MANCHESTER REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

The Shared Routes Project

IMPACT REPORT 2025

mrsn
Manchester Refugee Support Network

A VITAL BRIDGE BETWEEN REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY







WELCOME STATEMENT

I am very pleased to introduce you to the second Impact Report for our Shared Routes Project. We strongly believe in this important service which values and recognises that refugees and asylum seekers have much to offer to their local communities, and yet are often in an isolated position. Shared Routes supports refugees and asylum seekers to understand what volunteering in the UK is and how it can be a pathway to settle and connect with people in their local area. People go on to volunteer in local organisations, gain employment or access education courses. We call people who have completed our training programme 'peer navigators'.
This report presents the project's impact – the longer-term benefits of the service - over and above the project outcomes which we have been successfully monitoring. These include the impact on: the lives of the individual refugee and asylum seekers; local organisations; and the community. Our evaluator has gathered evidence from peer navigators who have completed their training and initial volunteering, organisations who have hosted peer navigators; other local organisations who have developed strong relationships with the project. Peer navigator names have been changed.
Shared Routes continues to demonstrate a successful approach to supporting refugees and asylum seekers to become involved in their local communities.
I would like to thank all the staff, refugees and asylum seekers and voluntary and statutory agencies who have supported the work of Shared Routes. And hope you will be interested to read about what the project achieves.

BELAY KAHSAY,
CEO MANCHESTER REFUGEES SUPPORT NETWORK



'II feel so proud of the work that is being done to train refugees and asylum seekers who come here. Many of them have amazing talent and qualifications which we can use in the society as a whole. Training them into volunteering is a great service. The more we have every single one of us being active, contributing and productive, that means we all benefit.'

AFZAL KHAN, MP MANCHESTER RUSHOLME

CONTENTS

The Shared Routes rationale and service model	2
Shared Routes key statistics	5
Impact on individual refugees and asylum seekers	7
Impact on local organisations	13
Impact on communities	15
Future developments	17

THE SHARED ROUTES RATIONALE AND SERVICE MODEL

THE NEED

Refugees and asylum seekers can be isolated both because of where they have been dispersed to live, which can be in deprived areas, with some adverse local attitudes. Many asylum seekers recently have been living in asylum hotels, which reduces their chances of being able to meet and get to know people in their local community. They want positive, non-hostile relations with the wider host community.
Refugees and asylum seekers have a lack of suitable opportunities to volunteer to help themselves and others currently encountering similar issues. Most asylum seekers are not allowed to work, which further isolates them and can leave them with little sense of purpose.
Many people bring with them a range of valuable skills and experiences.
Many local organisations have little involvement of refugees and asylum seekers.
Many refugees and asylum seekers have experienced traumatic histories and journeys. Many of them feel overwhelmed by their life circumstances, which are often unexpected, and they do not know how to start to build their life in the UK.

WHAT THE PROJECT DOES

·Peer Navigator Training Programme – a practical 6 session online course to train refugees and asylum seekers in issues about UK systems and organisations, volunteering, and how to apply for a volunteering or work role. A two-day intensive face-to-face course has also been delivered.
5 courses per year are currently being delivered.
·Identify suitable volunteering opportunities both generally and for specific Peer Navigators, building on individual strengths and in their local area
·Support Peer Navigators into volunteering and during placement if required, usually for over 3 months.
·Employment workshop – an online session, held once per year, to inform people about sources of support and information for gaining employment and employment training.
·Network meeting – a face to face meeting held once a year which invites all peer navigators to come together to exchange experiences and meet each other.
The project works across the Greater Manchester area.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1.Increase in volunteering in local organisations by Peer Navigators
2.Peer Navigators have increased confidence, skills, and understanding of how UK agencies and communities function
3.Increased capacity of local organisations (including MRSN and refugee community organisations) through the Peer Navigator network
4.Increased engagement of Peer Navigators with the local community

THE SHARED ROUTES RATIONALE AND SERVICE MODEL

STAFF

The Shared Routes team has 3 multi-lingual part-time staff from diverse backgrounds, all of whom have individual or family experience of the asylum process.

REFERRALS

These come from a range of statutory and voluntary sector providers that MRSN and Shared Routes have built connections with. Strong links have been made with asylum hotels and local colleges providing English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes. Many people also now self-refer, following the recommendation of friends who have previously undertaken the Shared Routes programme.

