MANCHESTER REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

Annual Report 2024
Shared Routes Project

Reporting period: Project Year 2 (02/01/2024 - 03/01/2025)

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I. Summary of the year

2024 was another successful year for us, our service users, partners and the wider community. We met or exceeded our targets again: 81 PNs completed our training (target: 72 PNs) and our evaluation through feedback forms and focus groups showed that all PNs benefitted from the training in terms of improved skills, knowledge, wellbeing and more. Furthermore, our case studies show, in more detail, the huge impact our project had on so many areas of our PNs' life. We were overjoyed to hear from them how vital Shared Routes has been in improving their lives socially, mentally, economically. The case studies also show how the progress of PNs impacted positively on their environment.

We continued our partnerships with, for example, Salford College, Rainbow Haven, Healthy Hyde or Bury College. In March 2024 we participated again at the Career Fair for ESOL students at Salford City College making it a success by opening doors wider for asylum seekers and refugees to benefit from.

Our project maintained its success with our PNs. Many came through recommendations of friends. This explains partially why the number of Africans increased from 20% to 59%.

This year, we decided to specify further the main E&M categories to ensure more diversity. We added to the category gender 'non-binary' and 'other' and to the category sexuality we added 'other'. The data shows that this increased specification helped us to get a clearer picture of the demographics of our service users. For gender, 7% identified as non-binary, 0% as other. For sexuality, 6% identified as other.

This year we had also a higher percentage of participants identifying as disabled (up from 0% to 5%; 8% preferred not to say).

Our service uses are central to our activities and we are evaluating our work with all PNs after every training cycle. Some PNs expressed that they would like to have a face-to-face training or a hybrid one. In response, we designed a 2-day face-to-face training in the summer as a compressed training makes it easier to attend during the school holidays.

We delivered the training in the Manchester city centre in August. The interest was huge and about 30 PNs had confirmed attendance. Unfortunately, the weekend before our event, the horrific right-wing anti-immigrant riots in the UK took place; right next to our event location in the city centre. Many PNs contacted us saying that they didn't feel safe to come to the city centre. We offered assistance by picking and escorting them back to their bus stop but many people were too scared. 15 PNs attended. Unfortunately, some of our PNs who attended the first day have been assaulted on their way back. Sadly enough, one young woman wearing hijab was chased by two men. We found it regrettable that we were unable to provide them with safety. All people intimidated didn't return the second day. We made sure that they were safe and offered them our counselling service.

To offer opportunities beyond volunteering, in collaboration with Refugee/Mentors we delivered our online information session about employment support and training. All 9 attendees have been signposted appropriately.

2025 is the final year of our current funding period. Thus, our evaluator, Sarah Forster, started to plan our impact report. She organised a review workshop with us and PNs. One result was that PNs preferred as a network event an event where they can socialize with themselves. Thus, we held such an event at the end of our year. 8 people from 5 different countries attended.

We supported 55 people into a volunteer role. The sheer number and the diversity of organisations was enormous: 44 organisations. We had many service users who were asylum seekers living in hotels. This year many of them received a decision to be moved much faster and on short notice to often remote areas. Although we offered to continue our support, most of them couldn't take up the offer in such unstable circumstances. But we still helped with signposting for urgent needs if needed.

One extraordinary highlight this year: It happened that the Refugee Integration Service (RIS) of MRSN urgently needed volunteers to manage their increased work load. We were happy to support them with 4 highly qualified PNs. We were elated, because this also meant that all PNs had not only meaningful roles but also many valuable development opportunities as our case studies show. It was very rewarding to hear from our PNs how much we have helped people in need. We're looking forward to 2025 and the impact report by our evaluator to hear more of our impact and inspiring stories.

