



## **ARC Blackburn Annual Report 2022-23**

### **Project ID: 20178184**

#### **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. How we support the Asylum and Refugee Community in Blackburn with Darwen
3. What is unique about the support and benefit ARC Blackburn offers?
4. What changes have we made based on our learning experiences?
5. Feedback from the Community
6. Suggestions
7. Main Challenges
8. How the feedback and learning will impact our service in the future
9. Appendices

#### **1. Introduction**

To prepare for the review we have collected feedback from service users (male, female, single and families from different countries), all staff and volunteers and 7 partner organisations. This includes a volunteer questionnaire with the purpose of identifying opportunities and obstacles to effective volunteer coordination. From gathering this information, we strongly feel that ARC Blackburn is offering excellent support to asylum seekers and refugees. We have also been able to gain useful feedback and suggestions for improving the services we offer.

#### **2. How we support the Asylum and Refugee Community in Blackburn with Darwen**

##### ***Context***

At ARC we offer all asylum seekers and refugees a warm welcome, a safe place to receive the support they need through services and activities, and a meeting place. All of which help them to start rebuilding their lives and settle into a new country. ARC provides direct support, and sign-posting services, to comply with statutory procedures; to ensure our service users have fair access to legal services, healthcare, education, and embed the skills to cope with everyday challenges and integrate into the community. We respond to more than 4,000 enquiries per year with our range of services. Service user attendance figures are shown in Appendix 1.

We provide facilities for education, recreation, and other activities with the objective of improving the quality and condition of the lives of ARC members and assisting their inclusion into the wider community. Asylum seekers and refugees bring with them a wealth of experience, skills and qualifications; at ARC we seek to support each person to use and develop their potential both within ARC, the community and in wider society through accessing education, volunteering, training and/or employment. This will enable them to develop skills, access opportunities to support themselves and their families and contribute to society.



Working with a wide range of partners in the community we work to maximise access to all services available which are vital for supporting everyday life and successful rebuilding of lives in a new culture and society. ARC fosters a positive attitude of respect and tolerance within a community of people from many different backgrounds; this promotes mutual understanding, an inclusive culture and encouragement for involvement and working with others both within and beyond the community.

### **Local Partnerships**

We have received positive feedback across the board from our local partners, showing that our existing and new partnerships are flourishing. Some examples of this feedback are shared below.

### **Housing**

We work closely with Housing Needs and Support at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to support refugees with issues arising from housing; the deputy manager attends our weekly drop-in event to offer support and guidance. We have direct contact with the asylum accommodation providers, Serco, and when necessary, we make contact regarding any property issues such as maintenance of heating systems; damp; broken appliances. This year we have made links with a new local organisation, Kairos, in order to address emergency temporary housing needs of single men.

### **Education**

We refer newly arrived families to the admissions team at the council, and vice versa. The International New Arrivals Officer visits our drop-in session regularly to set up individual appointments.

*“Since Covid I do all my meetings at the ARC drop-in and office instead of home visits. It’s really beneficial and 5 mins down the road from my office. It means the families get out and they also can get support with any other needs, or they can be signposted by the ARC case work team to the right provider. Sometimes families are not aware of ARC – so it is really good for them to come there through me.” (International New Arrivals Officer – BwD Council).”*

We have registered our English Club learners with the local ESOL Hub which is run by the local council. This has developed the organisation, monitoring and standardisation of ESOL teaching and learning in line with other local ESOL providers. It has enhanced our professional performance in ESOL teaching and learning and thus benefitted the ARC English club learners and teachers.

*“Great....I’m always welcome to any event and we are regularly meeting up and discussing things – so there is ongoing good communication. I’ve just set up some CPD sessions for our \ESOL partners and there has been good take up from ARC ESOL teachers.” (ESOL Lead – Integration & Community Engagement – BwD Council)*

We continue our close links with Blackburn College, referring service users on to more advanced English Classes, IT, Maths and other courses.



### **Destitution**

We have been able to continue with referrals to Rummage Rescuers and to Children's Storehouse, when the needs arises, for clothing, household goods and nursery equipment such as cots and pushchairs. This year we have set up an excellent link with The Trussell Trust Blackburn Foodbank in order to address food poverty of our service users. This has worked well and freed up our time and resources to concentrate on casework and other activities.

### **Mental Health**

Over the year, we have significantly developed our response to mental health needs in the asylum and refugee community. All of our service users have suffered a degree of mental and emotional trauma leaving their home countries and building their lives in a new country. On top of this, the Covid pandemic has put extra financial and social strain on them, often causing a decline in their mental health. The employment of a Mental Health Counsellor through Lancashire Women has been very successful. We have also introduced a new 10-week wellbeing course, 'Focus and Fly', which aims to improve self-esteem and confidence.

*"Love it.. it's brilliant... it's such a joy everyone wants to help...there's flexibility, always a member of staff to support the learners.. we get fed!! - 5 stars! ....There should be something like this as often as possible for people to come in, have fun, make friends – such an antidote to dealing with all the issues of survival, all the waiting .. and feeling in tatters. There needs to be this balance, this equilibrium in people's lives." (Focus and Fly Facilitator)*

In addition, we have attended coffee mornings with a small group of female service users at Humraaz, an organisation supporting women facing domestic issues.

A new initiative this year by Lancashire Mind, has been mental health training sessions for staff. Staff have found this to be very beneficial in understanding how to better support service users.

We have provided opportunities for our service users to learn about how spending time outdoors can greatly enhance their mental health. Lancashire Wildlife Trust 'MyPlace Greenhouse Project' has enabled our service users to partake in guided walks, learn about growing food, and visiting local parks with likeminded people.

*"I'm very happy with our working relationship – good communication, good understanding and respect. We have mutual challenges and understandings - engaging clients is sometimes difficult and there are cultural challenges." (MyPlace Project Officer)*



### ***Money Management***

In this current climate of austerity and rise in the cost of living, our service users, and those with asylum seeker status in particular, are struggling to make ends meet. To address this, we have linked with other organisations and a local mosque, Nural Islam, who make voluntary contributions to our organisation. We have engaged with Inspire Motivate Overcome (IMO) and Utilita Energy to run money management and energy workshops.

### ***Health***

We have made links with Healthwatch related to Covid research, in addition to a Covid vaccination team attending our drop-in to administer the vaccinations. An NHS Sexual Health nurse, and Hepatitis C and TB nurse, visit our drop-in monthly to carry out screenings and offer advice.

### ***Police Engagement***

We have continued this year to offer educational awareness raising placements to police in training. Ongoing engagement with community police, who visit the drop-in and support any more serious incidents of conflict, is continuing to develop bridge between the police and the community. Their advice and support provides our service users the reassurance they need to feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods and in the wider community.