MRSN SUPPORT

As a project of MRSN, Shared Routes can rapidly internally signpost people to other services they may need, for example for help with immigration, finance or housing issues.

PEER NAVIGATOR PROJECT INVOLVEMENT

Peer Navigators play a key role in project development, through inclusion in training delivery, monitoring, evaluation and strategic planning activities.







KEY STATISTICS:
JANUARY 2023 TO JUNE 2025

196 TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS TRAINED AS PEER NAVIGATORS

58% FEMALE

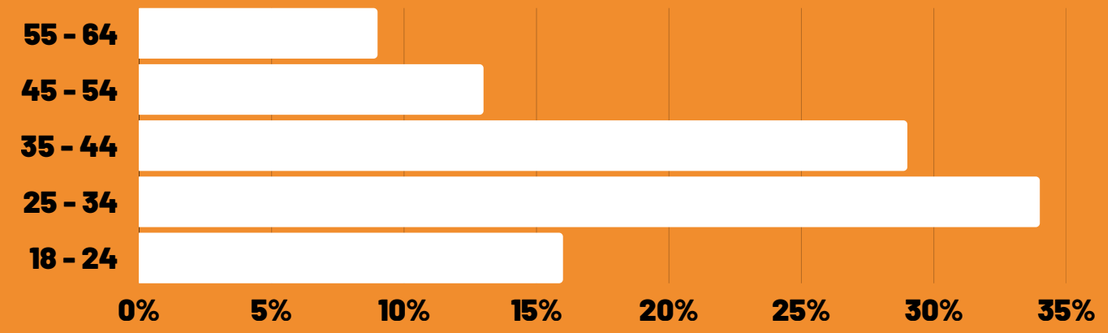
35% MALE

4% NON-BINORY

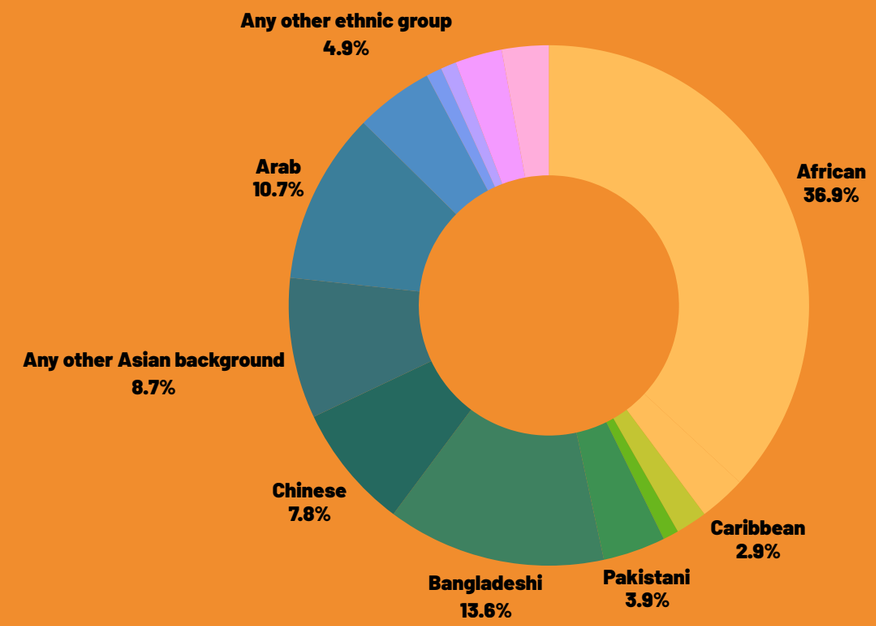
37% OF PEER NAVIGATORS ARE PARENTS/CARERS

3% OF PEER NAVIGATORS ARE DISABLED

AGE BREAKDOWN



ETHINICITY BREAKDOWN



SEXUALITY BREAKDOWN

- **70%** STRAIGHT/ HETEROSEXUAL
- **5%** GAY/LESBIAN/ BISEXUAL
- **3%** OTHER

IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Peer Navigators who have completed the Shared Routes training gain an understanding and appreciation of life in the UK, plus increased knowledge, skills and confidence to engage in volunteering. Many then go on to become volunteers in a range of organisations or take up employment or education opportunities, which further increases their inclusion into UK society and has a very positive impact on their well-being.

