



**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

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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		
Moirra 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*

Dated *18th May 2026*

Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountant

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