### ***Other Community Links***

We are continuing to develop our links with local schools and the wider local community. This year, after re-opening post pandemic, Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School have been providing hot lunches from their school kitchen to our Tuesday social drop-in on a weekly basis. We also continue to receive donations and/or Eid/Christmas gifts from Blackburn High School, Ribblesdale School and Clitheroe Grammar School. We continue to offer one week work experience placements to 6<sup>th</sup> form students. An important aspect of our links with the schools is the awareness sessions we offer on asylum and refugee issues which involve input from service users. Additionally, we have received Christmas donations/toys from Secret Santa, Cash4kids and donations of food and money from local churches and mosques.

The Bureau, a local arts project ran a Lantern making session which led to our service users taking part in the borough's impressive Festival of Light in mid-December. The Early Years Music project and 'Little Lancashire Village' have provided activities for mums and toddlers. We have continued our strong link with Blackburn Rovers which gives service users the opportunities to attend football matches and enjoy this important part of local culture.

### ***Additional Funding from Local Organisations***

Opportunities for additional funding have been identified throughout the year and, as a result of the lottery funding, we have had the capacity to apply for additional grants to run small projects.

Through our local networks, we have been able to secure small pots of funding allowing us to put on additional activities. Funding from the ASDA foundation has allowed us to run a



weekly cooking club providing service users with ideas for healthy meals on a budget. Active Lancashire funding has allowed us to run weekly exercise classes aimed at empowering women.

### **Networking**

We continue our strong link with Blackburn CVS which is a great support to the work of ARC. Contact with them through email and social media allows us to network with a wide variety of local organisations in the voluntary sector. Information sharing through these channels means we know about any events, activities and trainings which will benefit our service users, staff and volunteers such as the CVS employability sessions and the CVS Upskilling Project for staff training. The CVS Volunteer Awards allows us to celebrate our most committed volunteers. The network CVS has been an effective channel for advertising our staff and volunteer vacancies.

*“ARC Enables us to send asylum seekers and refugees for support that is beyond our remit and which we know is good quality and will help people out. It has provided a community venue for us to offer to our own wrap around support around employability and digital skills. It’s enabled us to reach this group which we would not be able to in our own venue.”* (CVS Assistant Executive Director)

### **Darwen Asylum and Refugee Enterprise (DARE)**

We have a strong link with DARE, our sister project in Darwen. Some of our service users visit both projects for support and one of our volunteers and trustees supports both organisations on a weekly basis. Information sharing, inviting service users to shared events and trips, and joint initiatives e.g., preparation for Refugee Week are all beneficial to service users and for raising awareness in the wider community.

### **3. What is unique about the support and benefit ARC Blackburn offers?**

The lottery grant has allowed us to make some big changes to the way we work which have been of great benefit to staff, volunteers and the service users. Office management, staffing and activities have all been significantly developed. Firstly, re-opening after the Covid pandemic was a huge challenge to build up confidence and engagement again with community members.

*“Quick re-opening after the lockdown and the ability of the staff to get back service users to drop in – the speed amazed me.... Most people didn’t understand the magnitude of effect Covid and social isolation had on people. AS & R were already disadvantaged then Covid came on top of that...it has a huge effect on people.”*  
(Volunteer J.)

Feedback from staff, volunteers and partners highlight the main features of the unique support ARC offers as: welcoming, safe and friendly; non-official and non-judgemental; flexibility in provision in order to accommodate people’s needs and circumstances; holistic, overall support in one place; diverse activities; the multi-cultural, multi-language



environment and staffing cutting across differing socio-economic backgrounds; signposting where appropriate rather than re-inventing the wheel; highly committed, high quality staff/volunteer team, mainly employed from the group we serve. Examples of lived experience stories can be found in Appendix 2.

Our partners affirmed the unique benefit of ARC to asylum seekers and refugees:

*“A safe space where people are understood, accepted and welcomed – there are very few places like that. They can get specific support relevant to their needs. They meet other people who have gone through similar, they can share survival stories and learn new skills.” (Focus and Fly leader)*

*“The ARC team have all the skills, experience and language skills needed to support people in the AS and R community. Staff/volunteers understand about all people have gone through and have to go through- several of them also have lived experience. They would find it difficult in any other organisation to access all they need to get their needs met. Newly arrived people especially- taken away from their country and their family can find wrap around care and support such as practical help in the case work office, social drop in, English Club, trips etc – it’s a very wide offer. Other services you might get one to one support on one specific issue but not the holistic support or friendships and a community to be part of. It is very unique and unusual for an organisation to offer both practical support and also a community to be part of.” (ESOL Lead – Integration & Community Engagement – BwD Council)*

*“ARC is really successful in engaging a very diverse group of people – multi-generational and multi-ethnic - children, women, young men, men all together -all can get their needs met, feel welcome and mix well together. Also a breadth of people amongst staff and volunteers – those who have volunteered for a long time, new people, diverse backgrounds, also from a breadth of different social & economic backgrounds, not just middle class.” (MyPlace Project Officer)*

*“English classes are really good. I encourage parents to join the classes- it’s flexible so they can join anytime. Even when children are waiting to join a school they can go with parents to English classes. Tuesday drop in is fantastic - families can be introduced to each other and up meet up with each other.” (Council Schools Placement Officer)*

*ARC make every one feel like they are family for ever.... they follow up and check in with people all the time. Like it’s an ongoing relationship not just about one issue that day. Staff and volunteers make sure that people are going on ok... checking in on them time to time....seeing what anybody needs. (Staff W.)*

We have included some examples of flyers and posters for our events in Appendix 3.



#### **4. What changes have we made based on our learning experiences?**

##### **Office Management**

We have put in a tremendous amount of effort of time and resources to move to digitalisation of the casework and registration for English Club. All our staff and volunteers in the casework office have had Lamplight training in order to input client details and record every support session. This has streamlined our work, saved time, stores data more securely and aids swift analysis of numbers/ types of support etc. It has also upskilled our staff and volunteers with skills that are transferable.

##### **Staff**

We have recruited a new manager after a 6-month hiatus between managers. This, as we opened after the Covid pandemic, has had a very positive effect on the smooth running of ARC, staff and volunteer support, innovation and introduction of new activities.

*“Getting the right manager in has made a big difference. Very nice with people, listens....very polite and joins in, open mind, very respectful” (Volunteer H.)*

*“Getting the right manager in has made a big difference. She is inventive and positive. Looks at how it can be done rather than how it can’t. Opens up potential for the organisation. Clients are getting a good service and extra possibilities of things to do. “ (Volunteer A.)*

Thanks to lottery funding we now have four paid staff, two of whom have lived experience. Both these two caseworkers were recruited this year; one from Iraq and another from El Salvador. They both arrived in the UK through the asylum seeking route themselves. Their first-hand experience greatly enhances the support we offer and increases the understanding of staff and volunteers who are of a white ethnic background. They speak the same language as some service users and come from the same cultural background of some. We have over 30 volunteers currently enrolled at ARC who are responsible for a variety of roles including casework, teaching English, and kitchen assistants. In the casework office, the full-time reception role is fulfilled by an asylum seeker from Iraq.

Overall, we have been successful in recruiting three staff members from the community itself. All three had previously developed their skills and experience at ARC as volunteers and so they have brought a wealth of knowledge and understanding to their jobs from the onset.