In Person Training









Network Event





Career Fair for ESOL Students
Salford City College



II. Training Peer Navigators

Indicator	Target change	Actual change	Comment
Outcome 1 **Increase in volunteering in local organisations by PNs**			
Successful completion of PN training	72	81	
Outcome 2 **PN have increased confidence, skills and understanding of how UK agencies and communities function**			
Improved skills development	72	81	
Improved knowledge and understanding of UK agencies and communities	72	81	
Improved confidence	72	71	Those PNs who did not report an increase in confidence had reported being confident prior to the training, so this indicator was not relevant to them. 37 PNs experienced an increase in confidence of at least 2 levels (from 5 levels)

Note: 63 evaluation questionnaires were received from the total group of 81 peer navigators. We have estimated our 'actual change' figures by extrapolation of the evaluation responses received to cover 81 people.

Shared Routes Training: Quotes from PNs

Anjanie, volunteering with Wellbeing Champion

"I understand more about volunteering in the UK. I've learnt what's the difference between hard skills and soft skills, about different 'races' and their concept towards mental health in their countries. This helped me."

Joseph, caring responsibilities, legal matters

"I have learnt how to volunteer in charity organisation and I am more confident than before to socialise in the community."

Mpho, homeless

"I want to thank Shared Routes and their training. Before, I didn't know about others cultures but now I have improved a lot. I have also improved my English and communication skills and have confidence now. And I meet some new friends."

Kadija, working at amazon

"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."

Biftu, volunteering with Digital Champion

"I didn't know there were many volunteer opportunities in my local council but after this opportunity I learnt how to apply for these opportunities that I am passionate about. Thank you."

Faven, volunteering with Oxfam

"I now know the British culture and communication at work which will enable me to excel in my voluntary work and even future career. I am confident to go out there and look for voluntary role. In fact, Shared Routes referred me to Oxfam and I am called for an induction soon. I am very happy and excited. This wouldn't have happened if it was not for attending this training program. I want to thank all the mentors for their precious time. I am very thankful and happy about this training."

Zayan, homeless

"This training helped me to improve my communication skills, how to volunteer in community and knowing about basic mental health. This helped me a lot."

Lulit, volunteering with Tameside Meal Project

"I also learnt about UK culture and communication Those: 'Be on time', 'Could you', 'Would you'. I know I learnt somethings like that and I'm glad to took this course."

*All names in this report are changed according to our confidentiality policy.

III. Peer Navigator Volunteering

Indicator	Target change	Actual change	Comment
Outcome 1 **Increase in volunteering in local organisations by PNs**			
PNs and host organisations report min. 3 months successful volunteering in local organisations across sectors	60	55	5 PNs are in work, 7 PNs in education, 8 PNs have housing issues, 3 PNs are having caring responsibilities, and 3 PNs have health issues .

Volunteer Placements

55 volunteers (PNs), 44 host organisations, 2 PNs volunteer at 2 places

Name of organisation	No of PNs	Name of organisation	No of PNs
01. Age Friendly Salford	1	23. Levenshulme Inspire	3
02. Age UK Tameside	1	24. Madina Mosque Longsight	1
03. Barnardos Eccles	1	25. Manchester Central Foodbank	1
04. Bloom Allotment Hyde	2	26. MRSN-Asylum Support	1
05. British Heart Foundation Eccles	1	27. MRSN-General Advice	2
06. British Heart Foundation Salford	1	28. MRSN-Immigration Advice	1
07. British Red Cross Bolton	1	39. MRSN-Refugee Integration Service (RIS)	4
08. British Red Cross Oldham	1	30. Mustard Tree	1
09. British Red Cross Manchester	1	31. Our Manchester Food Partnership	1
10. British Red Cross Tameside	1	32. Oxfam	2
11. Bury Parish Church	1	33. Rainbow Haven	1
12. Café Create, Bolton	1	34. Salford Barber Shop	1
13. Cancer Research Salford	1	35. Seven Seat Salon	1
14. Caritas Wythenshawe	1	36. St Martin's Church Droylsden	1
15. Citzen Advice Manchester	1	37. Stepping Hill Hospital	1
16. Digital Champion	3	38. Stockport Homes	1
17. Eastern Sudan Community Association Manchester	1	39. Tameside Arts Ltd	1
18. Emmaus Salford	1	40. Tameside Meal Project	2
19. Fairfield General Hospitel	1	41. The Bond Bord Rochdale	1
20. Gautby Youth Community Centre	1	42. Wigan and Leigh Hospice	1
21. Grafton Community Centre	1	43. Yellow Bird Age Friendly	1
22. Healthy Hyde Wellbeing Hub	3	44. YMCA Salford	1

