

**HOST
NATION**

Connecting refugees with host communities

Trustees' Report and Receipts & Payments Accounts

for the year ended 30 September 2025



Welcoming refugees through friendship

HostNation Annual Report 2024-25

The trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 30 September 2025.

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Letter from our Chair

I am pleased to present the Trustees' report on the work of HostNation in the year to September 2025.

HostNation is a place for refugees to find friends, not an advocacy organisation. Yet the connections that are made across cultural boundaries are truly opening hearts and minds at a community level and I believe this can bring real change.

Many of our befrienders have never met a refugee before, and the experience can be profound. I think of my own friendship with Abdullah*, which first brought me to HostNation. He is a doctor who fled from Kabul to London in fear of his life. I'm culturally Jewish, and he's a devout Muslim, but coming from very different backgrounds has never stood between us.

I've learned a huge amount from him – it's certainly not a one-way street. We're genuinely friends, and I'll always value this relationship. I am so heartened each year to watch as other HostNation matches forge their own strong bonds.

Our society urgently needs these positive stories, since hostility towards asylum seekers dominates news and politics. The government pursued a strong deterrence agenda over the last year, limiting the rights and human dignity of asylum seekers and refugees. Family reunion applications were

suspended as of September 2025. There was a sharp fall in the number of refugees settled via safe routes. HostNation protested against these measures as part of the coalition Together With Refugees.

Despite sporadic anti-refugee riots, the majority of the British public (71%) still believe people escaping war and persecution should be given refuge. Nearly half (47%) feel that refugees can make a positive contribution to the country (Ipsos, June 2025).

These numbers are falling, but as a HostNation board, we continue to witness wonderful acts of kindness. As one of our refugee friends, Nasir, told us: "Despite all the things we are hearing from the news, there are still people who are willing to help and give support... Therefore, I do feel more welcome here."

So we continue our work with hope, and with gratitude towards supporters and friends. My personal thanks go to the HostNation team and Board of Trustees, for their vision and determination.



DANIEL SILVERSTONE
Chair



*Danny (left)
& Abdullah
at their
favourite
cafe*

**Name changed*

Letter from our Director

Friendship is an essential human need. As Gulsom, one of our trustees who is a refugee, puts it, “I see HostNation as a first responder. When you arrive in a strange land, a trusted friend who shows you the way can change your life.”

To reflect this, we have changed our strapline to ‘Welcoming refugees through friendship’. The joy of our work is to see the positive impact of this welcome on the lives of refugees. Take Abdul. We matched him with John, a star volunteer who introduced Abdul to London’s cultural life.

Just a few months on, Abdul landed an internship at the International Rescue Committee. He says his experience with HostNation helped give him the confidence he needed. John, he tells us, has been a mentor and befriender: “John listens deeply and makes our conversations meaningful and uplifting.”

I am proud that this year we have made 199 friendship matches for asylum seekers and refugees from 44 countries. Of these, 83% told us they feel more welcome and included in British culture thanks to their friend. I am immensely encouraged that the hostile political environment around refugees does not stop volunteers coming to us, full of goodwill.

Our northern hubs have brought our values of welcome and warmth to our communities in Greater Manchester and the North East, not only making matches but organising fun socials (see updates on pp. 14 & 15).

To reflect on eight years of HostNation, staff and trustees gathered to assess our impact and set future directions. Key results include setting up a new advisory board of refugees to help guide our



HostNation awayday

work. We are also strengthening wider friendship communities through group activities, alongside our core delivery of one-to-one matches.

We know that we face a very difficult year ahead, with significant challenges in raising sufficient funding to continue our work. Several of our major grants have come to an end, and previous funders have changed their priorities.

Yet our work is more urgent than ever, so we must not be deterred. Whilst friendship does not make headlines, it has the power to transform lives and build communities. It bridges the divides between us. We believe it makes our society a better and happier place.

ANNEKE ELWES
Director, HostNation

“

“John is someone with great patience, compassion, and wisdom.”

ABDUL (RIGHT) & JOHN

”



 HostNation London

THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

“Greg brought back the joy I lost years ago.”

CINIAGA

When Ciniaga first met Greg, he was in a dark place. Convinced his whole family had died in conflict, he was alone in the UK. But friendship with Greg and his wife Maggie was to turn his life around.

“I was just thinking about my lost family 24 hours a day,” says Ciniaga. “I’d see other families in the street and it would remind me that I was all alone.”

Ciniaga, an IT engineer who speaks four languages, fled his home in the Democratic Republic of Congo in fear of his life: “We did not have a choice over leaving our home, we were forced to flee.” In the chaos, he was split up from his wife and children, and thought they had died.

Distraught, he sought asylum in the UK. But like so many refugees separated from their families, he could not find peace: “To an outsider, you may look free, but in your mind you’re in prison. If you could look into the heart of a refugee, you might see that the person isn’t there anymore – it’s as if they died a long time ago.”

A SPECIAL PICNIC

Then we stepped in and introduced Ciniaga to Greg, a volunteer befriender. He and his wife Maggie took Ciniaga out for



Greg and his wife Maggie have welcomed Ciniaga (centre) into their family

a picnic. Ciniaga instantly felt he had found people he could trust. “It made such a big difference to tell them my story. So I started to believe there was another life for me beyond this crisis, and there my hope started. Greg brought back the joy that I lost years ago.”