##### **Volunteers**

This year a young woman refugee from Nigeria began helping to run the refreshments at the social drop-in and a young man from the Ivory Coast oversees the drop-in as a whole. This particular volunteer is in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of seeking asylum, so he has a deep empathy and understanding of the issues people face.



Two of our volunteers from the community attend events such as the Lancashire Wildlife Trust MyPlace Greenhouse Project. We have previously signposted service users to activities like this but involving our volunteers from the community has made our service users more confident and willing to try new things.

Pre-Covid our volunteers from the community visited schools, churches and other organisations from time to time to raise awareness in wider community about asylum seekers and refugees. We aim to restart this work as other organisations are now more willing. Community members who are not volunteers are involved in the work of ARC by helping at various events and activities, for example, supporting in the setup for our social drop-in, Eid and Christmas parties, and often helping to prepare/provide food and care for children.

We are proud, this year, to have invited J., one of our long-standing volunteers, an asylum seeker himself, to join the ARC Blackburn Board of Trustees. J. brings a wealth of understanding borne from his own long and difficult experience of seeking asylum and managing to survive in that context. He also brings his deep understanding of his fellow asylum seekers and refugees as well as over 10 years of experience volunteering for ARC Blackburn.

Seeing fellow asylum seekers and refugees in these positions of responsibility as volunteers and staff has attracted an increased number of asylum seekers and refugees to the drop-in and other ARC activities. Our staff and volunteers are also involved in the activities which have started this year. For example, our reception volunteer attends 'Focus and Fly' wellbeing sessions which greatly encourages others. On his suggestion, we made the change of providing food after the sessions. This boosted numbers attending and encouraged people to chat and share with each other in English – improving English language and building friendships.

*“At ARC multi- ethnic and multi- cultural volunteers and staff – helps to understand the clients and also to be understood. That’s what makes ARC different. The clients they trust me because I speak their language, same background, same religion – they tell their issues even their secrets. They feel comfortable with me.” (Staff Q)*

*“ ..it’s a very multilingual team so they can walk in and talk to anybody. Staff are very kind and tolerant. They feel like they are coming home a place of safety. (Volunteer J.)*

Service users (SU) were unanimously positive about all ARC staff and volunteers:

*“So kind, and very helpful.” (SU C.)*

*“ English teachers I love. At Drop in – people were so kind....help me so much.” (SU D.)*





*“Good people, very nice and show respect and they smile. Makes me feel good.” (SU F.)*

*“Who is working here amazing people.” (SU G.)*

All staff and volunteers express feeling happy, fulfilled and well supported and valued. The staff recruited this past year testify to this and it is clear that this sets an ethos and environment of warmth, respect, cooperation where all are working together to provide the best support for all those in the ARC community.

*“I like the team work ethos amongst the case workers. People are looking to work together to get the best results for clients.” (Volunteer B.)*

*“I like to help a charity which is helping people. I learn a lot of things about different cultures and advantages for me too. Meet new people , new things..... In Blackburn first 2 months just sleeping . I didn't have anything to do . I didn't know anybody. Stress, heating bills, depression, lonely feeling..... I can now encourage people because I have been through these things.... [for example] I brought girl from Focus and Fly to English club and I speak Arabic so I can help many people.*

*I get good support. working closely with them, learning learning. I never use Lamplight before....Who is working here amazing people.” (Volunteer K.)*

*“ 2 months I've been working here and I feel so settled in the team that I feel like I've been working here for years.....it is like family to me. I like to help others like ARC helped me. I know how hard it is to be an asylum seeker... To see the gratitude on peoples faces .... we are making a real difference in peoples lives. Other staff they say to me.....well done you did well ...that they take the time to tell me. I feel very valued in every sense.” (Staff V.)*

*“its life changing actually. Before start volunteering my life was a mess. I was feeling depressed, useless, no goals in my life. Contact with people, seeing their problems and other challenges even more difficult than mine. I thought - yes I need to change. Very good now I have job with the team... I like.” (Staff Q.)*

### **Addressing Mental Health**

Many of our service users experience poor mental health including depression, anxiety and PTSD due to pre- and post- migration experiences. Many of their experiences are not improving due to poor housing, separation from family and difficulties with the asylum process. We discussed this as a team and decided to reach out to other organisations and private therapists in the community to explore ways in which they deliver mental health counselling to vulnerable groups with English as an additional language. As a result of this consultation we made the decision to work collaboratively with Lancashire Women to employ a counsellor. The project is still in its early stages, however the feedback from both the therapist and service users has been very positive.



Additionally, all our staff have attended the Lancashire Mind Mental Health First Aid accredited training and we are part of the Orange Button Scheme in Lancashire.

### **GDPR**

We recognised that we needed to improve and have more robust processes in place for handling and storing personal information; GDPR. We have purchased Lamplight, which is a complete data management system, and we are aiming to be paperless by the end of 2023. Our staff have received high quality training on the system which continues aiming to improve our processes further by the end of the year. Our staff members will additionally soon be attending GDPR training provided by Blackburn CVS.

### **Volunteers**

Most volunteers shared that they would appreciate being kept more informed about other events and changes at ARC, in addition to more training opportunities. As a result of feedback, we now hold monthly volunteer meetings for information sharing and for addressing specific focus points learning more about the asylum process, and what to do in a mental health crisis. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to share their views and suggestions on a more regular basis. This year we have strengthened our volunteer recruitment procedures and support and begun to hold regular meetings for volunteers. They do have some suggestions for further strengthening the team and the work of ARC including: improved communications and information sharing; better functioning IT resources; more formalised support and appraisal; recruiting more interpreters; better volunteer management; more tailored staff and volunteer training; more mental health support for staff/volunteers.

## **5. Feedback from the Community**

We asked the community to share their experiences with us, and how we have helped them to settle in Blackburn.

Most service users mentioned the weekly Social Drop-in and the English Club as activities they had most enjoyed. Those who attended Focus and Fly wellbeing sessions, Cookery Club and trips out also gave very positive feedback. People found kindness, friendship, a place for their children to play, opportunity to learn English, information, access to health advice/vaccines and a relaxed enjoyable atmosphere.

*"I like English and Drop in – people were so kind. At Drop in I can meet people. I get info about the Fire course". (SU C. M. 25 yrs)*

*"Learning English very good. Meeting people at Drop in. Good meet my friends. Children they like play....I Loved the cooking course....Covid vaccinations very good.. I had 2nd vaccine here....more convenient here and they explain more than my first at the Doctor". (SU B. F. 36 yrs)*



*“...going to park, trips . Mainly I like the social activities. English classes.... the more relaxed atmosphere and I can help too.” (SU M. 43yrs)*

*“Focus and Fly so good. Before I never like to stand in front of people and talk. At the beginning a bit shy but now I am comfortable to talk in front of many people. My relationship with others in group is very strong after F and F. I get to know people more”. (SU G.- M. 21 yrs)*

People mentioned many aspects of practical help to manage everyday life: a place to come, friendship, learning English, learning new skills – cooking, help for children's schooling, food parcels, legal signposting, counselling. Changes people see in themselves as a result of engagement with ARC this year included feeling happier, less lonely, increase in self-confidence, feeling more comfortable, more energy, more ability to speak English, feeling/being more independent, improved mental health, less tired and bored.