Signposting PNs for their urgent needs

We signposted in total 76 PNs to following services for their urgent needs:

College/University: 14
ESOL Classes: 12
Asylum Support: 19
Immigration Advice: 8
Housing Advice: 10
Health Services: 4
Employment Support: 9

VOLUNTEERING: CASE STUDIES

Alice from Hong Kong, volunteering with Age UK Tameside





"I'm Alice. I came from Hong Kong last year. In Hong Kong I was a teacher in Business and Accounting in a vocational school. Last Christmas, I met my friend in the supermarket. She invited me to join the ESOL class at the Hattersley Hub. The ESOL teacher recommended us to join the Shared Routes training. I think because this training is online it is suitable for us. I don't need to go out and take the course.

I'm born in Hong Kong. I grew up in Hong Kong. I've been to the UK many many years ago. I came here to take care of my mother. She is 86 years old. In this situation I don't have enough time to do a full-time job. So, I want to contribute to the society and I want to build a sense of community and sense of belonging here in the UK. So, volunteering was best for me and that's why I joined the class.

The teachers, they knew that our mother language is not English. So, they speak slow so that I can easily understand. I remember from the training the workshop on administrative jobs in volunteering, about what can you do for jobs. This made me very happy because this is what I wanted to be. So, I decided to apply for administrative assistant.

I tried and applied for several roles but the responses were very slow. Then Shared Routes helped me to find this volunteer job that I'm now doing with Age UK in administration. It is exactly what I wanted: in administration, with development opportunities and very near my house. It's very good.

I go every Wednesday morning to Age UK in Tameside. I'm an administrative assistant. I help Age UK to input their member's data. I'm also filing and help them to keep their files in order. Maybe next week I will help the accountant to do some paper work.

There is one colleague here who not just helped me how to work but 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. Then I could read what I need to do. It was quite helpful.

Before, I sometimes felt that people in the UK are cold but if I come here to volunteer they are very welcoming and always ask me "Are you ok?" "Would you like to have a cup of tea or coffee?" They always ask me. They make me not to feel lonely.

Also, Age UK is a service of elderly. I gained more knowledge to help me to take care of my mother. One of the main concerns is to prevent the elderly from falling down. They showed me some steps elderlies should use, especially when they walk in the winter. If you walk you should put down your heel first and your toes last. This prevents falling. It's very very useful.

I also shared in the many activities of Age UK. I went to a Diwali celebration which was new for me; the food and dance. I enjoyed it so much. It was very interesting. Hong Kong is different. Everyone speaks the same language. But here, accents are different in London, in Manchester and in other cities. I was often thinking: "What? What are they talking?" But now I learnt more. They tried to let me know what they are talking when I volunteer. They also make sure that I understood. It's so helpful. In volunteering I saw that Manchester is very diverse with many different cultures. I like that. In volunteering I saw many different cultures and they were so friendly. This was very nice."

Becky Skorupa,
Be Well Team Leader
Age UK Tameside

"Alice helps the team with admin work which gives the team more time to focus on clients, this is very helpful. Alice is happy to work in another team, as she is now volunteering with the finance team 1 hour a week."

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.

That 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."

Charlotte Thompson, Community Development Coordinator Levenshulme Inspire

"June has been a volunteer at Levenshulme Inspire community centre since August 2024 supporting our elderly group the taskforce once a week (sometimes more) as well as volunteering in our café helping cater for over 10 youth projects over south Manchester for 6 weeks over the summer and now working there once a week.