WONDERFUL NEWS

Ciniaga had clung to a scrap of hope and now applied to the Red Cross to try and discover his family’s fate. One day he got the life-changing news that they were still alive.

“He was beside himself!” exclaims Greg. “He had gone through an enormously difficult six years and suddenly

something he didn’t dare hope for turned out to be true.”

Although the whole family is not yet reunited, Ciniaga is smiling a lot more these days, says Greg.

“The most positive thing has been helping somebody who has faced extreme challenges, and seeing him turn his life around.”

GREG

As for Ciniaga, he can’t say enough about how Greg and Maggie have helped him. “When you are surrounded by good people, then good things happen. I have been so lucky.”

Strategic report

Our vision

HostNation believes every refugee deserves a friend.

Our mission

We wish to improve the lived experience of refugees and asylum seekers in our cities through friendship with local residents, in order to promote integration, tackle social exclusion and transform social relations in our communities.

Our objectives

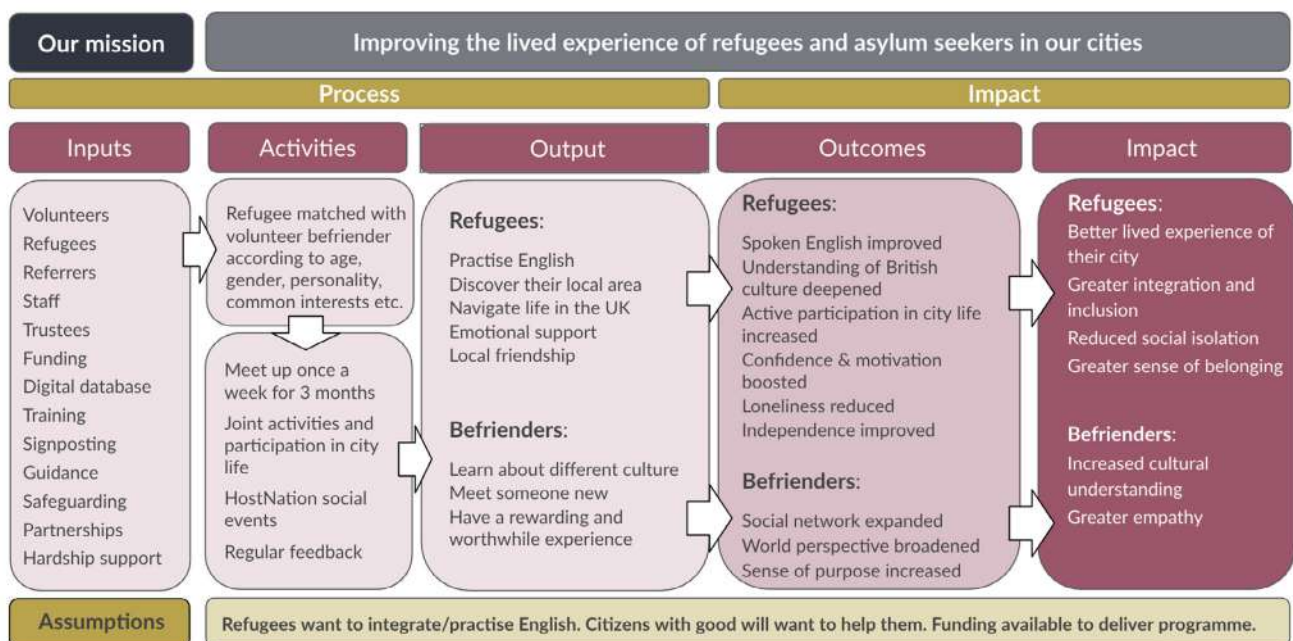
Our objectives as defined in our constitution are:

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit amongst those who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants through:
 - Facilitating positive intercultural relationships that provide friendship, social opportunity, community connection and support.
 - Providing increased opportunities for social integration and positive participation in the local community.

- Increasing opportunities to practise English skills through friendship with proficient English speakers in order to promote greater social integration.
- 2. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit amongst those who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, with a view to tackling discrimination, inequality and social disadvantage by providing:
 - Connection and support on the basis of equality, helping to identify and access opportunities.
 - Meaningful social interaction in order to encourage greater social cohesion in communities in the UK.
 - A means by which the public can engage with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants as individuals and potential friends.

To achieve these objectives, we recruit volunteers via an online database, then screen and train them before making careful matches with refugees, referred to us by refugee service providers, the NHS and other agencies (we also introduced a self-referral pathway in 2025). We aim for meaningful matches based on geography, gender, age and interests. We then introduce the new friends and provide guidance, safeguarding and relationship support.

HOSTNATION THEORY OF CHANGE



Outcomes and impact

1. STEPPING UP TO WELCOME REFUGEES

Over the past year, we have seen a steady inflow of new befrienders signing up:

- 66 in Greater London
- 36 in Greater Manchester
- 36 in the North East.

While the total number of new volunteers was lower than in some previous years, this was partly due to our active management of registrations. In London we periodically closed intake in certain boroughs and in Manchester we paused registrations altogether at specific times. We do this to balance the number of volunteers against the number of incoming refugee referrals. We also have a high retention rate of volunteers who are happy to befriend again. We ended the year with a healthy pool of available volunteers in each of our hubs.