*“Practical help, friendship, learning cooking. Different countries different dishes. I am feel happy now. I would feel lonely without going ARC. Arc helped me with a lot of things – appointments, ... I feel more confident.” (SU A.)*

*“Before I had no papers but now I have status. Universal credit account, forms for child benefit. I feel comfortable and I feel independent.” (SU B.)*

*“Meet new people, help people and learn different languages not just English. Making friends. Learning English. Showed me GP, solicitor, made calls to Migrant Help. Helped me with letters, filling form for council class 2 months ago. Before I came here I was tired and bored. Now I feel happier, fresher, more energy and feeling good I can help other people. I feel more confident and I can manage my life much better. I can make people understand what I need in other offices.” (SU F.)*

*“Counsellor was very helpful....it helps my mental health.” (SU E.)*

Staff and volunteers have seen the positive effect that ARC support has had on people.

*“English club is very helpful to people because college you have to wait until Sept. here you can come and start whenever you like their kids can come. Focus and Fly really helps the mental health – its what I see on peoples faces. When I talk to them in drop in they talk more – they are more open to talk.” (Staff V.)*

*“Focus and Fly – a lot of work around improving self confidence/self esteem. They are engaging and smiling and having fun.” (Staff P.)*

*“Drop ins. I notice the change in people – more happy because they can meet people. Cooking – I did my recipes first then they suggested they would try their recipes.... and more people are coming. Cookery – to meet as a small group and share. Different dishes another country , meeting , chatting, it makes us all feel*



*good. At home don't like to cook but here it's different - you are sharing with others... it feels good. Focus and Fly – people need that support – I see they are more confident and trust themselves more.” (Staff Q.)*

## **6. Suggestions**

### ***From Community Members:***

Feedback shows that service users are overall very satisfied with the support they get from ARC. However they did have suggestions for change – more English classes, more drop-in days, provision of free bus passes, more trips outside.

*“No problems. Everything is good.... I would like bus tickets for AS. A bit of money. We stay Douglas place , a long way to come....the weather very bad.” (SU A.)*

*“Most people thinking about bus tickets. Blackburn college have contact to transportation company. In Germany they have tickets very cheap. 10 Euros a month to go anywhere.” (SU G.)*

*“In nice weather every month have a picnic – trips out. More options – more days drop-in, 3 days English.” (SU F.)*

### ***From Staff and Volunteers:***

The main suggestions were the provision of free bus passes; more opportunities to share their respective cultures; trips out into nature; occasional parties; consistency re. case work outside the office hours; the importance of sharing food and time together in breaks, addressing social isolation more and more engagement and consultation with service users to encourage them to come and attend activities regularly.

*“ Most people thinking about bus tickets. Blackburn college have contract with transportation company. Asylum seekers need more support – make more contact with the council and getting more support like bus tickets.”*

*“More trips like in the nature places. I feel so relax, happy in nature place.” (Volunteer G.)*

*“We really make feel welcome but maybe some activities where they feel even more welcome and valued like sharing their cultures. Cooking club is a good start. So that they know we are really interested in them and their cultures.” (Staff V.)*

*“Have a party for everyone..... music – make the people happy, forget the bad things! “(Volunteer H.)*



*“Occasional evening events for adult refugees and supporters – music, poetry, dance, snacks.” (Volunteer O.)*

*“[re. consistency] Tuesdays [drop-in]– they [caseworkers] helped some people but not others with phone and casework. I felt like they helped woman but not man.” (Volunteer H.)*

*“Round the edges stuff is important like having food together in breaks- both for language and social contact.” (Volunteer F.)*

*“....Are we doing enough about socialising? ...I think we need to do more to address social isolation.” (Volunteers B & A.)*

*“Consultation focus groups with service users for their ideas for new activities.” (Volunteer A.)*

*“We need to encourage people more to come to Drop-in. We can do like a lottery – give a question on FB, then you come, give the right answer - get a gift like chocolates. That will bring a lot of people!” (Volunteer G.)*

*“There used to be a good focus on children and young people like sending out craft things.... A youth club.” (Staff K.)*

### **Suggestions for Organisational and Staff Development:**

As previously outlined, ARC benefits from having a team of staff and volunteers who are highly committed, who love their work and who feel well valued by one another and service users. All volunteers stated that they would recommend volunteering with us to their friends and family.

*“IT.... we are managing but we could be more efficient and get more done in the time.” (Volunteer A.)*

*“There is an issue re. people passing on info to staff and volunteers. Passing it once to one group of people isn’t enough. Friday staff/volunteer meetings can be beneficial.” (Volunteer B.)*

*“ARC has become more professional – it has taken a step up. It is more like a professional organisation than a small project. This is good because we need to support many people and have many activities going on...but communication*

*between staff needs to improve...staff need more training to develop leadership skills.”*



*“Watching videos for training - like youtube. Appraisal review every few months looking at Targets and achievements....so that staff feel they are engaged and developing professionally.” (Staff K.)*

*“Some management training which is specifically relevant for my role. That’s already been a conversation and wasn’t available in the past.*

*Counselling or therapies for staff themselves would be good.” (Staff P.)*

*“....more volunteer support. I can give a talk at drop in – my experience as a volunteer... maybe this is encouraging others. I think we need more volunteer training - like lamplight, how to talk to people, boundaries...this needs to be more formalised. Even simple.. like exits for fires.....regular volunteer meetings like one a month.” (Staff V.)*

*“ ....manuals to read, policies to tick off, basics about the asylum system, all the terminology.” (Volunteer F.)*

*“separate volunteer meetings for a) English Club volunteers b) other volunteers....too much time taken talking about English Club issues.” (Volunteer B.)*

*“Maybe we need a board with peoples face and names on and role – a nice welcome in different languages and the name of everyone.....A volunteer evening every now and again – social – like a Jacob’s join and music.*

*A Refugee week planning group.” (Volunteer O.)*

## **7. Main challenges**

### **a) Funding**

This was the main challenge identified by staff, volunteers and partner organisations. Funding needed for providing extended mental health support – both counselling service and wellbeing session such as Focus and Fly and mental health training and support. + other relevant trainings for staff and volunteers. Additionally, bus passes for asylum seekers and more trips out.