June is hard working, reliable and has been and continues to be an asset to our team and we are incredibly proud of all the work that she has done for us so far. June has shown herself to be a caring and attentive volunteer who responds incredibly well to her environment and the people within it. Everyone at the centre and within the groups she volunteers for really love her positive attitude and need to help people.

We want to see her reach her full potential in this country as well as living a full and well life and we fully support her ongoing legal situation and hope it is resolved as soon as possible."

Daniat from Eritrea/Ethiopia, volunteering at MRSN RIS





I'm from Eritrea but grew up in Ethipia. I came to the UK in March 2023. It has been almost 2 years now. 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 MRSN training and they sent me the link and I registered.

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. So, I was searching if there was a way to help others. But first, I have to take some training to know the culture and the people because everything was new and very different from where I have been. I needed a training which I took with MRSN. The 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. Sophie welcomed me and that helped me to love my work.

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.

Volunteering makes me not to focus on the flaws that I have. It helps me. 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." It makes you more happy and more confident going forward.

I still have to go to hospital. I have a lot of appointments coming up. In hospital 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."

Sophie McKenzie, Refugee Integration Service Co-ordinator MRSN

"Daniat is an asset to the RIS team. She is very competent and brings numerous skills to the project, including her IT knowledge, her ability to translate and interpret and her proficiency in taking the initiative. She is trustworthy, hard-working and empathetic. Daniat is a pleasure to work alongside."

"The RIS Project would be unable to function at its capacity without the Shared Routes Volunteers. The training they have received from SR, prior to volunteering with RIS means they are prepared and able to take up the work we do with relative ease. Their lived experience and personal understanding of our work is an important and key factor to RIS."

Hanan from Yemen/Saudi Arabia, volunteering at Mustard Tree and MRSN RIS

"I'm from Yemen but I was born and raised in Saudi Arabia. I came to the UK in June 2024. My mother was already in the UK and she was a service user of MRSN who helped her a lot. One time I went with my mom to MRSN and heard about volunteering and that it could help me with my language and other things. So, I asked about the Shared Routes project. I didn't have time to do the course in June but I attended the one in August. The training was so good to start with. It was my first step and it was so good because I learnt more about clients and keeping client's information secret. This was really good to know.

At that time, I was going with my mom everywhere. So, wherever I saw volunteering ads I applied. Once I went with my mom to the clothes shop at Mustard Tree and at reception there was a big sign for volunteering with their Freedom project. I asked, they told me how to apply and I filled the form.

At that time, I didn't get a place at college but I didn't want to sit at home. I wanted change, make something. I was just new and needed to see people, make contact with them. That's why I started volunteering.

I volunteer 16 hours a week with Mustard Tree, that is 2 days. I started in the warehouse but I found this isn't really for me. It was with the van and all. So, I changed to the coffee shop 1 day and 1 day in retail.

Mondays I go to the coffee shop and I learnt how to do coffee, make different breakfast and lunch and serve the customers. Wednesdays I go to the retail shop and work as cashier. I enjoy working in the coffee shop the most because I have different things to do, make the coffee, breakfast, serve. It's more things to learn and more interesting. In retail it's more mostly working on the till.

I also got the food hygiene certificate and customer confidence certificate from Mustard Tree. There are a lot of courses there. The programme of Mustard Tree is for 6 months and after that they help you to search for a job. There is a work coach for me. Like when I want to apply for something I should tell her and she helps me to apply. She also looks for courses for me. At the beginning she asked me "What is your goal?" "Why are you volunteering?" So, I told her that I want to volunteer until I get a place at college or university. I told her I want to be an engineer. She is searching for me for courses where I can apply to do this and make it to the college. She gave me a lot of things to join them. I'm volunteering now with Mustard Tree for 4 to 5 months.