Nearly 70% of our volunteers are female, and around seven in ten are in their 20s and 30s. Volunteers in the London hub tend to be slightly younger on average than those in Manchester and the North East. Overall, the age profile of our befrienders is well matched to that of our refugee friends. We always have more female than male volunteers across all our hubs, which means we often find female friends for male refugees. We do not match female refugees with male befrienders.

Training and support

As our befrienders may have no prior experience with asylum seekers and refugees, we provide a solid foundation of support services.

Our interactive training is mandatory. Volunteers learn about the hardships that refugees face in the UK, and explore how traumatic events may impact their ability to develop relationships. We discuss how to create a safe and empowering environment to allow friendship to flourish. We outline the potential challenges of befriending a refugee, with a strong focus on safeguarding and boundaries.

Befrienders are given written resources to guide them. Our bi-monthly newsletter lists ideas for free activities and refugee opportunities in each of our three hubs. We have extensive lists of refugee support resources which we provide to our befrienders and share with other organisations.

We have also developed guides to effective befriending and safeguarding, and set out sensitive cultural guidelines to help avoid any misunderstandings between male refugees matched with female befrienders.

2. REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKER REFERRALS

We are proud to have made 199 friendship matches across our three regions this year. Of these, 181 were new referrals of refugees and asylum seekers who we welcomed in 2024-25:

- 90 in London
- 45 in Newcastle
- 46 in Manchester.

Now in our eighth year, we are a well-established and trusted refugee befriending organisation operating across London, Newcastle and Manchester, supported by a growing network of referral partners who send us their clients.



“Our relationship is just chatting about life, improving Merve’s English, drinking tea. It’s about the shared everyday-ness of life.”

EMMANUELLE (RIGHT)



HostNation London

We received refugee referrals from more than 60 organisations, with 24 referring to us for the first time. We are grateful for all these partnerships.

Across all three hubs, the organisations who referred their clients most frequently included Breaking Barriers, Freedom from Torture and Hestia, alongside GP practices, NHS therapy services and local councils. In London we had fewer referrals than the year before, while both northern hubs saw an increase.

Of people referred to us, 59% had refugee status or humanitarian protection. More than a third were based in hotels and temporary accommodation, an increase on last year. Two thirds arrived in the UK less than three years ago, but even those who have been here for longer may still feel isolated.

CHALLENGES WITH REFUGEE REFERRALS

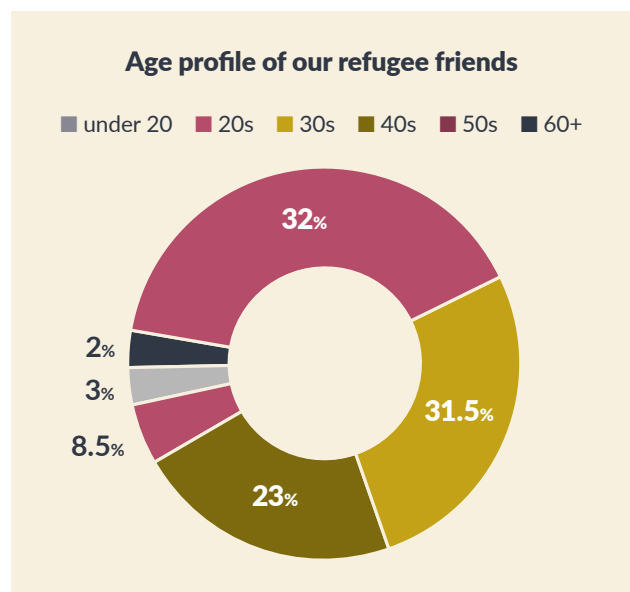
Around a third of all referrals did not meet our criteria, so we were unable to match them with a befriender. The reasons included an insufficient level of English, high mental health needs or a housing crisis. These clients require specialist support services that we cannot ask our benders to provide. Where possible we signpost them to alternative and more appropriate sources of support.

We are seeing an increasing number of asylum seekers in London struggling with their mental health. Refugee services can feel fragmented and difficult to navigate, and individuals often face prolonged uncertainty. These pressures are intensified by the continuous hostility of government policies.

NEW SELF-REFERRAL PATHWAY

In summer 2025 we decided to open an online pathway for refugees in London to refer themselves to us. By setting stricter referral criteria around English language proficiency, and requiring that applicants already have their 'leave to remain' status, we hope to target refugees who will be in a somewhat better and more stable position to engage in a befriending relationship.

A number of self-referrals have signed up since we opened this pathway and indeed have proved to be engaged and connected with their benders. We are trialling this approach in London, with a view to rolling it out to the northern hubs in 2026.



“As ever, I am HostNation’s biggest fan! It really helps our clients with their integration journey in the UK.”