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE UK AND OF VOLUNTEERING

Through attending the Shared Routes training, 196 people have achieved the following outcomes.

OUTCOME: Peer Navigators have increased confidence, skills, and understanding of how UK agencies and communities function

- Improved skills development 100%
- Improved knowledge and understanding of UK agencies and communities 100%
- Improved confidence 69%

It is worth noting that the people who didn't improve confidence considered themselves already confident.

OUTCOME: Increased engagement of Peer Navigators with the local community.

- Cultural awareness of UK and other RAS cultures 100%
- Choices and opportunities for engaging in society 100%

'I learnt about British culture and communication at work, about customer service and personal skills development. This was so helpful and beneficial as in my home country we do a lot of things differently.'

PEER NAVIGATOR

'After taking this training, I understood the value of volunteering and its positive impact to the community. Also, how volunteering could enhance the chances of an individual getting a job and have a good reference.'

PEER NAVIGATOR

Some examples of the roles and skills people bring with them are: psychology degree, university lecturer, Red Cross worker, housewife, business teacher, barber, accountant.

June from Botswana, volunteering at Levenshulme Inspire



"I'm from Botswana and I've been in the UK for 12 months now. I'm an asylum seeker living in a hotel in Manchester. I heard from the Shared Routes project through a friend who recommended me a link to join. The reason why I joined was that I thought it would be more useful to me to study and do work through the Shared Routes project. I just wanted to get myself to study and learn more about the UK culture. The Shared Routes training really helped me because I had no idea how to find a voluntary job. In the training they showed us how to go online and find a volunteer role. This really helped me a lot and it gave me the confidence to go online and search for the volunteer opportunity myself. Before I joined the project, I thought I couldn't do that but after joining I could do it because I got an idea what to do and this made it easy for me.
I applied with 'Levenshulme Inspire' and they called me for interview and I got the role. I'm volunteering for almost 6 months now. I started in August during the school holiday where I helped at a programme for kids. We prepared food packages for them. Then I continued volunteering twice a week. I volunteer Wednesdays at the café preparing food for groups. I volunteer also on Thursdays. There is a group of elderly people called task force that I support. They come and drink tea and meet and mingle. This is what I enjoy most about volunteering that I can give back to the community. I appreciate that they gave me the opportunity to work in the community and I love being there, giving my time and helping them. And it really helped me mentally as well to mingle with the Levenshulme Stockport community. The volunteering helped me in many ways. I've gained confidence. I've gained team work because we were a group of trainees. It also boosted my communication skills.
What I learned from the Shared Routes training to go online also helped me in other ways. I've been playing volleyball since I'm 15. So, I went online to look for the nearest volleyball team in my area because I love sports.

I applied online and they replied and we hit it on with all the people and everything. I am part of the team, I can say that. I play twice a week. My team is in the league national division 1 and next year we hopefully will be in the super league.
I did this project through you and it boosted my confidence. So now I want my friends to do the same for themselves. Because, honestly, when you are in the [asylum] system it can break you but if you find yourself something to do with your time. If you go out there and have the confidence, give your time to the community because through this programme you can learn a lot. So, I just empower others to go for it! It really opened doors for me. Now I can go anywhere because I have references. I just say the Shared Routes team and Levenshulme Inspire recommend me. It's a real good thing. It's all about references in the UK. That's hard when you just came here. You need them. You have to have people who know you, who have worked with you."

INCREASED SOCIAL INCLUSION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Peer navigators, staff and external organisations have reported the following key aspects:

- ·Increased confidence and ability to interact and communicate with other people
- ·Increased confidence to speak in English
- ·Improved well-being and mental health
- ·Contributing to society through volunteering
- ·Increased ability to live in their new environment – the UK
- ·Making connections with people where they volunteer
- ·Each cohort of Shared Routes Peer Navigators has its own private messaging group where people support each other with minimal intervention from the paid staff team.

Through their contact with the Shared Routes Project, 91% of all participants, i.e. 179 peer navigators, have been signposted for support with a range of needs including: access to college/university, ESOL classes, immigration advice, asylum support, housing advice, health services, employment support.

The 196 peer navigators have taken the following paths since completing the course:

-122 have gone into volunteering roles
-10 people have gone straight into employment
-19 people have gone to an education course
-12 people have experienced housing issues including some asylum seekers living in hotels being moved out of the area
-Other people have caring responsibilities (12 people) or health issues (8 people) which have prevented them from volunteering.

