

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

England & Wales - Charity number 1168507

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 2016-07-29

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Lifecentral Church
Little Cornbow
Halesowen
West Midlands
B63 3AJ

Phone 07522 596137

Email Welcomegrouphalesowen@gmail.com

Website www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 1. THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS LIVING WITH THEM, RESIDING (TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY) IN HALESOWEN AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS, WHO ARE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POSITION, BY PROVIDING SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND EVENTS INVOLVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. 2. THE RELIEF OF POVERTY, THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS LIVING WITH THEM IN HALESOWEN AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT.

Activities: We seek to alleviate social isolation and financial exclusion of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, providing a safe weekly drop-in, telephone support and deliveries to people across Dudley, Sandwell and the west of Birmingham. Offering friendship, refreshments, empathy, mutual support, guidance, signposting, financial help, foodbank access, clothes, baby supplies and household goods.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Birmingham City
- Dudley
- Sandwell

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£57,034	£52,512	-	-
2024-12-31	£19,373	£26,053	-	-
2023-12-31	£28,379	£24,674	-	-
2022-12-31	£27,697	£22,937	-	-
2021-12-31	£20,690	£20,506	-	-
2020-12-31	£23,818	£16,357	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Anthony Lau		2022-05-16
Clare Neville		2019-01-24
Comforter Zibwowa		2024-09-02
Dilys Ward		2018-01-10
Freda Parkes		2014-04-21
Helen Bryan		2009-09-05
Lynn Gower		2019-09-05
Lynn Poulton		2023-07-24
Mike Gower		2020-05-27
Moira McNulty		2017-07-20

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

England & Wales - Charity number 1168507

Accounts



**Welcome
Group
Halesowen**

**Trustees' Annual Report
1 January to 31 December 2025**

Welcome Group Halesowen

Charity registration number: 1168507

Welcome Group Halesowen

Trustees' annual report for the year ended 31 December 2025

Charity registration number: 1168507

Registered address: Lifecentral Church
Little Cornbow
HALESOWEN
West Midlands
B63 3AJ

Email address: welcomegrouphalesowen@gmail.com

Website: www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk

Trustees and officers

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Clare Neville	Chair	
Mike Gower	Vice Chair	
Dilys Ward	Secretary	
Lynn Gower		
Moira McNulty		
Freda Parkes		
Helen Bryan		
Anthony Lau		
Lynn Poulton		
Comforter Zibwowa		

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document Constitution, adopted 12th May 2016

How the charity is constituted Unincorporated association

Trustee selection methods Trustees are appointed or reappointed annually at the Annual General Meeting held in March

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity as set out in its constitution are:

- (1) The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers and their dependents living with them, residing (temporarily or permanently) in Halesowen and the surrounding areas, who are socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by providing social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.
- (2) The relief of poverty, the promotion of physical and mental health and the advancement of education of asylum seekers and refugees and their dependents living with them in

Halesowen and the surrounding areas through the provision of information, guidance and support.

The main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit:

The charity seeks to alleviate social isolation and financial exclusion of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, providing a safe weekly drop-in based in Halesowen, digital support and deliveries to people across Dudley Borough and adjacent areas of Sandwell and West Birmingham. Offering friendship, refreshments, empathy, mutual support, guidance, signposting, financial help, foodbank access, clothes, baby supplies, household goods and free SIM cards. We work in partnership with Brushstrokes Community Project to provide advice on asylum support and immigration matters. We have two drop-in sessions, on Monday mornings and afternoons, during school term-time. Our sessions are completely free and we pay the bus fares of asylum seekers and those with refugee status to enable them to attend. We have toys and activities for pre-school children.

We also have a session exclusively for refugee and migrant women living in Dudley Borough, with refreshments and activities (such as informal English conversation, crafts, exercise, cookery and trips). This runs for two hours on Monday mornings 10am to 12pm, term-time only, in Lye, complemented by literacy classes.

The trustees meet regularly throughout the year to plan and organise activities that ensure the charity complies with its stated purposes for the public benefit according to the Charity Commission's guidance.

Our vision:

Welcoming and helping asylum seekers and refugees

Our values

- Welcome all asylum seekers and refugees who come to us for help
- Embrace each person with respect and acceptance and without judgment
- Provide a place of safety and hope and facilitate mutual support
- Recognise that each individual has emotional, social, practical and spiritual needs

Achievements and Performance

In 2025 for our Mondays at Welcome Group much continued in the same way it has for the previous 17 years, we are here offering a place of welcome and hospitality, a safe space, a place to meet friends, enjoy company, share difficulties and hopefully find some answers. We have continued to provide bus tickets for people to attend, free SIM cards, nappies, a supply of secondhand clothes and household goods.