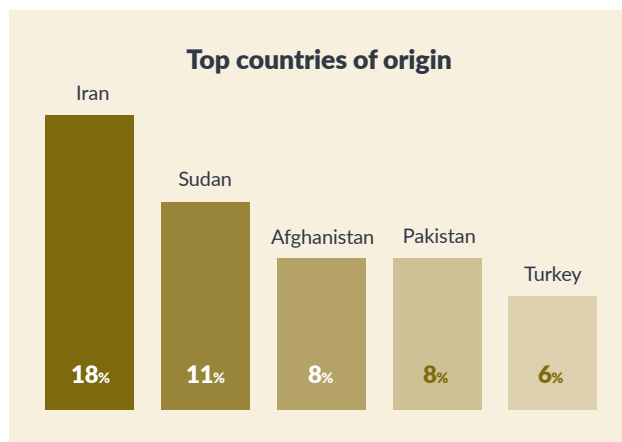
COCO CLAXTON

Refugee Integration and Housing Lead,
Brent Council



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

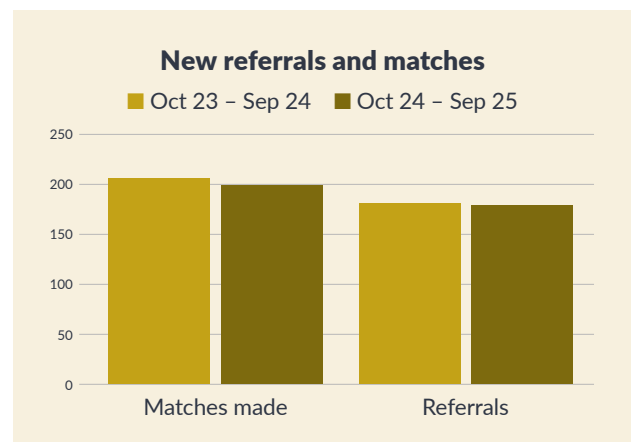
Our refugee friends came from 44 different countries this year. Iran stays at the top of the list with 18% of total referrals. Referrals from Sudan made up 11%, while Afghanistan and Pakistan each accounted for 8%. We saw a significant drop in referrals from Turkey, alongside a slight increase in referrals from Eritrea and Hong Kong. All referrals from Hong Kong were based in Manchester, linked to the local employment support scheme.



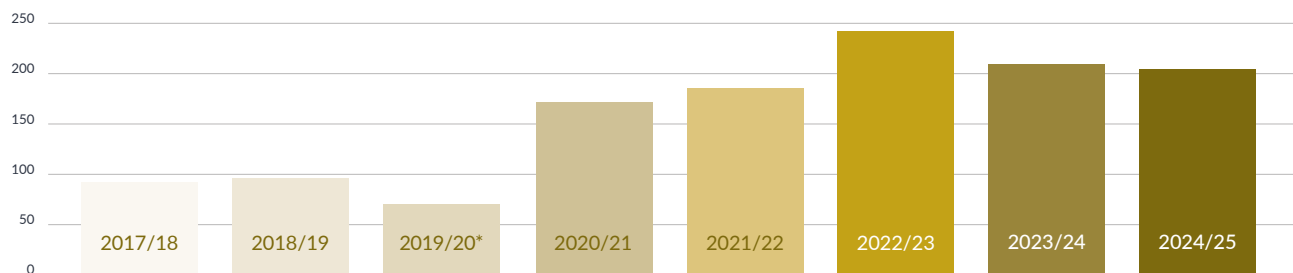
3. FRIENDSHIP MATCH OUTCOMES

Across the year we made 199 friendship matches, a similar level to the previous year. Half of these matches were in London, with the remaining 50% split evenly between our two northern hubs. Referral numbers also remained stable year on year.

We prioritise building meaningful and lasting relationships between befrienders and their refugee friends over the quantity of matches.



Matches year-on-year



*Reduced matches due to Covid.



“

“Lauren is really an authentic person, very kind, very supportive. I felt lonely before, but not now.”

**LAUREN (LEFT) & ZEINAB
AT A MUSIC FESTIVAL IN MANCHESTER**

”

HostNation Manchester



POSITIVE IMPACT ON REFUGEES

For most of our refugee friends, meaningful engagement in a befriending relationship led to improved wellbeing and a noticeable reduction in loneliness.

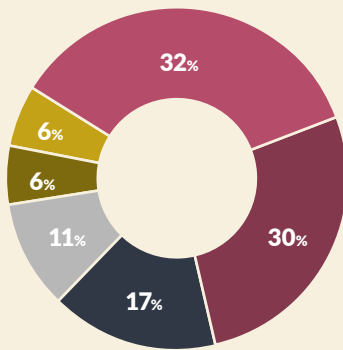
Eight out of ten refugee friends said they felt better and less lonely as a result of meeting their befriender, with nearly 50% feeling a lot better.

Having a befriender not only supports the wellbeing of our refugee friends and reduces feelings of loneliness, but also helps them to feel more welcome and gain a better understanding of British culture.

This is reflected in 83% of our refugee friends telling us that they felt more welcome and more included after three months of knowing their befriender.