After the Shared Routes training, I started volunteering at MRSN RIS. I register people on AIMS [the Client Management System]. I translate. I learnt a lot at MRSN, more than at Mustard Tree. I learnt how to use their client management system. I translate the consent form for clients. I learnt a lot about people's information, about the Home Office and how it's working, about all the processes in the UK. They taught me how to do e-visa, Universal Credit, how to create an account. I learnt a lot of things. I'm volunteering now more than 4 months with them. I volunteer 1 day a week and sometimes I come 2 days.

Volunteering changed a lot for me. I'm much more confident to interact with people. Before, I was so shy to talk and couldn't start a conservation. Now, at MRSN and Mustard Tree I have to start the conservation. "What do you like?" How can I help you?" That's one big improvement for me. Also, now I understand the British accent more. This was so hard for me and I had a lot of difficulties.

Because I learnt more about the UK and life here, I could help my family as they don't speak English. I help them to understand what is happening. For example, when people knock at doors advertising, my mom used to believe them. But as I'm going out and hearing what is happening, I could understand that they were lying when they said "Come to our company, we offer better services. Give us your bank details." From volunteering I know that this is scam. But my mom gave our bank details and 2 times we needed to cancel the card. Now, she is not doing it anymore. This is one of the benefits of me volunteering.

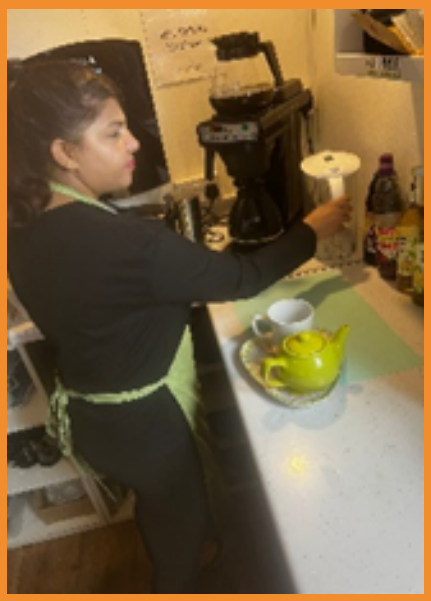
My plans are now to get a job, even if it's part time, it's fine. Until then, I volunteer and in September I will start college, I got a place. Until then I will volunteer."

Sophie McKenzie, Refugee Integration Service Co-ordinator MRSN

"Hanan's confidence has grown a great deal since she has been volunteering with RIS. The attributes she brings as an interpreter and translator are considerable and the work she does on admin and triage integral to the project. Amirah is a much valued member of the RIS Team."



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. For example, I needed to know about UK life and values. The teaching was very good. I understood everything. A lot of information I learnt. 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. add? Thanks Mrsn for all ongoing help and support."

Carol Hardman, CreateBolton Operations Manager

"Saima was with us at Cafe Create for a few months. During her time with us she worked well with the other volunteers. She undertook any task asked of her and she developed a good relationship with customers."

Faris from Sudan, volunteering at Eastern Sudan Community Association



I'm Faris. I'm from Sudan and I came 2015 to the UK.
I found Shared Routes through the internet and friends told me that they have done it and I registered for the training. I wanted to work to help people, particularly in the field of kitchen because I love working in the kitchen.
I liked the training because everyone was friendly. MRSN helped me in so many other ways with housing and immigration advice and general advice. I'm so grateful for their support because I needed help in everything. MRSN is a very good charity.

I started volunteering with my community the Eastern Sudan Community Association. I worked in the kitchen of their community café. I cooked, cleaned and served coffee and tea. Later, I also signposted clients for help with paper work. This was very important. So many people needed help. I volunteered for more than 9 months. I came one, two or three days every week. Because of volunteering I learnt so much about my community and what people need. I benefited much because it made me happy that I helped people. Before, I did not speak English. Now, I speak good. Volunteering also helped me with references. Now, I work in a kitchen in a restaurant in town. I'm still volunteering when I'm free."