*“ being able to employ a counsellor is vital. Options are limited in the local area and there are huge waiting lists. All have been through some kind of trauma. Feedback has been that people are really grateful....it’s really helped them and improved their mental health. People feel safe here having this help in a familiar environment. They may not feel confident [in other venues] due to trust issues.” (Staff P.)*

*“Try to train more volunteers - funding and resources are an issue. Resources have now shrunk so badly ...even from the council I got 67 certs in 4 yrs! And now there are few opportunities. Without these trainings I would not be able to do what I do*





*now as a lead volunteer. Start with some in house training for the most committed volunteers.”(Volunteer J.)*

### **b) Service user Engagement**

It has taken time, since opening up all services and recruiting new staff post pandemic, to build ARC back up and get people coming back but attendance numbers for case work, drop in and English club are now very encouraging. New activities do take longer to attract people on a continuing basis. We use a variety of strategies to promote our projects; existing and new, including social media and direct contact. Client engagement is a challenging area in which we aim to further develop our skills. We have recently been successful in gaining free access to Canva for Teams, an online design and publishing tool, and our team are due to receive free Canva training via Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. We hope this will improve our ability as a whole team to produce engaging promotional material and share with our target audience.

*“Identifying the needs of clients and then encouraging them to keep attending sessions put on to address their needs is challenging.” (Volunteer B.)*

*“Engaging people and trying to motivate them to join different activities we run is very hard work needing constant communication. There are language barriers, cultural differences and understandings - it takes time .....” (Staff P.)*

### **c) Government policy**

Volunteer F explains the challenges:

*“ We’re at the mercy of new government policies etc. and we don’t know yet how many additional numbers of people are coming in the near future.”*

## **8. How the feedback and learning will change what we will do in the future**

If financially possible, we would like to improve the accessibility of our mental health counselling service by introducing interpreters and/or a language line interpretation service. We currently have over 20 different spoken languages and would like to be able to refer any service user needing support, regardless of their ability to speak English. We believe that by supporting the emotional wellbeing of our service users, we can help them to address issues and offer them healing opportunities. As a result, our service users can live healthier, happier lives.

Additionally, we aim to promote and boost employee wellbeing. We are committed to meeting the financial needs of our staff during the cost-of-living crisis by introducing free healthy basic meals and snacks. We will also have monthly team meetings in a location away from the office such as a local coffee shop. We have booked a ‘Gong Sound Bath’ meditation session for the whole team which helps to the brain and body to reach deep relaxation. Increased staff wellbeing can improve performance and job satisfaction, which



can lead to reduced staff absence and turnover, increase productivity and promote staff engagement. We would also like to consider the added support of therapy for our staff.

We are working closely with the integration team at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to prepare for an increase in asylum seekers arriving in Blackburn. We have discussed provision for transport including bus fares for service users living a distance from the centre of Blackburn. We have also discussed how the council can work more closely with our organisation to provide additional ESOL provision, for those who would like it.

We aim to continue our work with MyPlace Greenhouse Project to deliver projects during the warmer months, with the opportunity to attend trips outdoors which include picnics and outdoor cooking. We have also applied for additional funding to run an allotment project in Blackburn which will allow our service users to take responsibility for planting, growing and caring for seasonal plants including fruits and vegetables. We are still awaiting a decision on the funding application.

CVS Community are providing a variety of training opportunities for our staff, this includes leadership and management training for senior members of staff. We believe this will equip them further with the skills necessary for continuing to improve our organisation in all areas.

As we continue to move towards paperless and becoming digitalised, our volunteer recruitment documents will be digitally shared with all volunteers going forward. These will be accessible at all times by volunteers, including up-to-date policies and procedures.

## **9. Finance Report and Amended Budget**

From the time the original proposed budgets for this grant period were prepared, much has changed at ARC Blackburn. Partially due to the last throes of Covid and the resignation of our manager, on health grounds, Christmas 2021, our expected expenditure changed to a marked degree. We did not feel it was safe to recommence all our pre-covid activities for the first couple of months of 2022.

This dictated that we could not start to replace our two employees, lost during Covid, until March when we also started to look for a new manager. During this period, we maintained a very basic service for our service users due to the loyal support of our remaining employee, a number of our volunteers and our trustees. We were not able to recruit the two new caseworkers we needed until May and a new manager was only identified to start work in June.

The result of this was that our staff costs for the year were reduced by a substantial amount. As all our new staff were offered 3-year contracts we would be grateful if you would allow us to roll this money over, to be used for four months after the Lottery grant ends to cover these contractual obligations. However, if this is not acceptable, we should



be grateful you would allow us utilise this cash to further develop our Mental Health service, which will this year cost us £36000.

It is worth noting that we are advised we should expect an increased number of asylum seekers to be placed in Blackburn in the foreseeable future and this means we may well need to appoint an additional caseworker to accommodate this development. This would also mean we need to find more funds to purchase additional IT/telephone equipment and rent more space in our building.

We continued to approach funding organisations last year, but with limited success. We were pleased to receive £10000 from the Awards for all fund to support our Focus and Fly project. A number of large funds were unable to help but we did receive several modest amounts for revenue expenses and several small amounts for a number of new services/innovations we wished to introduce. We are soon to approach Lloyds Bank for their support. We are at the point now where we wish to build up some sensible reserves and are hoping the local Methodist churches will soon let us have the £25000 promised some time ago, which could be an initial sum to be retained for this purpose.

We are including with this report a copy of our audited accounts for the year ending 31 August 2022. (*Appendix 5.*) These represent a period very much affected by Covid and therefore do not give a true representation of our required current operating expenditure needs and the progress we have made since becoming a registered charity in April 2020. We are extremely pleased by the way we have emerged from Covid, this being due to good stewardship of our resources, the excellent staff we have been able to recruit, our loyal team of volunteers and a committed and diverse group of trustees. We are very optimistic about what we are planning and hope to achieve in 2023.

**We trust the accompanying table of expenditure and budget for 2023 (Appendix 4) is sufficient for this report, but will be happy to provide more information if required.**