‘I have met lots of people I socialise with them and have learnt a lot from them, and about different environments.’

PEER NAVIGATOR

‘I am more happy because volunteering work has enriched my life. I can see different things at different angles.’

PEER NAVIGATOR

‘The Shared Routes Project fosters inclusion by providing a vital bridge between refugees, asylum seekers, and the local community. It creates a space where people can connect, develop core skills, and feel part of a supportive network, contributing to social integration and improving overall wellbeing.’

THE BREAD AND BUTTER THING

‘Shared Routes really empowers people in terms of knowledge, confidence, health and well-being. Often when people are waiting for their Home Office decision, they can become very depressed, isolated and lonely. For them to be involved in the programme and surrounded by others does wonders for people. They learn about British values and the skills required in a workplace.There are also people who don’t want to volunteer at the moment, for various reasons, but they do the programme as they feel the benefit and it supports them for later on.’

HEALTH & WELLBEING PRACTITIONER, HYDE PRIMARY CARE NETWORK, HEALTHY HYDE TEAM

INDIVIDUAL REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS HAVE BUILT A POSITIVE LIFE, HAVE GOOD SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND MAKE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

Peer navigators, staff and external organisations have reported the following key aspects:
•Improved well-being and mental health
•Contributing to society through volunteering
•Having a focus and/or goals
•Building knowledge, skills and experience
•Improved social life
•Increased confidence to speak in English

Other aspects mentioned include:
• Encouraging others to get involved with Shared Routes and/or volunteering
•Shared Routes staff team maintain contact with people and offer support for some time after they complete their volunteering, up to three years.

‘Shared Routes project has made a great impact on peoples’ lives. The people I was with on the course are all volunteering, so it's an important project. It's really helpful and the project is needed to keep engaging people. You must not take that impact for granted.’
Peer Navigator
Before that I was just like in minor depression because I was not engaging myself into different activities. So, I was not good at all. After I got your training it was nice. The training helped me a lot to move forward.’

PEER NAVIGATOR

‘Shared Routes gives people the chance to become active citizens, through doing the programme and securing volunteering. They get to practice their English language skills with native speakers, so they really benefit from that. It also adds to their CV and makes them more job ready when they get to that point, and they get to form friendships on the course and in their placement. It can support people to achieve a higher level of independence and personal growth.’

HEALTH & WELLBEING PRACTITIONER, HYDE PRIMARY CARE NETWORK, HEALTHY HYDE TEAM

‘Shared Routes gives them a purpose in the country when everything else has been taken away from them. They want to feel accepted, useful and productive and that is what this programme does. It gives them a sense of identity.’

LEVENSHULME INSPIRE

‘Our business has been instrumental in helping refugees and asylum seekers to gain experience and move towards paid work. The volunteers say they have gained experience and confidence at the end of their volunteering with us.’

SEVAN UNISEX HAIR SALON

‘Shared Routes is giving people a chance. The work they do starts building people’s self-esteem and gives them a wider idea of what they can do. They can make life choices and have ownership of themselves. Building self-esteem is absolutely massive and completely and utterly life changing.’

COORDINATOR, TAMESIDE ASYLUM SEEKER AND REFUGEE NETWORK

Samuel from Eritrea, volunteering at Salford Barber Shop



I'm from Eritrea, born and raised there. I was 14 years in jail because of my religion. After my imprisonment, I exiled to Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and then came in 2022 to join my family in the UK. I was looking for some help with language and integrating with the UK culture. I heard about Shared Routes from a friend and decided to join your course. The course was very helpful for me because I met other refugees and I learnt much: How you integrate with diverse people, languages; how to search for job, how to ask for job, how you apply, how you talk in business. Many things I learnt.

This helped me to look for volunteering with a barber to do hair cutting. I'm volunteering with a barber in Salford for almost 4 months. This is very supportive for me. I worked as a barber in my home country but I don't have a CV. There is nothing like that back home. Now, through volunteering I can develop my CV here in the UK and I made progress in my knowledge and skills. The volunteering made me confident and proud of what I have achieved. Because I have a little bit trauma and suffered a bit from isolation. But after this course and volunteering I get satisfaction for myself, for my family. My confidence developed and this is very beneficial, for sure.