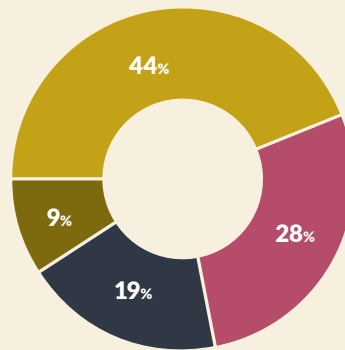
**Match outcomes all hubs
(Oct 2024–Sep 2025)**

■ Positive friendship
 ■ Sustained with effort
 ■ Supportive and sustained
 ■ Too hard to sustain
 ■ Positive but unable to sustain
 ■ Never got off the ground



**English improved thanks
to having a befriender**

■ A lot more
 ■ A little more
 ■ No difference
 ■ Already good



Improved well-being

A lot better	47%
A little better	36%
No difference	17%

Feeling less lonely

A lot less	37%
A little less	40%
No difference	23%

Feeling more welcome

A lot more	41%
A little more	41%
No difference	18%

BENEFITS FOR BEFRIENDERS

Befriending is a shared experience, and its impact extends beyond the positive outcomes experienced by our refugee friends. As our Chair testifies in his introduction, befriending brings powerful benefits for both sides. We often hear his words echoed by our volunteers: “It’s definitely not a one-way street.”

For us, the benefit to the befriender is an essential part of the community integration that we aim to foster. Our ambition is to bridge divides within our communities, one transformative friendship at a time. Each match is based on equality, understanding and human dignity on both sides.

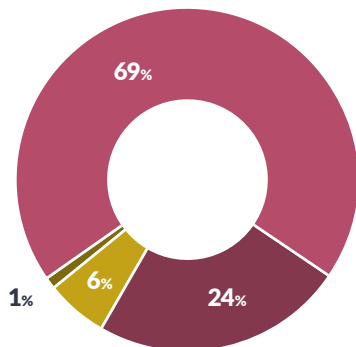
As volunteer Andrew told us: “The simplicity of heartfelt conversation between two people has a profound healing power.”

The vast majority of our volunteers share how meaningful the experience is for them with 94% reporting that it was rewarding and nine out of ten telling us that their cultural understanding has broadened as a result.

Our high retention rate is testament to this, with many volunteers returning to make a second or third refugee friendship.

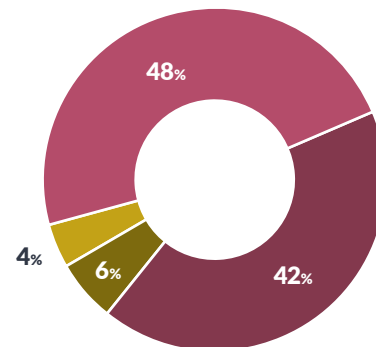
Rewarding experience for the befrienders

■ Yes, very rewarding
■ Yes, somewhat rewarding
■ Don't know
■ Not rewarding



Befriender's cultural understanding

■ A lot broader
■ A little broader
■ No difference
■ Already quite broad



“It’s just really nice getting to know someone from another culture and spending time together.”

HELEN (LEFT) & BITA



HostNation North West

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

All too often, asylum seekers and refugees are misnamed as ‘illegal migrants’, grouped together indiscriminately in statistics, and denigrated with inflammatory language.

We want to tell their real stories. Each person who comes to us to find a friend has followed a unique path to safety and a new life in the UK. As they get to know their befrienders and relax, narratives are exchanged and bonds are formed.

Our website and social media set out to celebrate these wonderful friendships. There is Yogi, the refugee who was once sleeping rough and is now a successful chef; he credits his befrienders Sabine and Geoff for saving his life (photo below).

Or Nisar, who was alone and distressed before we introduced him to Sarah; now, after spending time with Sarah and her family, Nisar says, “My life has

taken on a new and positive meaning. Knowing Sarah has made me very happy.” (See photo on p24.)

We hope these positive examples of social integration create new awareness. We also support our referral partners in their pro-refugee campaigns during events such as Refugee Week and Volunteers Week, through the Together With Refugees group.

We used our platforms to protest against the cruel suspension of family reunion visas; we joined with 213 organisations to promote messages of compassion during the anti-refugee riots; we called on supporters to tell their MPs we need an asylum system that treats people with dignity.



Geoff, Sabine and Chef Yogi

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HOSTNATION LONDON

A THANKSGIVING TO REMEMBER

We were deeply honoured to be chosen as the official charity for the 2024 Thanksgiving Service of the American community in London at St Paul's Cathedral.

This was thanks to our close relationship with the American International Church (AIC), with whom we hold joint, secular Supper Clubs for refugees.

The warm welcome we received from the American community and the US Embassy was humbling. Little did we think when we started our partnership with the AIC in 2023, that our small charity would one day be celebrated in the nation's cathedral.

In a powerful appeal for refugees, the Rev. Jared Jagers spoke movingly of those who are alone on feast days, having left their homes behind. He invited all present to "make our city a



St Paul's Cathedral

welcoming place and to work together through organisations like HostNation to create connections and set a place at the table." An astonishing £6,000 was raised for our work, far exceeding our expectations.

It is heartening to see people of all faiths and none mix freely at our joint Supper Clubs, to which the AIC bring in social food enterprises, musicians and enthusiastic volunteers. We are so grateful for this enduring collaboration.

GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

Our community membership of **Kew Gardens** allows our friends the chance to visit this botanical marvel and its beautiful galleries at no cost. It is a real boost to their wellbeing. They can also benefit from our membership of **London Zoo**, by which we are able to purchase low-cost tickets and give our friends a free day out.