We started 2025 still struggling to manage the number of people attending the group and the challenge of restricting our catchment area. This inevitably meant turning people away. However, in recent months almost everyone who arrives to join the group is eligible to attend, and we are rarely having to turn people away.

We are grateful that our partnership with Brushstrokes has continued thanks to funding from the Dudley Migrant Connect Fund. Having their advisers with us has made such a difference to our members; they have been able to help with such a wide range of issues and we are so

thankful to have their expertise. Their immigration adviser has attended once a month to offer help at pre-arranged appointments. Those who have had difficulty accessing legal advice to progress their claims have really appreciated this provision.

We have continued to receive very generous support from local churches. Through funds the Catholic SVP group accessed, our members received supermarket gift cards on three occasions in 2025, before each of the main school holidays, help very much appreciated by them all. Black Country Foodbank continue to give our members access to their food parcels. Being able to receive extra food and toiletries, makes a huge difference to our members, who also benefited from them providing funds for fresh fruit and vegetables, which we bought and distributed at the group on three occasions in the year. They also contributed towards the food we provided at our Christmas Party. We are incredibly grateful for this partnership.

A very significant event in 2025 was Welcome Group successfully applying to Dudley Migrant Connect Fund for a new women's project at Lye. In March 2025, the group called *Blossom* opened in Lye to provide a women's only space where they could learn English, find out about British culture, do crafts, exercise, cookery and go on trips. This group has seen an average attendance of 10-15 each week and reached 46 women from 10 countries. They have experienced a really varied programme. We would like to congratulate the team involved and thank them for their hard work in providing such lively and engaging activities for the members. The group will continue with renewed funding.

Our Refugee and Asylum Seeker friends are still facing massive challenges. The Government is planning to introduce changes that will make it harder to get indefinite leave to remain, harder to get family reunions, almost impossible to get British citizenship. It is important we speak up on their behalf.

We once again acknowledge the work of our project manager. We would not be able to serve our Refugee and Asylum Seeker friends without his commitment, dedication and enthusiasm, alongside that of our volunteers and supporters. We can celebrate that one third of our current volunteers are from various migrant backgrounds.

Finally, we recognise that Welcome Group is a safe space, a place which enables friendships to blossom, a place that can restore hope, a place of love and acceptance.

Statistical outcomes:

- We have 228 registered members (¾ female, ¼ male) and in 2025 we engaged with a total of 447 adult service users from 46 countries. 195 people used our services for the first time.
- 80% of those we helped were from just 10 countries: Eritrea, Syria, Iraq, Albania, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Yemen, with more than 1 in 5 of them from Eritrea.
- 36% of our members were asylum seekers and 64% had refugee status. The proportions have reversed over the last 3-4 years as successive governments have reduced the backlog in asylum decisions combined with settled refugees continuing to access our services.
- 42% of members resided in Dudley, up from 35% a year earlier, reflecting the increased local focus of the group.

- 24 of our asylum seeker families and singles from 7 countries were granted refugee or humanitarian status (leave to remain) after being in the UK for an average of 5 years.
- Attendance at Monday sessions stabilised at 90-100 by the autumn after increasing to 110 or more some weeks in the summer. The catchment area for newcomers introduced in 2024 has had limited effect due to the increasing demand from local people. Our Christmas party saw an all-time record Monday attendance of 143 adults.
- Weekly referrals to foodbanks averaged 11 a week, similar to 2024.
- We continued to distribute free Vodafone SIM cards with generous data, calls and texts, giving out 485 SIM cards, 37% more than in 2024.
- During the year we were able to purchase 110 small new appliances for our members, from kettles to microwaves, saucepans to shopping trolleys and 8 large appliances (washing machines, fridge-freezers and cookers).
- We issued monthly baby supplies, occasional sanitary products, secondhand household goods, clothes and small electricals. We helped 14 families with school uniform grants. About 90 deliveries to homes took place, including furniture, household goods and gift cards, with a van hired on 6 occasions.
- Through our partnership with Brushstrokes, art & craft workshops were offered for 6 weeks in the summer, attended by 12-15 people each week.
- We signed letters, petitions and wrote to our MP to support the various campaigns of national refugee charities for a fair, just and compassionate asylum system in the UK.