I started from scratch. I didn't know how to live here, get a job. Shared Routes helped me economically, mentally, in so many ways. I come from a developing country and I was in prison for many years. So, your project was very helpful for me. I feel this confidence, my skills and knowledge improved. I developed my language skills and integrate with the culture of freedom, free speech and democracy. It's the first time I experience democracy. I want to go on with barbering and at the same time I'm looking for other income to support my family, for example translating.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITIES

Peer Navigators, staff and external organisations have reported the following key aspects:

- Understanding UK systems and culture
- Contributing to society through volunteering
- Increased confidence and ability to interact and communicate with other people
- Confidence to speak in English
- Making connections with people where they volunteer
- Increased ability to live in their new environment – the UK

Other aspects mentioned include:

- Understanding other people with different needs

Since volunteering I have gained so much confidence to socialise more. I have joined other organisations including a choir, and a gardening project. I have made friends at [placement organisation]. It feels like that is where my family is. That's my home. Through this project, it has paved the way for me to get to know the UK. I was really struggling mentally. I didn't like socialising because of this. Now I know how to be with people, it has really helped me mentally.'

PEER NAVIGATOR

'It has helped me to understand the culture and how to communicate with others. Because the Manchester accent is quite different, sometimes I don't understand what they're talking about. My colleague explained to me and also wrote down for me what was said.'

PEER NAVIGATOR

We believe it is important for people to be integrated into the local communities [which Shared Routes is supporting].

GRAFTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

'[Through Shared Routes] the volunteers are able to gain experience in the workplace to take forward into the wider community.'

CREATEBOLTON

'Look at the life here - 360 degrees – different areas, different sectors, having that pool [of Shared Routes volunteers] which have the potential and ability to go and work in different areas really strengthens us.'

AFZAL KHAN, MP MANCHESTER RUSHOLME

IMPACT ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

On completion of the Peer Navigator training, more than two thirds of peer navigators have taken up volunteering roles in a wide range of voluntary and community organisations, as well as some statutory and business organisations. The number and range of organisations has much increased over time and covers the Greater Manchester area. This has added capacity and skills to the organisations to provide their services.

Outcome: Increase in volunteering in local organisations by Peer Navigators

-196 people completed the peer navigator training
-122 peer navigators completed a minimum of 3 months successful volunteering in 68 local organisations across sectors

Peer Navigators, staff and local organisations have reported the following key aspects:

- Build capacity of host organisation to deliver its services

-For smaller organisations, this may be critical to activities happening at all, especially where they rely on volunteers
-For larger organisations, the capacity is enhanced and more activities/services can be offered

- Wider staff and volunteer team learn about refugee and asylum seekers
- Community mixing in the workplace

‘Our mission is to engage with all members of the community and the refugee and asylum volunteers form part of the mission, as it supports a win-win approach for both organisations. I’ve found all [Shared Routes] volunteers to be really hard working.’

TAMESIDE MEAL PROJECT

Outcome: Increased capacity of local organisations (including MRSN and refugee community organisations RCOs) through the Peer Navigator network

-122 peer navigators have volunteered in 68 local organisations across sectors, including small community groups, larger voluntary organisations, local authority projects and local businesses.

- 15 peer navigators have volunteered at MRSN in a range of projects

-4 peer navigators have volunteered at refugee community organisations and 18 peer navigators have volunteered at community projects who have many refugee and asylum seekers using their services

‘Organisations include: Age UK, Bread and Butter, British Heart Foundation, British Red Cross, Bury Parish Church, Diversity Matters NW, Healthy Hyde Wellbeing Hub, Levenshulme Inspire, Mustard Tree, Pakistani Community Centre, Rainbow Haven, Tameside Meal Project, Wigan and Leigh Hospice, Yellow Bird Age Friendly.

Tasks that volunteers have undertaken include:
At MRSN: advice support and case work for general advice, immigration and asylum support projects, administration, supporting Shared Routes development, Shared Routes administration

At other organisations: helping people complete official forms, organising and supporting community events, administration, cooking, packing food bank parcels, supporting group projects, working in charity shops, supporting IT functions and helping people use IT.

"‘We have benefited a great deal as [the peer navigator] has been reliable, supportive and become part of the team. She is our main volunteer on a Thursday supporting our elderly group and she helps set up the room, serve drinks, chats with service users and clears away afterwards. She is a valuable asset to the taskforce team.’