Holly Morgan  
ARC Blackburn Manager

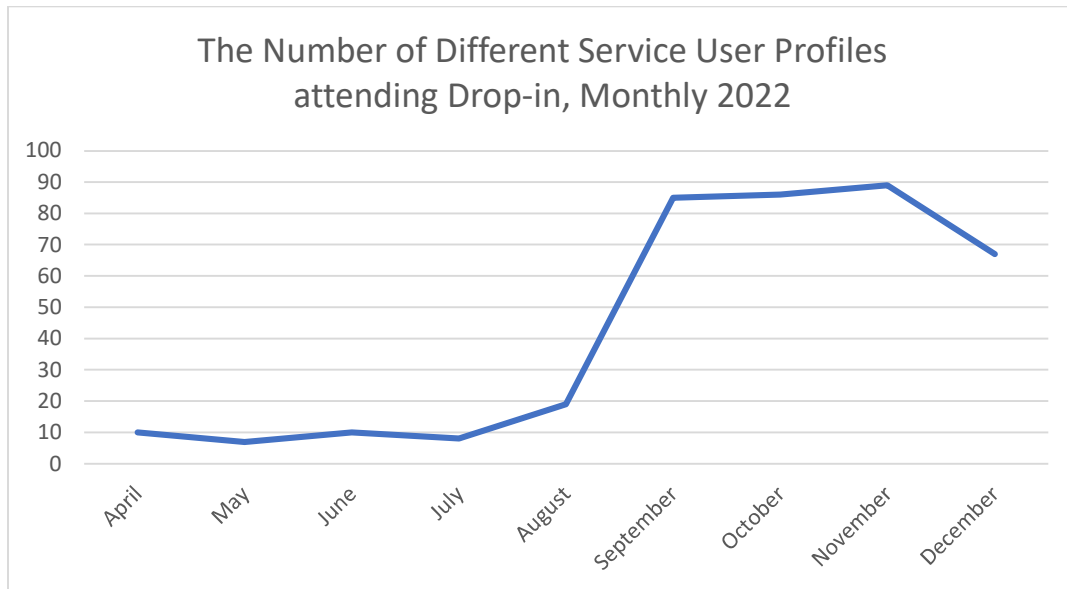
January 31<sup>st</sup> 2023

H. Morgan

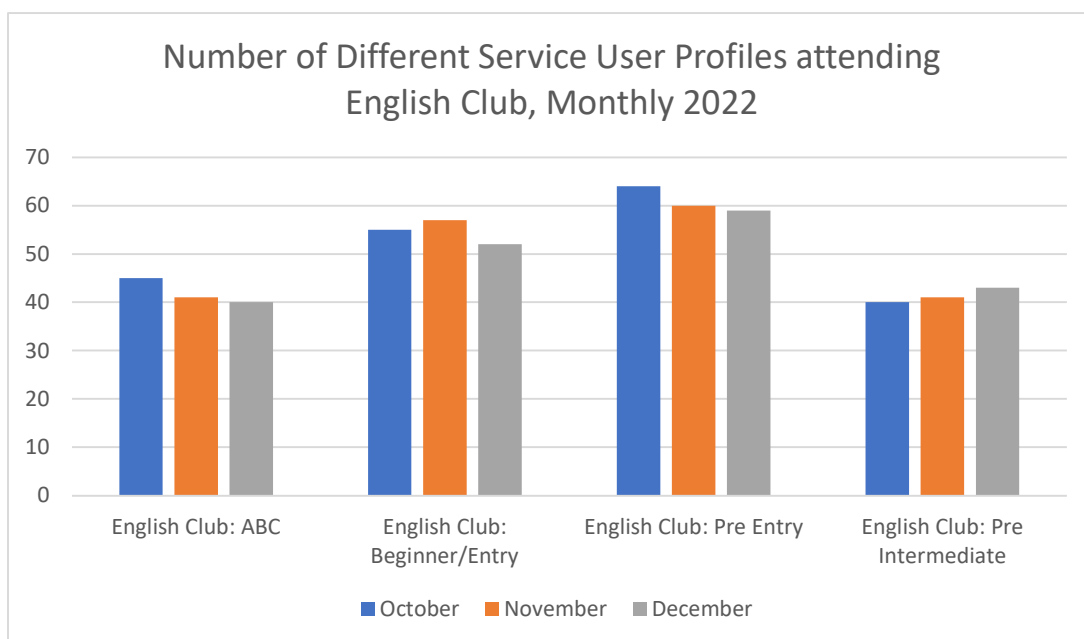
## 10. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Graph – Service User Attendance Figures

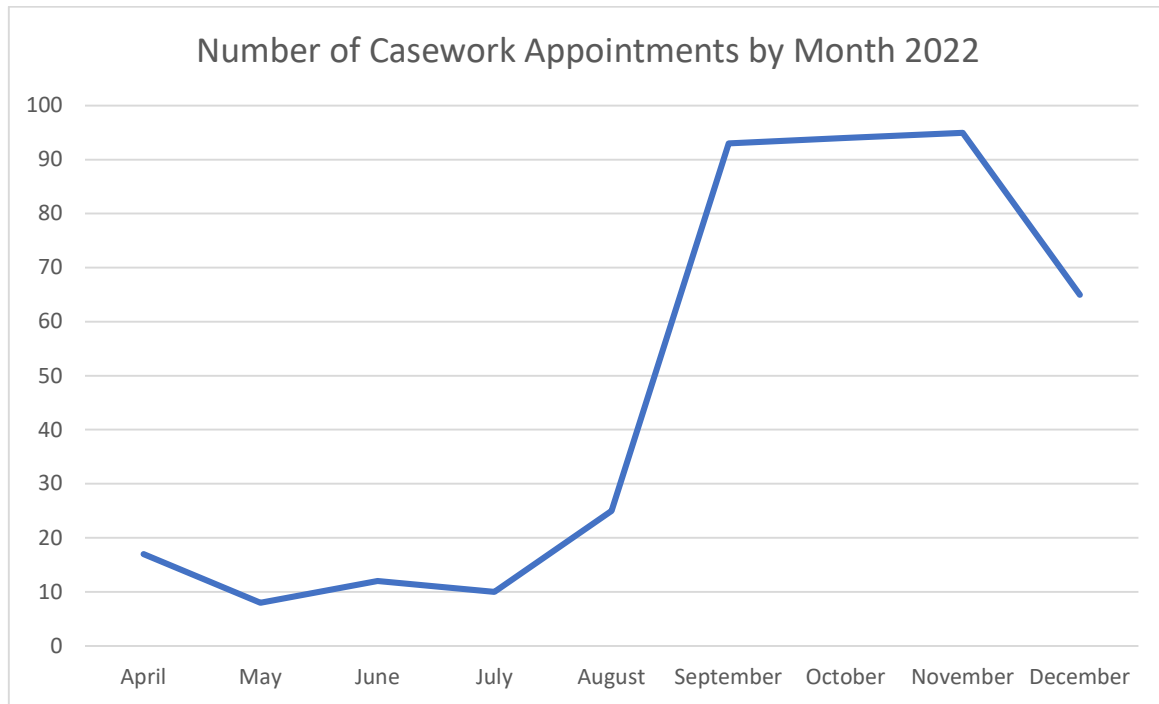
The graph below shows the upward trend in the number of different service users attending the weekly drop since April (during December the office was closed between 24.12.22 and 3.1.23).



The graph below shows a steady, consistent attendance at our twice weekly English Club, since we began recording this information on our new case management system, Lamplight (during December the office was closed between 24.12.22 and 3.1.23).



The graph below shows an increase in the number of casework appointments by month (during December the office was closed between 24.12.22 and 3.1.23)





## **Appendix 2: Lived Experience Stories**

### **1. A family from El Salvador seeking asylum**

I was an asylum seeker from El Salvador, then a volunteer and now a staff member at ARC. I helped a Salvadorean family in an urgent situation who needed to be signposted. They had been here 18 months but with no solicitor. So the Home Office suddenly decided to close the case and stop their housing and money support. They live in Burnley – we are not funded to support people outside of Blackburn. We contacted an organisation in Burnley and now they have started helping them. They don't have any stress now – they are allowed to stay in their home... they now have some money. Before Home office told them to leave the house they knew nothing. Because I speak their language, share their culture was myself and asylum seeker they trusted me and I could interpret well for them. They feel more secure now.... more confident.