Financial Review

Financial position at end of year

Cash in bank on 31/12/2025 was £11,284 in unrestricted funds. This is a healthy position to end the year on, but we are facing ongoing heavy demand on our services and the need to continually replenish our funds through funding applications to trusts and donations. Trustees have an agreed reserves policy of £5000 which is equivalent to 2 months operational costs. We have minimal liabilities to consider in reaching this figure, only employing one person one day per week on a permanent basis.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signature: *C.E Neville*

Full name and position: Clare Neville
Chair

Date: 18/05/2026

Welcome Group Halesowen

Registered Charity Number 1168507

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31st December 2025

	2025		2024	
Receipts	£	£	£	£
Grants and Donations				
DCVS Grant - Dudley Migrant Connect	26,039.00		-	
Postcode Local Trust	9,000.00		-	
Charles Plater Trust grant	5,000.00		-	
Halas PCC	4,331.00		5,229.00	
Allen Lane Foundation	4,000.00		-	
The Grimmitt Trust	3,000.00		-	
Souter Charitable Trust	2,000.00		-	
Black Country Foodbank	1,000.00		500.00	
Stourbridge Quakers	600.00		600.00	
Bryson&Lowe Open Garden	467.50		281.55	
Churches Together in Halesowen	200.00		330.00	
Other donations and grants	1,396.81		12,432.66	
Total Receipts		57,034.31		19,373.21
Payments				
General direct charitable activity	30,221.28		26,002.65	
Dudley Migrant Connect	18,703.63		-	
Operating costs	3,587.35		2,726.67	
Total Payments		52,512.26		28,729.32
Surplus / (Deficit 2024)		4,522.05	-	9,356.11
Add				
Funds brought forward		14,606.76		23,962.77
Funds Carried Forward		19,128.81		14,606.66
Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2025				
Assets				
Bank balance	18,999.59		14,532.30	
Cash in hand	129.22		74.46	
		19,128.81		14,606.76
Less liabilities		-		-
Total Net Assets		19,128.81		14,606.76
Represented by				
General funds	11,414.00		14,606.76	
Ring fenced funds				
Dudley Migrant Connect	7,335.37		-	
Other	379.44		-	
Total Funds Carried Forward		19,128.81		14,606.76

Signed on behalf of trustees

Chair *C E Neville*

C E Neville

Date

18th May 2026

Treasurer

K Sables

K Sables

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Welcome Group Halesowen
(Registered Charity Number 1168507)**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for year ended 31st December 2025.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed *Mike Weaver*
Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountant

Dated *18th May 2026*

Address: Nine Acres, Uffmoor Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 1DL

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

England & Wales - Charity number 1168507

Accounts



**Trustees' Annual Report
1 January to 31 December 2023**

Welcome Group Halesowen

Charity registration number: 1168507

Welcome Group Halesowen

Trustees' annual report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Charity registration number: 1168507

Registered address: Owen House, rear of Lifecentral Church
Little Cornbow
HALESOWEN
West Midlands
B63 3AJ

Email address: welcomegrouphalesowen@gmail.com

Website: www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk

Trustees and officers

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Clare Neville	Chair	
Mike Gower	Vice Chair	
Dilys Ward	Secretary	
Andrew Harwood	Project Manager	
Lynn Gower		
Moira McNulty		
Freda Parkes		
Helen Bryan		
Anthony Lau		
Lynn Poulton		From 24.07.23

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document Constitution, adopted 12th May 2016

How the charity is constituted Unincorporated association

Trustee selection methods Trustees are appointed or reappointed annually at the Annual General Meeting held between March and May

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity as set out in its constitution are:

- (1) The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers and their dependents living with them, residing (temporarily or permanently) in Halesowen and the surrounding areas, who are socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by providing social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.
- (2) The relief of poverty, the promotion of physical and mental health and the advancement of education of asylum seekers and refugees and their dependents living with them in Halesowen and the surrounding areas through the provision of information, guidance and support.

The main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit:

The charity seeks to alleviate social isolation and financial exclusion of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, providing a safe weekly drop-in, telephone support and deliveries to people across Dudley, Sandwell and the west of Birmingham. Offering friendship, refreshments, empathy, mutual support, guidance, signposting, financial help, foodbank access, clothes, baby supplies, household goods and free SIM cards. We work in partnership with Brushstrokes Community Project to provide advice on asylum support and immigration matters. We have two drop-in sessions, on Monday mornings and afternoons, during school term-time. Our sessions are free, and we pay the bus fares of asylum seekers and those with refugee status to enable them to attend. We have toys and activities for pre-school children.