We referred some of our friends to the **Bike Project** who provided them with a free bicycle. We also provide asylum seekers who cannot afford London's transport system with Oystercards topped up from our hardship fund, so they can easily meet up with their befrienders.



"It warms my heart to be part of this loving community. I am so glad to have found you and all the wonderful friends, new and familiar, that I see at each HostNation event."

LAUREN (left) & USMAN

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HOSTNATION NORTH EAST



Here on Tyneside it has been an especially good year for making friendships that last, and that have made a real impact on refugees' lives.

"Helena is truly one of the best people I have ever met." RO

When Ro first came to us, he was struggling with low mood and finding it hard to concentrate at college. He needed a friend. After we introduced him to Helena, an occupational therapist, things began to change for Ro.

As Helena showed him around the Toon, with walks and coffee, yoga classes and sports events, his confidence rebounded.

"My language skills have improved a lot with Helena," Ro tells us. "I know a lot more about the history and culture of England. I don't feel lonely that much now. I have someone to talk to." A year on, they have a strong, trusting relationship.

"Ro's got a friend for life." HELENA

With 45 friendships made this year, a strong list of volunteer befrienders and a growing number of referral partners, we feel well placed to continue our impact in the North East.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF TYNESIDE

Tynesiders consider themselves the friendliest people in the UK, and they certainly stepped up during our social events. These

occasions are an important focus for us, as they help to bind our existing friendships, strengthen integration and enhance everyone's wellbeing. We welcomed more than 40 guests to a year-end party at the

Magic Hat café, where a tasty meal was prepared entirely using surplus food. Also highly popular was a picnic in Jesmond Dene in August, with perfect weather for a scavenger hunt around the park.

Plenty of dancing, chaos and laughter ensued as our refugee friends learned to reel at a ceilidh to celebrate Refugee Week in the summer, organised with West End Refugee Service.

The success of these events shows us the power of social connection to help heal trauma and build new lives.

Lots of fun at the Refugee Week ceilidh



HIGHLIGHTS FROM HOSTNATION MANCHESTER

It was a good year for HostNation in Manchester, as we increased the number of friendships made, whilst maintaining very positive outcomes.

Despite sporadic flare-ups of hostility towards asylum seekers in the area, we still have willing volunteers signing up online.

A great feature of our HostNation life in Manchester is our partnerships with local organisations who believe in supporting refugees as an integral part of the local community.

Many of our refugee friends are cooped up in cramped accommodation. That makes our group visits to the RHS Bridgewater gardens in Salford much more than just an outing – they really lift everyone's spirits. A mid-summer visit saw our team



A wonderful day out in the gardens of RHS Bridgewater

of friends gardening, relaxing and connecting as part of the RHS wellbeing programme, while our Christmas visit included a light show and fun clay-making activities. Waseem, a refugee from Libya, said it was one of the best days of his life.

Our annual party in Manchester was a hit again, with 40 refugees and their befrienders enjoying

delicious Greek food at the House of Books and Friends – a heritage venue, bookshop and cafe with a mission to prevent social isolation. Many of the friends who came along have been together for several years.

"It was a really fun time. I truly enjoyed myself and met some wonderful and kind friends."
AHMED

FRIENDS ON TRACK

Amongst many flourishing Manchester friendship stories, one of our favourites is that of Abdo and Priya.

When Abdo, who is from Sudan, modestly told us he quite liked running, we matched him with Priya, who has set up her own running club.

Abdo couldn't wait to lace up his running shoes and it turns out that despite all the hardship he has been through, he is an amazing athlete.

"Abdo came first in the 10k run!" Priya told us with delight, just two weeks after they met. Since then Abdo has smashed many more runs and has been a real part of the local running community.



Priya & Abdo get set to run

Financial review

In the year to 30th September 2025, income of £172,431 was received and expenditure of £164,696 was incurred, resulting in a year-end surplus of £7,735.

In-year income exceeded budget due to additional grant funding from Garfield Weston, an increased grant award from Mila and individual giving income that doubled, boosted by a donor appeal and Thanksgiving donations from the American International Church (see feature p.13) in November.

Grants accounted for 80% of total income for the year, with donations, Gift Aid and interest payments making up the rest. Major donor income is variable and 2024-25 saw fewer corporate or major donations than the previous year.

Expenditure showed an increase in staff costs as freelancers moved onto payroll and included a 5% pay increase for all PAYE staff. Staff costs were at 91% with core running costs at 9%, lower than previous years. The full budget for community events of nearly £5,000 was utilised within the year, reflecting the increased prioritisation of social events across all our hubs. Expenditure on digital costs and professional services were much lower than the previous year when we invested in new computer hardware as well as a new website and three years website hosting.

London continued to account for 56% of hub expenditure, with Manchester at 24% and the North East at 20%, reflecting each hub's proportion of total matches.

HostNation's reserves increased to £95,565, from a brought forward position of £87,830. We had budgeted for a planned deficit with the intention of spending down reserves in the 2024-25 financial year. However, with several multi-year grants coming to an end and the difficult funding landscape, our higher reserves figure will help ensure stability for HostNation while we work to secure the future funding we require.

