

AN EASY GUIDE TO TAKING A SIMPLE ACT

INVITE A REFUGEE FOR TEA

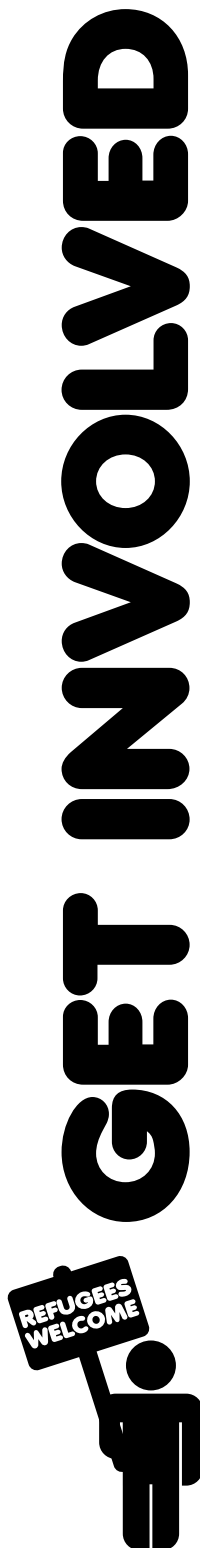
Having a chat over a cup of tea is a great way to share experiences and make someone feel welcome. Signing up with a buddying scheme, inviting a refugee to give a talk at your school or workplace, organising a tea party or participating in one of the many Refugee Week events, are just some of the ways you can share a cuppa.

JOIN A BUDDYING OR MENTORING SCHEME

- Everyday friendships are key to helping newcomers to the UK settle in, and understand the practicalities of British life and peculiarities of British culture. But people seeking sanctuary in the UK can often find it difficult to meet new people and make new friends. Mentoring and buddying schemes are therefore perfect ways for refugees to meet local people and feel more at home in the UK.
- Whether it's helping someone to write a CV, master the local transport system, or practise their English by chatting about football, having a mentor or befriender you can put all your questions to can really help people settle in. Befrienders and mentors are usually given training before they begin volunteering and are fully supported throughout the process. Check out our list of schemes below to find out what's available in your area.

WELCOME A REFUGEE SPEAKER

- Refugees are just ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. People often only get this once they're face-to-face with refugees themselves and see that yes, they really are just normal human beings with interests and feelings just like them. This face-to-face human interaction and real life stories are really persuasive in humanising the asylum debate. So a great way to increase awareness amongst friends and colleagues is to invite a refugee to come and speak to your group, society, school or business.
- Luckily, there are lots of projects that can help you organise this. Have a flick through our list of projects and organisations through which you can invite a refugee speaker to come and do a talk or workshop locally, and of course, have a cuppa with you all afterwards.



SUPPORT REFUGEE WEEK

- Organisations up and down the country are busy organising all sorts of exciting events to mark national Refugee Week. And many of them will offer the perfect chance to have a chat to refugees and people working at refugee support organisations over a cup of tea or even a tasty snack.
- So whether you're up for a game of football, taking in a bit of Kurdish art, or taking the kids for African storytelling, Refugee Week is bound to offer something for you. To find out about local Refugee Week events, visit www.refugeeweek.org.uk/Events/Events+Calendar.htm.

GET ORGANISED

- If you're the organising type and belong to a group that meets regularly, you might want to organise a tea party yourselves in association with a local refugee community group. You could organise a traditional British tea party with bunting, fairy cakes and all the trappings or have a cultural exchange that showcases different tea rituals from different countries. After all, tea isn't just big in Britain – it's key to life in many countries from Japan to Turkey. To find out about groups in your area you could work with to put on an event, please email info@refugee-action.org.uk.

TELL THE WORLD

- Once you've done this action, don't forget to let everyone know by ticking the 'invite a refugee for tea' action off at www.simpleacts.org.uk. And make sure you tell friends and family just how simple it was to have a chat over a cuppa, and inspire them to get involved too. With your help, we hope to get thousands of actions done by 2010. Remember small actions x lots of people = big change...

THANKS FOR THAT

- Thanks so much for taking part in the Simple Acts campaign. Refugee Action is really proud of every supporter that takes action to make our communities more welcoming places for refugees. If you have a spare moment to tell us more about what you've done or send us some photos from the event you hosted, Refugee Action would also love to hear from you at giving@refugee-action.org.uk or on 020 7654 7705. The more we know about what've you been up to, the prouder we'll be! And you never know, we may even add your photos to our online gallery of special supporters...



GET INVOLVED

BEFRIENDING AND MENTORING PROJECTS

NATIONWIDE

**Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES)
Nationwide.**

RIES is run by different providers around the UK, including Refugee Action (which operates RIES in Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Bolton), British Refugee Council (other areas in England), Scottish Refugee Council, Welsh Refugee Council, North of England Refugee Service, Multi-cultural Resource Centre, Metropolitan Support Trust, Yorkshire and Humber Regional Migration Partnership.

Website, email and phone: See www.refugee-action.org.uk for your local Refugee Action office details or if your area is covered by one of the other agencies, check out their website.