### **2. S- a young mother from Syria seeking asylum**

Sometimes we are required to give urgent support to a service user liaising with several organisations over a short period, in this case – one day. S. a young woman from Syria in her late 20s came to ARC in a distressed state. She had been experiencing domestic violence over a long period and had finally plucked up the courage to seek support. The case worker began by giving her reassurance that she would try to help her. She began by contacting several women's refuges. After a long wait on the phone to Migrant Help it was clear that none of these could accept her because she was a failed asylum seeker with no recourse to public funding. This was a huge barrier to come across and it took most of the day to start to resolve. Eventually the case worker managed to get through to the Serco area manager who then managed to find another property for her. All this was very time consuming involving numerous phone calls/waiting and emails. The case worker then took her to her children's school where the perpetrator then turned up. They were unable to leave until he was escorted from the area. The case worker spoke with the school liaison who was aware of the ongoing issue. The case worker finally was able to take her to the newly allocated house and wait for housing officer. The case worker finally arrived home at 9pm. The next day she phoned social services to brief them. That incident caused us to review and improve our safeguarding protocols.

### **3. C. a woman in her 40's from Eritrea - refugee**

We often works with service users over several years. C, in her 40's, from Eritrea, has, even after 5 years in UK, limited English and appears to have a degree of learning difficulties. C. therefore needs a lot of support in accessing all services vital for managing everyday life such as housing, universal credit, all the utilities, schools/college for her son. Additionally we support her with job searching and communication with potential employers. C. is unable to manage any of these tasks independently so without the support of ARC she would stuck. She is vulnerable and has been subject to exploitation even from a family member for which she has come to ARC for advice and emotional support. We have liaised with schools and Blackburn college to help her get support to encourage her son to attend regularly. It has been particularly challenging as it is hard to access an interpreter for Tigrinya so we have needed to do our best, occasionally contacting a former ARC employee to translate. All the support C. has been able to access





at ARC has meant that she is living independently and feeling safe and finding friendship at drop-in. This support has helped her to rebuild her life and, more latterly, find, interview for and hold down a regular cleaning job.

#### **4. A. a newly married man from Sudan - refugee**

We have been giving support to A. , young man from Sudan, for over 5 years. A. has a degree of learning difficulties which means he has really struggled to manage the affairs of everyday life such as managing money, utilities bills, keeping on top of rent and council tax and applying for the benefits he is entitled to. He comes to the case work office almost every week and the case workers need to phone him once a month to remind him to pay his rent or he gets into debt. Before we took this step, at one point his debt situation became very complicated and he was in danger of being evicted. Our case workers have spent hundreds of hours working with him over the years and are still continuing. More recently we supported him with family reunion to bring his wife over to join him- a very complicated process which he could not have attempted to do himself. Our case workers helped to get accommodation for them and furnishings, helped set up all the utilities payments and universal credit. When his wife became pregnant and they had a baby they had some support from social services as they are classed as vulnerable. At ARC we looked at what support we and social services could put in for the family. We had monthly meetings with the children's support worker from social services. We were able to access nursery equipment and baby clothes from Children's Storehouse. We regularly provide them with food parcels especially throughout the Covid pandemic. Communication with the GP and hospital was difficult for them resulting in missed appointments for both A. who was suffering from stomach pain and for the baby who had a leg brace. We were able to give them to sort out this issue by liaising with the health providers. The family have ongoing encouragement to take part in social activities like coming to the social drop-in and walks with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and playing football at Witton Park with Creative Support. A's wife comes every week to Drop- in with her baby and to English classes. She is picking up English really quickly. Our Arabic speaking volunteers and staff give them invaluable support with interpreting for all their needs.



### Appendix 3: ARC Blackburn Flyers



**ARC Blackburn**  
Asylum and Refugee Community

Wesley Hall, Feilden Street  
Blackburn BB2 1LQ  
01254 690282



Every Wednesday  
12pm - 2.30pm



Join us for cooking club every  
Wednesday. You'll learn to make a  
variety of healthy dishes, from  
scratch.

## ARC Counselling

### Safe & confidential mental health support

**Together, we can work through ways to deal with:**

- Stress, worry or anxiety
- Depression or low-mood
- Health and long-term conditions
- Trauma
- Relationships



*Book an appointment:*

**0300 330 1354**

**Or through your  
ARC Caseworker**

**Person-centred,  
1-1 mental health  
support in  
Blackburn with  
Darwen**

ARC, Wesley Hall, Fielden Street,  
Blackburn, BB2 1LQ



*We are*  
**LANCASHIRE  
WOMEN**



**Want to be part of a new group and learn new skills?**

**Want to meet new friends?**

**Come to Focus & Fly confidence building course!**

**Every Thursday**

**ARC Blackburn, Wesley Hall**

**10.30am - 2pm**

**Breakfast and lunch included**

**Weekly prizes**

**£50 Asda voucher at the end of the course**





## ARC Blackburn



**Asylum and Refugee  
Community**



Wesley Hall, Feilden Street  
Blackburn BB2 1LQ



01254 690282



### LADIES ONLY

## Zumba Dance & Exercise Class Every Friday 12pm - 1pm

ARC Blackburn & Diva Dance & Fitness will be running a LADIES ONLY exercise class for asylum seekers and refugees.

Every Friday from 12pm-1pm at Wesley Hall, Blackburn.

If you are interested, come and join us on Friday!

Refreshments provided.





# Interfaith Wildlife Project

Do you like spending time outdoors?



Have you always wanted to learn how to plant or grow your own food?

Are you looking to make new friends?

When?  
Starts 6th February  
Every Monday\*  
10am-1pm  
**FREE MINIBUS**



Please contact Andy Mather on  
07720 208424 to book your place.  
\*February and March only.







# MAGIC FOR SMILES



**JAMIE JIBBERISH  
AT**

**ARC BLACKBURN  
TUESDAY 26TH JULY  
12PM**

**Humanitarian magician for children and adults**



# MINI LIGHTS

## Early Years Event

### Sat 10th December

**10.30am - 1.30pm**

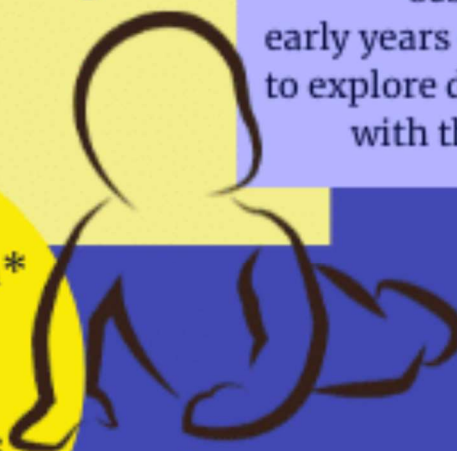


Light themed creative sessions for early years children aged 0-4 to explore different art forms with their families!

**Free Admission\***  
**Free Parking**  
**Snacks and Refreshments**

\*Donations very welcome to help cover costs

Small parade outside at the end so wrap up warm!