LEVENSHULME INSPIRE

‘Without the [Shared Routes] volunteers it would be impossible for us to accomplish our goals of making nutritional meals for the most vulnerable in the community. Their help in the kitchen and preparation of the meals breaks the barriers of languages and all is possible through simple process of showing what needs to be done. We simply would not exist without our volunteers.’

TAMESIDE MEAL PROJECT

‘The [Shared Routes] volunteer has significantly supported our food distribution efforts, increasing our capacity to serve the community efficiently. Their presence has also allowed us to engage with more individuals, ensuring we reach those who need help most within the local community. Their contribution has also helped improve the quality of service, allowing us to offer a more friendly and connected experience to the individuals we support.’

THE BREAD AND BUTTER THING

‘When we have volunteers on site this supports the participants more as they have smaller groups.’

BLOOM ALLOTMENT

‘[The peer navigator] is a dedicated and determined member of our organisation, who brings positivity and passion to the rest of the team and our clients. Her energy and interest in getting involved in new things and developing her knowledge and experience has enabled her to be a highly reliable member of our team, and has increased her confidence outside of our charity too.’

MUSTARD TREE

DANIAT FROM ERITREA/ETHIOPIA, VOLUNTEERING AT MRSN REFUGEE INTEGRATION SERVICE





"I’m from Eritrea but grew up in Ethiopia. I came to the UK in March 2023. I was in college for 1 year studying GCSE Maths and English. I took also a lot of training to help me to integrate with the people of the UK and understand the culture and to make myself ready for work and other things. I was taking a course about volunteering with the Manchester Adult Education Service. Then, I heard some of my friends talking about the Shared Routes training. I was interested in volunteering specifically because at that time I was an asylum seeker and I didn’t want to just sit and wait. I needed to do something that makes me purposeful.
The Shared Routes training revealed a lot of things that I didn’t know before. Before the training, most of the time I didn’t go out and I just learnt by myself. I didn’t know the exact value and culture of the people. I got all this information from Shared Routes and also I got it in writing (the handouts). It gives me guidelines how to volunteer. It helped me to be a volunteer. I got the connection to an advice project of MRSN, the Refugee Integration Service (RIS). I have a good knowledge of IT, I have studied that, so I help with IT. I help also with filing and I help a lot of refugees filling a lot of forms and applications and this is how I started case work. I work as a translator too because there are a lot of people that come from Eritrea and Ethiopia and I speak Tigrinya and Amharic so I translate for them.
My manager, Sophie, encouraged me to study immigration law but at that time I was not settled because of housing and other things. Now this is sorted and I will start. I’m so grateful to meet Sophie because she considers me like I’m working there not as a volunteer. She always encourages me to work and to try a lot of things by myself. She also helps me a lot in my situation with housing or other things. First, I started as a translator. Then I tried some applications. She showed me a little bit by little bit and I became to know everything. She gives me that confidence to work with every application. Now I can work on any application that’s coming in. If there is anything I don’t know, I can count on her. I have been volunteering with MRSN RIS for more than 5 months now. I really enjoy volunteering with MRSN RIS because it gives me that motivation to help others, be purposeful and be connected with a lot of people. It gives me satisfaction that I help people and the confidence to look forward, to what I will do afterwards. Volunteering prepared me in a lot of ways.
Now I’m doing a course in software engineering. So, I’m looking for a job or part time job. Until I find a job, I will continue volunteering.
Everything changes when you become volunteer because you have such scheduled life. I’m volunteering 2 days a week and I have to study the rest of the time. So, it makes me to have that track and focus. I was in the hospital and I was so stressed. But going to the volunteer work makes me to be more fruitful – not focussing on the flaws that I have. If you stay in the house, you keep thinking about your weakness but if you go out and help others, you’re like “Yes, I’m doing something purposeful.” I still have to go to hospital and they show you all your weaknesses, it’s very stressful for me. I had hoped they could treat my condition but now it looks like it cannot be treated. But I don’t want to fixate on that. I don’t want to lose myself. I want to focus on my future.”





IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Build strong relationships in and across communities

Peer Navigators, staff and external organisations have reported the following key aspects:

·Volunteering leading to enhanced services to communities
·Community integration for peer navigators especially through volunteering in local organisations
·Peer navigators passing what they have learnt on to other refugees and asylum seekers and encouraging them to do Shared Routes and other courses
·Shared Routes programme promoting community equality and diversity
·Shared Routes collaborative working building connections and strong relationships both geographically and with communities of interest
·Community mixing in the workplace

‘Before I did the course and was volunteering I didn't know how to speak to people from different countries. After that I learnt how to deal with different people and to ask for any kind of help I'm looking for. It made the life easy for me here. I have become confident. There's nothing to be ashamed for asking people for help, they will help. Life has become so easy here.’

PEER NAVIGATOR

‘I know the working culture in the UK now. I feel like I'm now a valuable asset, I wasn't before. I know how to work with elderly people, how to work with customers, how to be with children.’

PEER NAVIGATOR

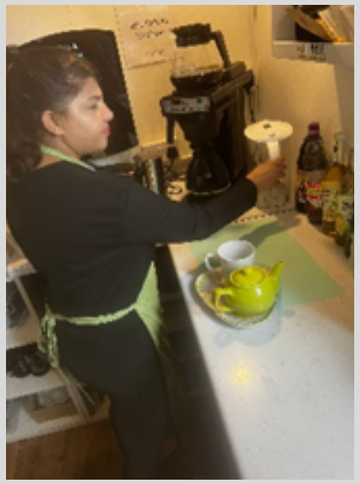
‘We know that over 200 languages are spoken in Manchester. It’s a key element for us to take a step towards one another. Through that, you have a strong community cohesion. The more we can use spaces to bring people together, the stronger we will be. Having a project like Shared Routes assists us in getting people engaged in different ways.’

AFZAL KHAN, MP MANCHESTER RUSHOLME

‘The Network is designed to get people working together. It is attended by a wide range of people from all sorts of organisations (including statutory and voluntary sectors), and some from across the Greater Manchester area, like Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Shared Routes have been an enthusiastic contributor. They are very skilled at making use of opportunities, and have built connections and made some strong relationships, for example with Healthy Hyde. Through the Network, they can get their information distributed into many organisations including employers.
The big thing for us is raising aspirations and how we work together. The Shared Routes project helps gives us a flow - you might start off doing your conversational English, but then you can move into volunteering and improving self-esteem. Through the placements, and their relationships with providers, Shared Routes are managing to embed people into the community. You can see the longevity for people. They have a very important role going forwards.’

COORDINATOR, TAMESIDE ASYLUM SEEKER AND REFUGEE NETWORK

SAIMA FROM PAKISTAN, VOLUNTEERING AT CAFE CREATE BOLTON





I’m Saima. I’m from Pakistan and I’m living in the UK for 4 years. I did the Shared Routes training to improve my skills. I did volunteer job after this training and I’m using the skills of this training. With the help of Shared Routes I’ve managed to register at local Bolton CVS who helped me to find volunteer job during the course. I feel very confident during interview as I learnt job interview skills through Shared Routes course. I used the interview skills that I learnt for my volunteer interview and I got the job. I used Shared Routes as reference. The job is in a café. I volunteer one day a week. In the training I learnt a lot about volunteer work. This helped me.
I have difficulties learning English and understanding. This is very problematic. Through volunteering I improved a lot with understanding and talking. I volunteer in a café in Bolton. I’m making breakfast for the people and serving and talking. I like to interact with the people. Volunteering gives me more confidence and I learnt more English and about UK culture. I’ve seen a lot of change. I’m more confident and more reliable to work independent. I’m reliable. I go every time. Even in harsh weather I’m going. I learnt a lot and I asked a lot. I volunteered for 3 months and I really liked it.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

TThe experience of Shared Routes to date has proven the need for the project and illustrated the impact it has for individuals, local organisations and communities.

The project is acutely aware of the ongoing barriers for refugees and asylum seekers which include: the asylum dispersal process often exacerbates isolation, including through use of hotels; asylum seekers can be moved to a new area with little or short notice; many refugees and asylum seekers have limited English language skills.

The ongoing development priorities for the Shared Routes project are to:
·Maintain hybrid working in a way that maximises impact for peer navigators, working across Greater Manchester
·Strengthen and further develop links with key local agencies who support the project
·Build more structured arrangements with employment and training agencies, such as Job Centre Plus, Growth Company
·Investigate programmes of support for volunteer development
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MRSN and the Shared Routes project would like to thank everyone who has helped support our work in achieving positive outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers and our communities.

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We also thank everyone who has contributed to this report.

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