The trustees meet regularly throughout the year to plan and organise activities that ensure the charity complies with its stated purposes for the public benefit according to the Charity Commission's guidance.

Our vision:

Welcoming and helping asylum seekers and refugees

Our values

- Welcome all asylum seekers and refugees who come to us for help
- Embrace each person with respect and acceptance and without judgement
- Provide a place of safety and hope and facilitate mutual support
- Recognise that each individual has emotional, social, practical and spiritual needs

Achievements and Performance

We have continued to be what we were set up to be, a welcoming place, a place of sanctuary and hospitality for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. A place for them to feel they are not alone, a place of friendship and support. Through our presence we are pushing back against the hostility and intolerance communicated by many politicians and the media. I hope we are a little bit of light shining in the darkness. So, we want to concentrate as much as possible on the positives of 2023.

As a group we are blessed with positive and enriching links with other organisations, churches and groups, including a local Catholic primary school. Different staff join us as volunteers each week. The parents and children have contributed on so many occasions with uniforms, shoes, toys, cash donations and gifts. The children have offered our members wonderful hospitality serving afternoon tea both at their school and at our meeting. And what a joy it is to be entertained by them.

We are also grateful to the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) at our local Catholic church. Their generous support has enabled asylum seekers in our group to receive supermarket vouchers on three separate occasions during the year, a much-appreciated boost at each holiday time. They have also given us access to a fund which has enabled some of those who have received Leave to Remain to be given an electrical appliance. A wonderful opportunity for those trying to equip a home for the first time in UK.

Another positive development in 2023 is Brushstrokes Community Project generously enabling one of their immigration advisers to be at our group one day each month since February. This has enabled many of our members to move forward with their asylum claims, several of whom had been stuck in limbo for many years. The Refugee & Migrant Centre (RMC) opening a

centre in Dudley has also benefited our members. It is another place we can signpost people to, to receive skilled support and advice locally.

Our first ever website www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk was launched on 3rd May. The website helps to showcase our services, helps our fundraising efforts and makes information about the group more widely available.

Our ongoing challenge is being able to respond to all the diverse ways our members need to be supported. Being an asylum Seeker or refugee in the UK, contrary to media reports, is a very difficult life. Many are lonely and isolated, struggle with English, the way our systems work, with living in poverty, and poor housing. We find our support is needed in so many areas of their lives.

Because the services we provide are hard to find, people are hearing of us or being recommended to us, as a place that offers help. This is our challenge. How do we manage to offer the support needed, to the ever-increasing number of people seeking our help?

By the summer of 2023, our financial situation was precarious. Our numbers were growing week by week, we were overspending our budget and as trustees we knew we could not continue as we had been. Welcoming anyone who attends, providing our services to anyone who arrived at our door, was becoming unsustainable, both financially and practically. It was decided we needed to put in place a catchment area, and for the first time for many years we faced the possibility of turning away people wishing to join us.

However, during the Autumn our financial position transformed, so many people responded to our need. Individuals, and particularly local churches, heard of our predicament and responded generously. It was so uplifting to know people in Halesowen valued our work so much. We also had successful funding bids that helped secure our position. Once again, we were on track with our budget.

However, capacity issues had not eased. Despite putting in place the catchment area, more and more people were seeking out our services. Our numbers were still too high for us to sustain and as a group we were stretched to our limits. Turning away people in need is very difficult and it takes a physical and emotional toll on our volunteers. It contradicts our reason for existence. However, we remained hopeful our measures would soon result in more manageable numbers.

We are also grateful to OM for enabling our project manager to work tirelessly on our behalf through his ministry with them. We want to thank our more than 30 dedicated volunteers for the commitment and love they all give to Welcome Group.

Statistical achievements:

- At the end of the year we had 178 registered members, with 236 children, and in 2023 engaged with a total of 331 adult service users from 43 countries. 164 people used our services for the first time.
- To put these numbers in perspective, we saw a one third increase in the number of people we helped compared to 2022 and our membership rose by one fifth.
- 54% of those we helped are from just 5 countries: Eritrea, Albania, Syria, Iraq and Nigeria.
- Half are asylum seekers and half have refugee status. About 12 of the asylum seekers had been refused asylum with no recourse to public funds and were thus vulnerable.