FUNDING PARTNERS

City Bridge Foundation

City Bridge Foundation is a London grant giver that provides support to London communities. They have a funding stream for rebuilding the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in London.

After an initial three years of funding (£96,000), we were granted a further two years of continuation funding in 2023. This year we received the final grant of £39,750 in four payments of £9,937 which was spent on project delivery through our London hub.

Mila Charitable Trust

Mila is a small family charitable trust that supports projects in the North East. This year we received a three year grant of £15,000 p.a. – up from £10,000. This funding is restricted to project delivery in the North East.

The Henry Smith Foundation

The Henry Smith Foundation helps people and communities at a time of need, to bring about positive change. They fund us through their Improving Lives programme. We were granted three years of funding (£135,000) in April 2023. This year we received £47,500 to support project delivery across all three hubs. It is restricted to achieving the outcomes we set and within their priorities of 'support networks and family' and 'help at a critical time'. There are no specific regional or expenditure restrictions.

Garfield Weston

The Garfield Weston Foundation gave us a one year grant of £20,000 in February 2025 for project delivery and core funding with no restrictions.

Other funding

This year we increased individual donations from £18,589 in our last financial year, to £30,900, in part thanks to being the recipient of the American community's Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Cathedral (see p.13). Major donors, Gift Aid and bank interest contributed a further £3,000.

CASH RESERVES

Our trustees agreed to minimum cash reserves of £30,000, which covers three months' predicted running costs. Given the uncertainty around future funding, we will be carrying forward a higher level of reserves to offer stability should there be any discontinuities in funding in 2025-26.

COSTS AND BUDGETING

We are governed by the Charity Commission's financial regulations. Expenditure was on budget with £164,696 incurred. The majority of this expenditure (91%) relates to staffing (£149,562) of which £7,824 was freelance cost and £141,923 was payroll cost.

Staff costs relate to direct project delivery – staff time spent sourcing referrals; recruiting, screening, checking and training befrienders; making matches; liaising with referrers; safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation; communications and reporting.

This year 2024-25 saw several changes in staff structure. We also welcomed two new volunteer trustees to our board from fundraising backgrounds.

Non-staff in-year spend (9%) relates to hardship payments to our refugee friends, travel and hospitality expenses, community events and other direct costs.

Of non staff-related costs, 30% were for refugee social events – supper clubs, days out, ceilidhs, nature walks, picnics – demonstrating our commitment to bringing the HostNation community together.

Digital and professional fees including IT systems, social media, software, maintenance, web hosting, insurance, payroll, design and accountancy accounted for the remainder.

Risk management

In 2019, our trustees devised a register of risks. A three-stage traffic light system was adopted:

RED High risk (business critical)

AMBER Low risk (potentially constraining)

GREEN Negligible/low risk (no action)

We set out four risks we would review regularly:

Risk	Definition	Mitigation actions
Insufficient resources	Lacking the staffing and/or finances to achieve our stated aims.	- Regular review of budget, funding strategy, staffing levels and ability to meet demand for services. - Maintain close relations with existing funders.
Reputational damage	Acting unprofessionally and/or attracting negative publicity or scrutiny that potentially undermines our principles and ethos.	Regular review of our training procedures, financial and safeguarding policies.
Governance risks	Trustees who are disengaged with our work and/or fail to ensure that we are in compliance with our charitable purposes & charity law.	Regular review of our Board to ensure we have a balance of the skills required for effective governance and financial oversight.
Public policy and external environment risks	Is the external environment conducive to or potentially a threat to achieving our stated aims?	Close monitoring of the changing environment in which we operate.

Finances

A small group of staff and trustees regularly review the external funding landscape. We have built a fundraising target database and have put in many new applications. However, competition for funding has been intense. Many institutional funders have changed their funding priorities.

Whilst we had the income to achieve our stated aims in 2024-2025 and are carrying forward substantial funds to 2025-26, we did not succeed in bringing in the major new grants or major donors we need to secure our longer-term future. At the end of the 2024-25 year, trustees therefore placed “insufficient resources” on amber.

Reputational risk

We have robust and transparent systems and are mindful to safeguard our ethos and principles in our work, decision-making and strategic planning.

Governance

We have strengthened our trustee board and remain confident that our trustees are fully engaged with our work. On a very productive away day, staff and trustees worked together on new initiatives for increasing our impact. A strong team ethos connects trustees and our staff team.

Public policy

We are acutely aware of the threatening national and international environment on refugee and asylum issues. One of our trustees brought summary reports on this external environment to the board at each quarterly meeting, enabling us continuously to assess any risk in our programmes and plan accordingly. We have retained an amber rating for public policy.

Nationwide protests outside asylum hotels and anti-immigrant riots in summer 2025 added to the risk level. The refugee sector found itself targeted and so, for reasons of safety, HostNation has changed the charity’s registered address, improved security regarding personal details and no longer holds befriender or refugee addresses.

Further challenges from the Home Office to limit refugees’ ability to integrate or gain UK citizenship increases the risk to our purpose. We may need to raise the risk level to red in future, but it currently remains on amber, where it has been since 2021. We pay especial attention to reviewing this risk factor at every meeting of the trustees.



Kaat was so shocked by anti-refugee riots that she reached out to make a refugee friend.

“

“I’m in awe of how quickly Abdul’s thrown himself into the community!”