Scottish Refugee Council: www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Welsh Refugee Council: www.welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk

North of England Refugee Service (north east region): www.refugee.org.uk

Metropolitan Support Trust (East Midlands): www.mst-online.org.uk/refugeeandasylumseekers.html

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Migration Partnership: www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk

As a mentor you will be matched with a refugee. You will meet regularly to encourage, support and guide the refugee as they seek to achieve their goals in education, employment and integration. Activities may include visiting the local library or art gallery, helping the refugee to understand the employment process and conducting practice interviews, or explaining the curiousness of UK customs. Mentors spend around 5 hours a month with their mentee.

Support and Mentoring in Learning and Education (SMILE)

Refugee Council

London, Birmingham, Leeds (Yorkshire and Humberside)

www.smileproject.org.uk

T: 020 7346 1116

E: smile@refugeecouncil.org.uk

SMILE offers mentoring and befriending to children from a refugee or asylum seeker background. Mentors work with children who are finding it difficult to get into school for three months to help them access school or college places. Befriending is with children who are struggling in school in some way and operates over a 12 month period.



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Time Together
TimeBank
London and Scotland (mainly Glasgow area)
www.timetogether.org.uk

T: 020 7785 6378

E: mentor@timebank.org.uk

Mentors spend about 5 hours a month with their mentee, trying to help them feel more at home in the UK. This may include helping them to write a CV, practicing English or taking them to visit a museum.

SOUTH CENTRAL

Haslar Visitors Group
Portsmouth/Gosport
www.haslarvisitors.org.uk/index.html

T: 023 9283 9222

E: coordinator@haslarvisitors.org.uk

The Haslar Visitors Group is a secular organisation with over 60 members who visit and befriend men detained in the Haslar Immigration Removal Centre. The centre is operated by the Prison Service and is wholly occupied by male asylum seekers and immigration detainees.

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Leeds Area Asylum Seeker Network (LASSN)
www.lassn.org.uk

Leeds

T: 0113 380 5690

E: online enquiry form from website

The Befriending project provides the opportunity for isolated asylum seekers and refugees to forge a relationship with a supportive adult for a period of 6 to 12 months. Volunteer befrienders are matched with clients for regular visits. The aim is to familiarise people with Leeds, help them integrate into the local community, gain access to other services and to help alleviate the emotional stress caused by past trauma and the asylum process.

Mentoring Refugees into Employment
Leeds Metropolitan University

Leeds

www.heacf-awards.ac.uk/guide/lc7.htm

T: 0113 283 2600 ext 3946

E: m.message@leedsmet.ac.uk

Following a report showing that 33 per cent of refugees coming into the West Yorkshire region had been educated to degree level, this project was set up to

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enhance the employability of Leeds-based refugees through individual mentoring provided on a voluntary basis by staff of the university.

SOUTH WEST

Time Together
TimeBank and Volunteering Bristol
www.timetogether.org.uk/city_26.html
T: 0117 927 9636
E: mentor@timebank.org.uk

Mentors spend about five hours a month with their mentee, trying to help them feel more at home in the UK. This may include helping them to write a CV, practicing English or taking them to visit a museum. NOTE: this scheme currently has no mentor volunteering spaces but is still taking enquiries for the future.

Horizons Mentoring Project
Second Step
www.second-step.co.uk/horizons-community-mentoring.html
T: 0117 909 6630
E: horizons@second-step.co.uk
Horizons provides support for formerly homeless people adjusting to independent living in long-term accommodation.

Bright Futures Mentoring Project – part of the Amana Cohesion Programme
<http://mentoring08.wordpress.com/>
T: 0117 955 6971

The project aims to provide a provision for Somali young people in Bristol, particularly those who are:

- Excluded from or not attending school;
- Likely to offend, drop from school or join gangs;
- Involved in drugs; and
- Identified involved in crime and gangs.

British Migrant Community Development (BMCD) - AMANI Befriending Project
T: 0117 9248915
E: amanibefriending@yahoo.co.uk
Works with refugee and asylum seeking children (whether with family or unaccompanied).

WEST MIDLANDS

The Refugee and Asylum Learning Mentor Team
The Secondary Learning Mentor Outreach Team

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www.leadingaspectaward.org.uk/casestudy/The+Secondary+Learning+Mentor+Outreach+Team/439

T: 0121 464 5337

E: georgina_jones@birmingham.gov.uk

The team supports and mentors secondary aged newly arrived students in the transition in to the British school system and overcoming possible barriers to learning that they may encounter. The team also raises awareness of refugee issues amongst British born students through group work and workshops.

Restore - A Befriending Scheme

A project of Birmingham Churches Together

Supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham and Solihull

www.restore-uk.org

T: 0121 766 8764

E: befriend@restore-uk.org

Restore offers a befriending scheme, which links a trained volunteer from Birmingham or Solihull to a refugee or asylum seeker to offer support and help them to find and use local services.

LONDON

MRCF mentoring project (Transforming Lives and 2 Heads are Better than 1)

Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum

The project supports people living all around London

www.mrcf.org.uk

T: 020 8962 3048

E: francesca@mrcf.org.uk

MRCF's mentoring programme is a volunteering scheme providing support to migrants and refugees with mental health needs. Based on a social health model, migrant and refugee volunteers provide culturally holistic mentoring which includes a range of helping skills, befriending, coaching and tutoring to isolated migrants and refugees to improve well-being and access services.

As mentors, volunteers would be matched with a mentee taking into account gender and language issues. Mentees are referred to MRCF by Community Mental Health Teams, specialist mental health providers, GPs and other community services. Mentees can also self-refer themselves. Mentors would meet with their mentees once a week for 2 hours, over a period of approximately 6-9 months.

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