- 36 of our asylum seeker families and singles from 14 countries were granted refugee status (leave to remain) after being in the UK for an average of 6 years. This higher than usual number of positive decisions was partially due to the Home Office target to clear a backlog of 92,000 legacy asylum cases (made prior to Nationality & Border Act in June 2022).
- Attendance at Monday sessions massively increased from 50-55 adults at the start of the year to 75-80 in the autumn, bringing more pre-school children too.
- Our Christmas party saw an all-time record Monday attendance of 124 adults and 33 mostly pre-school children. We enjoyed a delicious hot international buffet meal, were entertained by a ukulele band and were able to give out donated new toys and gifts to 219 children of our members.
- Weekly referrals to foodbanks increased from an average of 6 to 10 each week.
- Many newer asylum seekers continued to be housed initially in hotels. In the autumn, 15 of our asylum seekers were living in hotels with basic meals provided.
- We continued to distribute free Vodafone SIM cards with generous data, calls and texts, giving out 312 SIM cards.
- Supermarket gift cards, funded by SVP were also given out to asylum seeker families and single people, 70 at Easter, 83 in the summer and 77 at Christmas.
- In October we partnered with Dudley Public Health in distributing 167 toothbrush packs to children and adults. Each pack contained a toothbrush and toothpaste.
- In November, with so many people granted asylum and needing to move on we made an appeal for suitcases and travel bags receiving about 40 in the following few weeks.
- We continue to issue monthly baby supplies, occasional toiletries and sanitary products, pass on donated goods, clothes and appliances. We have also been able to purchase small appliances and school uniforms among other items. More than 150 deliveries to homes took place, including Christmas gifts, supermarket vouchers and small furniture items.

Financial Review

Financial position at end of year

Cash at bank on 31/12/2023 was £18,438 in unrestricted funds. This is a healthy position to end the year on, but we are facing increasing demand on our services and the need to continually replenish our funds through funding applications to trusts and donations. Trustees have an agreed reserves policy to cover 2 months operational costs in the event of a loss of income and to meet any unforeseen expenditure that may occur.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signature: *Clare Neville*

Full name and position: Clare Neville
Chair

Date: 2nd September 2024

Welcome Group Halesowen

Registered Charity Number 1168507

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

	2023		2022	
Receipts	£	£	£	£
Donations over £500				
National Lottery Fund	9,900		9,700	
Halas Parochial Church Council	3,318		5,727	
Grimmitt Trust	3,000		-	
Hilden Charitable Foundation	3,000		-	
HEF Graham Griffiths Fund	2,300		-	
Edward Cadbury Grant	1,000		-	
Life Central Church	915		-	
Stourbridge Quakers	600		600	
All Churches Trust	-		4,900	
Heart of England Community Fund	-		2,000	
Churches Together in Halesowen	-		830	
Asda Foundation	-		760	
Sub total		24,033		24,517
Other donations up to £500		4,346		3,180
Total Receipts		28,379		27,697
Payments				
Cost of Charitable activities				
Supporting asylum seekers and refugees	22,350		20,838	
Drop in centre and sundry running costs	2,324		2,099	
Total Payments		24,674		22,937
Surplus		3,705		4,760
Add Funds in Hand 1st January 2023		17,581		12,821
Funds in Hand 31st December 2023		21,286		17,581

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	20,776	16,900
Petty Cash	510	681
Net Assets	21,286	17,581

Represented by:

General Fund	18,438	15,806
Ring Fenced Donations	2,848	1,775
Total Funds	21,286	17,581

Approved by trustees on 02/09/2024 and signed on their behalf

C. E. Neville

CE Neville

Chair

K. Sables

KSables

Treasurer

**Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of the Welcome Group Halesowen
Registered Charity Number 1168507**

**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st December 2023 and
Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2023**

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the attached accounts.

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed: *Mike Weaver*

Name: Michael Weaver

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Chartered Public Finance Accountant

Address: Nine Acres, Uffmoor Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 1DL

Date: 5th September 2024

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

England & Wales - Charity number 1168507

Accounts



**Welcome
Group
Halesowen**

**Trustees' Annual Report
1 January to 31 December 2022**

Welcome Group Halesowen

Charity registration number: 1168507

Welcome Group Halesowen

Trustees' annual report for the year ended 31 December 2022

Charity registration number: 1168507

Registered address: Owen House, rear of Lifecentral Church
Little Cornbow
HALESOWEN
West Midlands
B63 3AJ