KAAT

”



HostNation North East

Structure, governance & management

Organisational structure

HostNation incorporated as a charity (CIO) and registered with the Charity Commission in September 2018.

Our board

As of 30 September 2025, we have seven voluntary trustees. After a skills audit we decided the board would be strengthened with the addition of more fundraising expertise and corporate connections. We therefore welcomed two new trustees in May 2025, with backgrounds in social enterprise and charity fundraising respectively.

The board unanimously agreed to a four-year trustee appointment period, renewable to a maximum of 12 years. The board continues to meet quarterly, chaired by Daniel Silverstone, who was CEO at both the Commission for Racial Equality and Interights.

Our team

We have a lean operational team and no business premises, so overheads are low. The majority of staff work on a part-time contractual basis with full employment benefits and pension contributions.

Public benefit

The trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidelines on public benefit and consider these measures when carrying out the charitable objectives of this charity.

Safeguarding

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually. All staff, our Chair and our trustee safeguarding lead have attended safeguarding training for those working with asylum seekers, refugees and people who have been trafficked. Our staff and trustee safeguarding leads ensure that they are up to speed on best practice and refresh their training.

We have a full safeguarding policy with reporting processes, safeguarding guidelines for befrienders and a screening and checks policy (all available on our website), which we review annually. We also regularly update the safeguarding training delivered to new befrienders.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were appointed as independent examiners to the charity in 2023 and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 2 March 2026 and signed on their behalf by:



DANIEL SILVERSTONE

Chair of trustees

2 March 2026

Report of the independent examiner to the HostNation trustees

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of HostNation (the charity) for the year ended 30 September 2025, which are set out on pages 21 to 23.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the trustees of the charity 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 charity'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

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provided payroll services to the charity. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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 charity 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.

Dougal Howard

Date: 2 March 2026

DOUGAL HOWARD ACA
Member of the ICAEW

Godfrey Wilson Limited

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House,
62 Prince Street,
Bristol BS1 4QD

Receipts & payments account

Receipts & payments account

For the year ended 30 September 2025

RECEIPTS	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Grants		102,250	35,000	137,250	103,800
Individual giving (including Gift Aid)		–	32,947	32,947	18,260
Interest		–	1,684	1,684	488
Major donors		–	550	550	30,719
Total receipts		102,250	70,181	172,431	153,267
Payments	1	102,250	62,446	164,696	153,229
Net receipts / (payments)		–	7,735	7,735	38
Cash funds at 1 October 2024		–	87,830	87,830	87,792
Cash funds at 30 September 2025	2	–	95,565	95,565	87,830

Statement of assets and liabilities

As at 30 September 2025

CASH FUNDS	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	95,565	87,830
Total cash funds	95,565	87,830
Restricted funds	–	–
Unrestricted funds		
General funds	95,565	87,830
Total cash funds	95,565	87,830

Approved by the trustees on 2 March 2026 and
signed on their behalf by:



DANIEL SILVERSTONE
Chair of trustees

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 September 2023

1. TOTAL PAYMENTS	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Staff costs	141,923	99,331
Freelance fees	7,824	33,980
Travel and subsistence	2,670	2,641
Social events and workshops	4,437	2,887
Hardship fund	2,977	3,609
Digital and other direct costs	3,052	6,498
Professional fees	1,813	4,283
Total payments	164,696	153,229

2. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	At 1 October 2024 £	Receipts £	Payments £	At 30 September 2025
Restricted funds				
The Henry Smith Charity	-	47,500	(47,500)	-
City Bridge Fund	-	39,750	(39,750)	-
Mila Charitable Trust	-	15,000	(15,000)	-
Total restricted funds	-	102,250	(102,250)	
General funds	87,830	70,181	(62,446)	95,565
Total funds	87,830	172,431	(164,696)	95,565

Purposes of restricted funds

Income and expenditure are restricted by geographical location. HostNation manages three hubs across the UK: Manchester, Newcastle/North East, and London. The donors listed below provide funding restricted to use within specific hubs.

The Henry Smith Foundation provides support to HostNation through their 'Improving Lives' programme. The grant was provided to support running costs of an organisation providing a

befriending service for refugees for three years. Income received this year has been divided proportionately between all three hubs.

Newcastle/North East

Mila Charitable Trust is a family trust that supports HostNation in the North East.

London

The City Bridge Foundation have been supporting HostNation's London Programme since 2020. The final grant payment was received in 2025.

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 30 September 2025

Charity number

1180004

Registered office

5 Brayford Square
London
E1 0SG

Trustees

Dostyar Dost
Gulsom Gohar
Annika Heinrich
appointed 14 May 2025
Aoise Keoghan Nooshabadi
appointed 14 May 2025
Mohamed Massoud
resigned 15 January 2025
Olivia Petie
Daniel Silverstone
Lucy Vidal

Bankers

Metro Bank
One Southampton Row
London
WC1B 5HA

Virgin Money
7 Gold Street
Northampton
NN1 1EN

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD



*Sarah & Nisar
at the beach*



**“After getting to know Sarah,
I no longer feel lonely. Before, I often
felt very alone and emotionally distressed,
but now my life has taken on a new and
positive meaning.”**



NISAR



HostNation North East