenbelt attendee, it was heart-warming to share the stage and talk about the charity's vital work making the UK a more welcoming place for those looking to rebuild their lives.

I'd like to send my sincere thanks to everyone who made it such a memorable and impactful event.”



“We need to help each other because we are all living on the same planet - we’re all human.”

Hilary, a retired headteacher, lives in a small village in Northamptonshire. When the war in Ukraine started, she began thinking about hosting and soon welcomed her first guests - who are still living with her today.

“I had some worries before hosting and it was a bit of a leap of faith,” she said.

“I’d lived alone for 14 years, and my main concern was how I’d be able to share my space with other people. I was used to doing what I liked, when I liked, how I liked, but I was committed to hosting because I thought it was an important thing to do.”

Hilary signed up to host with us and we matched her with Ihor and Alina, a Ukrainian couple in need of a place to stay.

When Ihor and Alina arrived, the three soon became firm friends, and Hilary considers hosting to be one of the best things she's ever done.

For Ihor, the placement couldn't have been better: "We're happy and feel lucky to live in the village. It's beautiful and there are lots of nice people who are interested to know who we are.

"It's all based on respect and communication. We have our own space if we need it, but we can also spend a lot of time together.

"We share food, celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, and understand each other.



Olena, Ihor & Alina at a local village hall event

"Hilary is always asking how she can help us and if we ever need any advice we can ask her – she's never said no."

Six months after the couple arrived, Hilary welcomed Olena, another guest from Ukraine. All three are now working full time, and Ihor's skills as a handyman are legendary across the the village.

With the whole village curious about their arrivals, they've been happy to share their story: speaking about Ukraine at a local women's group and organising charity events.

"It's like having a big family," said Hilary. "We laugh a lot, and we share a lot too. We're quite open with each other and I think that's important."

With the placement and the war in Ukraine both in their third year, Ihor's experience in the UK has strengthened his belief in the power of community:

"Three years ago we'd never met but now we're living like family. We need to help each other because we are all living on the same planet. We're all human."

“It felt like when you’re living in the desert and you move to the city.”



Ameer (left) with Timothy

Ameer was evicted from his Home Office accommodation and given just 28 days to find somewhere to live. Within two days we were able to place him with Timothy, our co-founder and host, who helped Ameer find a job.

He said: “It felt like when you’re living in the desert and you move to the city. I’ve never met anyone like Timothy in my life – he’s always trying to help me with my English, and everything else.”

Ameer was soon offered a management training position in digital marketing, a role he’s determined to make the most of.

“I’m working there now, and the place is really nice, the people are really nice. Every day I’m learning something new.”

Ameer hopes the job will help him fulfil his ambition of opening his own business and that one day he’ll be able to get involved with Refugees at Home again, this time as a host:

“I told Timothy that if I get a big house then I will keep a room for a refugee, just like he did.”

When Mo's asylum status was granted, the Home office gave him just seven days' notice to leave his accommodation before moving him to Reading – too far to carry on studying in London.

We put him in touch with three different London hosts, including Nicola (pictured), helping him finish his course ahead of starting a family.



After Mo's studies were extended, he was concerned about how his hosts, Jonathan and Nicola, would react.

"They're like family to me. They said: 'we're happy to help and you don't need to worry. Focus on your exams, and we are not rushing you to move out.'

"The course was tough because English is not my first language; sometimes one exam took me two months to pass, but being with them helped me a lot.



"I've been in the UK for just over three years. In that time, I've come further in life than any years before it."

Now, with plumbing and gas engineer courses under his belt, Mo has been able to move in with his partner in Kent in time to welcome their daughter into the world:

"My baby is here now; she is called Etti and she is lovely. We are finally all together in our flat and so happy!"

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As we look to expand our work over the coming years, a little extra support will go a long way to help us in our mission.

Host

Whether you can host for three days or three months, we're always looking for more people who are willing to open their homes and make a difference.

Fundraise

From comedy nights to ultramarathons, there's no shortage of ways to take on a challenge while raising money for a great cause - and we'll be there to support you every step of the way.

Donate

If you're able to, here's how your generous donations can make a difference:

- £15 will help us visit someone's home before they host with us
- £25 will enable us to place a guest in need of somewhere to stay
- £30 provides a week's bursary for a guest with no recourse to public funds
- £40 helps us recruit and retain a host through to their second placement







www.refugeesathome.org

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