Email address: welcomegrouphalesowen@gmail.com

Website: www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk

Trustees and officers

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Andrew Harwood	Chair (until 16.05.22) Project Manager	
Clare Neville	Secretary (until 16.05.22) Chair (from 16.05.22)	
Mike Gower	Vice Chair	
Dilys Ward	Secretary (from 16.05.22)	
Elizabeth Lacon	Treasurer	Until 31.10.22
Matthew Edwards		Until 16.05.22
Lynn Gower		
Moira McNulty		
Freda Parkes		
Helen Bryan		
Rachel Hall		Until 16.05.22
Anthony Lau		From 17.06.22

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document: Constitution, adopted 12th May 2016

How the charity is constituted: Unincorporated association

Trustee selection methods: Trustees are appointed or reappointed annually at the Annual General Meeting held between March and May

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the charity as set out in its constitution are:

- (1) The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers and their dependents living with them, residing (temporarily or permanently) in Halesowen and the surrounding areas, who are socially excluded on

the grounds of their social and economic position, by providing social and recreational facilities and events involving the local community.

- (2) The relief of poverty, the promotion of physical and mental health and the advancement of education of asylum seekers and refugees and their dependents living with them in Halesowen and the surrounding areas through the provision of information, guidance and support.

The main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit:

The charity seeks to alleviate social isolation and financial exclusion of vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees, providing a safe weekly drop-in, telephone support and deliveries to people across Dudley, Sandwell and the west of Birmingham. Offering friendship, refreshments, empathy, mutual support, guidance, signposting, financial support, foodbank access, clothes, baby supplies and household goods. We have two drop-in sessions, on Monday morning 10.15 to 11.45am and Monday afternoon 12.30 to 2.00pm, during school term-time. Our sessions are completely free and we pay the bus fares of asylum seekers and those with refugee status to enable them to attend. We have toys and activities for pre-school children.

The trustees meet regularly throughout the year to plan and organise activities that ensure the charity complies with its stated purposes for the public benefit according to the Charity Commission's guidance.

Our vision:

Welcoming and helping asylum seekers and refugees

Our values

- Welcome all asylum seekers and refugees who come to us for help
- Embrace each person with respect and acceptance and without judgment
- Provide a place of safety and hope and facilitate mutual support
- Recognise that each individual has emotional, social, practical and spiritual needs

Achievements and Performance

Chair's Report for 2022

I think we can safely say Covid is behind us as far as our work at Welcome Group is concerned. But we discovered that some of the changes put in place to deal with it, enabled us to provide a better service so we have continued with them. Lifecentral Church enabling us to have the two rooms opened up into one space, and the two sessions, have halved the numbers in each session, and provide us with a much more pleasant and harmonious environment. We are very grateful for the support Lifecentral Church gives us.

Thinking about the world our members are living in, it is difficult to not feel despondent and depressed. We campaigned against the government's cruel Nationality and Borders Bill, which has now passed into law. With the proposal to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, though challenges to that are still ongoing through the courts, we can hope and pray that these challenges are successful.

The slow progress of the Home Office in processing asylum claims and the lack of suitable accommodation as the numbers build up, mean more people being housed in hotels. With payments not keeping pace with high levels of inflation, and the cost of living crisis, particularly the price of food, it is affecting our members very badly.

Sometimes the challenges can seem overwhelming, but we have to concentrate on the positive impact Welcome Group has on individual suffering people, and I share a comment made from an African man in March, *'When I come here, I feel free. I feel released. No harassment. I can relax. You are good people.'*

On a personal note, I have appreciated assisting Andrew (our project manager) in a small way with his role of registering new members of our group and responding to particular problems they are facing. It has been a privilege and very humbling to hear their specific problems especially if we have been able to offer assistance and support. Knowing we can make a difference is so important.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