Abdulhadi Ahmad, Director of Eastern Sudan Community Association

"Since April, 2024. Faris is assisting us in our Manchester branch with the youth and sports activities of the association. He volunteers in the kitchen and helps with other activities as needed. His help is highly valuable and really helps to run our activities."

Samuel from Eritra, 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've been here now for 14 months.
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."

Eyob from Eritrea, volunteering at Levenshulme Inspire



"I learnt about your organisation from a friend who told me that the MRNS has advice services. During one of my visits, I came to know about your project, Shared Routes. I wanted to volunteer because I wanted to do something. I had so many problems bringing my family here. It is still not solved. So, I wanted to volunteer to take my mind a bit off.
Your team told me about Levenshulme Inspire in Manchester. It was very close to my home. One of your team members helped me to apply online to volunteer with the food bank. I applied and was invited for an interview.I was then accepted as a foodbank assistant. I like the work. We help many people to get food.
I have to say my experience is very helpful. I have gained a lot from my experience: talking with the people around in the charity. I was able to learn more about the community around. I improved my confidence as I got to know the society more and more. Volunteering is also enjoyable as people are friendly and sometimes humorous when they talk to me. It was for this reason that I'm volunteering for about 8 months now and I continue."

Charlotte Thompson, Community Development Coordinator Levenshulme Inspire

"Eyob has volunteered at Levenshulme Inspire for our community café since May 2024 doing a variety of roles and duties. He has volunteered for us on average of 2 - 4 hours a week depending on his availability and what is needed in the café. Tijar is hard-working, reliable and has been an asset to our team and we are incredibly proud of all the work that he has done for us so far. We couldn't be happier with the hard work he has done at Inspire and we hope he continues to volunteer with us."

IV. Supporting PNs

Indicator	Target change	Actual change	Comment
Outcome 4 **Increased engagement of PN in local community**			
Cultural awareness of UK and other RAS cultures	60	81	
Choices and opportunities for engaging in society	60	81	

V. Key learning for the year

1. Refining the E&M categories helped to provide more detailed and valuable demographic information on our service users

2. The right-wing anti-immigrant riots in August showed how hostile the environment can be for asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, and ethnic and religious minorities. It shows that these groups need much support to settle successfully in the UK.

3. Our case studies show the huge positive impact our project has on the lives of our service users and their community/environment.

4. The case studies show how important Shared Routes' support is by way of increase in confidence, language skills, improving mental health awareness, gaining references and networks as well as signposting for urgent needs.

VI. Equality Monitoring Data

Gender	%
Female	62%
Male	31%
Non-Binary	7%
Other	0%
Prefer not to say	0%

Age	%
18-24	20%
25-34	35%
35-44	25%
44-54	10%
55-64	10%
65+	0%
Prefer not to say	0%

Ethnicity

Black/African/Caribbean/Black UK	%
African	59%
Caribbean	4%
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background	1%

Asian/Asian Uk	%
Indian	0%
Pakistani	3%
Bangladeshi	4%
Chinese	9%
Any other Asian background	3%

Other ethnic group	%
Arab	7%
Any other ethnic group	5%
Prefer not to say	3%

Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	%
White and Asian	0%
White and Black African	1%
White and Black Caribbean	0%
Any other mixed background	0%

White	%
English/Scottish/Welsh/Northern Irish/UK	0%
Irish	0%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%
Any other White background	1%

Disability	%
Disabled	5%
Not disabled	87%
Prefer not to say	8%

Sexual orientation	%
Heterosexual/Straight	73%
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	4%
Other	6%
Prefer not to say	17%

Caring responsibilities	%
Caring responsibility	37%
No caring responsibility	59%
Prefer not to say	4%

Religion or belief	%
Christian	50%
Muslim	31%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Sikh	1%
Other religion	0%
No religion	5%
Prefer not to say	13%

*Note: Numbers are rounded and therefore might add up to more than 100%