- This was a year of parties: to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and Christmas. At Christmas gifts were given to 194 children in 88 families, £5 notes in Christmas cards to 136 people and 75 supermarket gift cards to asylum seeker families and single people. 30 food hampers, from Lifecentral Church and Stourbridge Quakers, were also distributed. A particular delight of the coronation party was having 44 children of all ages who are usually at school or nursery when we meet.
- Supermarket gift cards, funded by SVP, were also given out during the summer (50 families) and at Easter (70 families and singles). In addition, SVP directly gave £2000 for home starter kits of smaller and larger appliances for settled people moving to permanent housing, not included in our finances as it was reimbursed directly from SVP. We are grateful to Mike for liaising on this.
- Afghan Welcome Celebration, hosted by Lifecentral Church on Saturday 7 May with Dudley Centre for Equality & Diversity (CfED). We welcomed 60 Afghan adults and children, plus special guests including the Mayor of Dudley. Featured a Kurdish feast, speeches, drumming, bouncy castle, henna painting and children's Eid gifts. Money from our Afghan Helping Hands Project was used to fund this. Our first direct involvement with the 16 Afghan families resettled in Dudley.
- 17 of our asylum seekers from 12 countries, with their families, have been granted refugee status (leave to remain). Apart from two people, they were waiting for between 5 and 21 years. These low figures speak volumes about the broken asylum system and enormous backlog of asylum claims.
- Performance of Journeymen Theatre's *The Bundle*, based on the story of a real Chechen asylum seeker woman and her children, in May. 20 volunteers and 10 refugees watched.
- We received a Dudley CVS Spotlight Award for our own ongoing work and partnership with Healthwatch Dudley.
- A new partnership with Brushstrokes Project whereby one of their immigration advisers, George, will run an immigration advice session once a month will begin in the New Year.
- A deepening partnership with Our Lady & St. Kenelm's Catholic Primary School including a performance of Christmas songs, different staff regularly helping on Monday afternoons, and gifts of toys and other items at Christmas.
- Our first ever website www.welcomegrouphalesowen.org.uk will be launched soon. We are particularly grateful to Anthony for his work on this. The website will help to

showcase our services, help our fundraising efforts and make information about the group more widely available.

STATISTICS

- In December 2022 we had 147 registered members and engaged with a total of 248 adult service users from 39 countries in 2022. Our members have 183 children in the UK. 60% are asylum seekers with the rest having refugee status. 10 of the asylum seekers had been refused with no recourse to public funds and were thus especially vulnerable.
- 68% of those we helped are Syrians, Eritreans, Afghans, Albanians, Nigerians, Iraqis, and El Salvadorians.
- Attendance at Monday sessions has consistently averaged 55-59 adults while the average number of mainly pre-school children has dropped from an average of 15 to only 10, reflecting increasing attendance at nurseries.
- Weekly referrals to foodbanks remain constant at an average of 5 each week.
- Newer asylum seekers are being housed in hotels. We have welcomed people from Britannia Hotels in Birmingham and Wolverhampton and more recently from The Collection Hotel on Hagley Road, Birmingham.

DEVELOPMENTS

- During the summer Healthwatch Dudley staff regularly attended Monday sessions to find out about the experience of our refugees in accessing health services, to then influence change in how services are delivered locally. They ran two community events with food, activities and health checks in August for Syrian families in Dudley.
- We have welcomed several new volunteers over the past year who have enthusiastically taken up their roles on Monday and behind the scenes. Kevin took over as treasurer in November from Elizabeth who stepped down as a trustee and treasurer after 14 years faithful service, since Welcome Group started.
- Our Afghan Helping Hands Project supported Afghans with English classes, household goods and children's coats in partnership with Dudley Centre for Equality and Diversity.
- We were approved to distribute 300 free Vodafone SIM cards with generous data, calls and texts. About half of these have already been passed on to about 70 newly arrived Ukrainians, our own members and several other groups working with refugees.
- The arrival of Ukrainians on the Homes for Ukraine scheme was potentially a new challenge for us, but their needs were very different and the government's provision more generous than for any other refugees so our contact with them has been minimal.

THANKS

As Chair of Welcome Group, I feel humbled that our small group here has enabled all this to happen. But I particularly want to thank Andrew, our project manager for his commitment, hard work and dedication to the service of asylum seekers and refugees. He enables the group to offer the support we do. We see what happens on Monday, the practical tasks he performs, the interviews with new members and those in difficulties, but we may not be so aware of what goes on beyond our Monday meetings. The organisational and administrative tasks, the telephone calls, the emails and letters written, the visits, the deliveries. Without him our members would not receive the service they do. We also thank OM for enabling him to fulfil this role.

But alongside him I want to thank our whole team of volunteers and trustees for their dedication and commitment, working together, using their variety of skills and talents to enable the work for asylum seekers and refugees to continue. We have around 40 people who volunteer in

various capacities and a smaller group, including the trustees, who are involved with deliveries, purchases, resolving our friends' practical problems, sorting and packing of donated goods, visiting and accompanying people to appointments.

Financial Review

Financial position at end of year

Cash in bank on 31/12/2022 was £15,000 in unrestricted funds. This is a healthy position to end the year on, but we are facing increasing demand on our services and the need to continually replenish our funds through funding applications to trusts and donations. Trustees have agreed a reserves policy of £3000 which is equivalent to 2 months operational costs. We have no liabilities, such as staff costs, to consider in reaching this figure.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signature: *C.E Neville*

Full name and position: Clare Neville
Chair

Date: 26th October 2023

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

ACCOUNTS 1st JANUARY - 31st DECEMBER 2022

	2022	2021
INCOME		
Donations:		
Halas PCC	5,727.00	3,036.00
Legacy - Margot Fischl	0.00	5,000.00
The Hope Centre	0.00	4,000.00
Heart of England Community Fund	2,000.00	0.00
Quakers - Stourbridge	600.00	500.00
Donations in Memory of Anne West	0.00	765.00
Donations	2,591.00	1,310.00
+ PLT - Nappies & Baby Supplies	0.00	1,650.00
Allan Lane Foundation	0.00	3,000.00
Asda Foundation - Christmas 2021	0.00	300.00
Asda Foundation - Christmas 2022	760.00	0.00
Donations Christmas 2021	0.00	680.00
Donations Christmas 2022	265.00	0.00
HMRC Tax Refund	62.52	449.18
National Lottery Fund	9,700.00	0.00
Allchurches Trust	4,900.00	0.00
Churches Together in Halesowen	830.00	0.00
OLSK Catholic Church	261.69	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	27,697.21	20,690.18
EXPENDITURE		
Room Hire / Storage	1,130.00	400.00
Insurance	464.80	464.80
Bus Fares	6,395.55	3,857.00
Refreshments	1,040.53	439.25
Communications/Postage/Stationery	276.03	123.50
Cleaning materials / hygiene / Safety	8.77	47.18
Equipment	40.30	906.35
Easter	136.20	178.20
Christmas Expenses 2021	0.00	1,100.68
Christmas Expenses 2022	1,948.64	0.00
Volunteers Expenses & Training	143.92	170.38
Afghan Helping Hands Project	4,397.85	0.00
+ PLT Nappies & baby supplies	905.30	744.86
HEF Baby Supplies & equipment	727.37	0.00
Support - Baby Supplies & equipment	221.00	561.34
Support - Mobile phones top up	80.00	6,195.00
Support - inc. food & toiletries	276.02	734.20
Support - household goods	719.31	616.13
Support - finance	3,303.92	2,110.00
Support - school uniforms	406.59	361.00
Support Expenses - other items	46.50	1,405.22
Support - Train / coach tickets / travel	183.30	0.00
Childrens Resources	0.00	15.00
Gifts	0.00	10.00
Pat Inspection	35.00	66.00
Fuel	50.25	0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	22,937.15	20,506.09
SURPLUS	4,760.06	184.09

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1168507

ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1168507

Independent Examiner's Report

I report on the attached accounts of Welcome Group Halesowen for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



G. M. JONES
ACCOUNTANT
DUDLEY CVS
7 ALBION STREET
BRIERLEY HILL
DY5 3EE

1st September 2023

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1168507
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
National Lottery Community Fund	9,700		-	
Halas PCC	5,727		3,036	
Legacy	-		5,000	
Allchurches Trust	4,900		-	
Hope Centre	-		4,000	
Allan Lane Foundation	-		3,000	
Heart of England Community Fund	2,000		-	
Postcode Lottery Trust	-		1,650	
Other Grants/Donations	5,308		3,555	
Gift Aid	62		449	
		27,697		20,690
		<hr/>		<hr/>
EXPENDITURE				
Direct Charitable Expenditure	20,838		18,329	
Rent and Insurance	1,595		865	
Printing, Stationery, Advertising	276		123	
Volunteers' Training/Expenses	144		170	
Repairs and Renewals	75		972	
Sundries	9		47	
		22,937		20,506
		<hr/>		<hr/>
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</u>		4,760		184
		<hr/>		<hr/>

WELCOME GROUP HALESOWEN
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1168507
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2022

	2022	2021
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Current Account	16,900	12,409
Petty Cash	681	412
NET ASSETS	17,581	12,821
Represented by:		
Income & Expenditure Account:		
Balance at 31 st December 2021	12,821	12,637
Surplus for the Year	4,760	184
	17,581	12,821

Funds above include £1,775 remaining from grants received which has been defrayed after the year end.

Approved by the Committee on 1st September 2023 and signed on their behalf.

C. Neill

CHAIR

K. Sables

TREASURER