## Arts and Crafts

## Dance

## Music

## Face Painting

## Sensory Room

**The Bureau Centre for the Arts**  
**Penny St, Blackburn,**  
**BB1 6HQ**

Book tickets online at: [www.bureaublackburn.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.bureaublackburn.co.uk/whats-on)  
Contact 07837253184



**YOUTH  
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**





# BLACKBURN FESTIVAL OF LIGHT



**Tuesday 13th December  
11.30am at ARC, Wesley Hall**



# Interfaith Wildlife Project

Do you like spending time  
outdoors?



Have you always wanted to  
learn how to plant or grow  
your own food?

Are you looking to make  
new friends?

When?  
Starts 6th February  
Every Monday\*  
10am-1pm  
**FREE MINIBUS**



Please contact Andy Mather on  
07720 208424 to book your place.  
\*February and March only.



The Wildlife Trust for  
**Lancashire  
Manchester &  
North Merseyside**

**NEAR  
NEIGHBOURS**

# SHARED SOUNDS

Weekly sessions full of songs, rhymes and musical games for young children with their parents/carers



The Bureau Centre for the Arts, Outreach Programme



**Interactive musical play sessions  
for children from birth to 4 years**

**Tuesday mornings 10.30am - 11.30am**

**Jan 17th, 24th, 31st, Feb 7th**

ARC Wesley Hall, Fielden Street, Blackburn, BB2 1LQ

[info@arcblackburn.org.uk](mailto:info@arcblackburn.org.uk)

For more information e-mail [sorrel@bureaublackburn.co.uk](mailto:sorrel@bureaublackburn.co.uk)

Shared Sounds Sessions are led by qualified musicians with training and experience in early childhood development.

**We are currently able to offer free and subsidised sessions at The Bureau Centre for The Arts due to funding support from The National Foundation for Youth Music. Please get in touch if you are interested in trying a session with your child. Booking is essential.**

Find us on social media [/bureaublackburn](https://www.facebook.com/bureaublackburn)

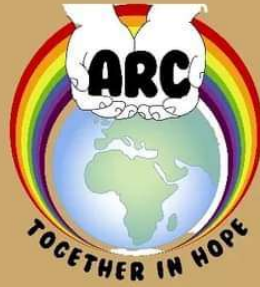


**YOUTH  
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**





# CHRISTMAS PARTY

AN EVENT FOR ALL THE FAMILY TO ENJOY

FOOD, REFRESHMENTS, CRAFTS, GAMES, SANTA'S  
GROTTO

ARC BLACKBURN, WESLEY HALL

TUESDAY 20TH DECEMBER

11.30AM-2PM





# JOIN US ON A DAY TRIP!

EXPLORE BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN WITH  
LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST AND THE ARC PROJECT

Monday 24th October 2022

10am till 2pm

Limited places

Book a place with Holly at ARC

Bring food for lunch

All abilities welcome



## FREE MINIBUS

Pick up and drop off from

Wesley Hall, Feilden Street, Blackburn, BB2 1LQ



The Wildlife Trust for  
**Lancashire  
Manchester &  
North Merseyside**



## **Appendix 4 Budget**

Year 2022							Year 2023
Revenue				Capital			
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget
Salaries (inc. on-costs such as NI and pensions)	£128,060	£ 63,181	£64,879			£0.00	£97,392
Contracted Mental Health professional	£25,000	£ 10,019	£14,981			£0.00	£36,000
Overheads/Utilities	£2,000	£ 2,895	-£895			£0.00	£3,500
Rent/Accommodation	£12,500	£ 12,921	-£421			£0.00	£15,000
Professional Fees	£6,500	£ 6,697	-£197			£0.00	£7,750
Office Costs (inc. digital costs)	£2,250	£ 2,251	-£1			£0.00	£2,000
Training	£500	£ 330	£170			£0.00	£2,000
Volunteer Costs	£500	£ 482	£18			£0.00	£800
Travel	£500	£ 10	£490			£0.00	£300
Equipment	£1,000	£ 328	£672			£0.00	£3,000
Youth Group	£1,250		£1,250			£0.00	
Removals	£1,000	£ 50	£950			£0.00	£500
Catering	£1,000	£ 512	£488			£0.00	£1,000
Miscellaneous	£2,000	£ 2,775	-£775			£0.00	£3,500
New Client Services/Projects	0	4691	-4691				£5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£184,060</b>	<b>£107,142</b>	<b>£76,918</b>			<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£177,742</b>

**Asylum and Refugee Community, Blackburn**  
**Registered Charity No: 1188910**

**ACCOUNTS &  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**for the year ended 31 August 2022**

**Asylum and Refugee Community, Blackburn**  
**Registered Charity No: 1188910**

**Index to the Financial Statements**

**Year ended 31 August 2022.**

	<b>Page</b>
Income & Expenditure Account	1
Balance Sheet	2
Notes to the Financial Statements	3
Independent Examiner's Report	4



Asylum Refugee Community Blackburn

Registered Charity No : 1188910

Income & Expenditure Account

Year Ended 31 August 2022

	£	£	2021	£
Income				
Grants		124,474.10		72,065.00
Donations		8,681.72		5,075.95
Miscellaneous Income		208.76		0.00
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		133,364.58		77,140.95
<b>Less Expenses and Overheads</b>				
<b>Staffing Costs</b>				
Staff Wages & Salaries	49,947.93		46,006.45	
Staff NIC	0.00		0.00	
Pensions	934.67		787.48	
Staff Training Costs	3,256.00		50.00	
Pension Fees	105.00		0.00	
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	1,458.10		125.52	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		55,701.70		46,969.45
<b>Tinta Appeal Expenses</b>		0.00		0.00
<b>Administration &amp; Marketing</b>				
Stationery & Inks	848.09		30.00	
Client, Socials and Charity Expenses	578.68		750.10	
Lamplight Training & Database	3,720.00		0.00	
Memberships	30.00		30.00	
Advertising	295.00		0.00	
Postage	117.48		0.00	
Accountancy, Payroll & Examination of Accounts	748.90		647.60	
Funding Application	727.00		1,325.00	
Professional Fees	0.00		150.00	
Bank & Card Fees	93.00		76.50	
Travel Expenses	0.00		63.59	
Website Fees	10.79		400.07	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		7,168.94		3,472.86
<b>Establishment Expenses</b>				
Rent, Electricity & water	8,899.56		0.00	
Insurance	998.78		1,022.65	
Telephone	3,811.66		2,331.59	
Computer Expenses	195.64		179.15	
Alarm & Security	0.00		0.00	
Repairs & Sundry Equipment	2,160.89		219.67	
Equipment Hire	0.00		0.00	
Due Diligence Checks	700.00		0.00	
Sundry Expenses	330.54		81.10	
Cleaning Expenses	75.00		0.00	
Depreciation of Assets	497.00		712.07	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
		17,669.07		4,546.23
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<hr/>		<hr/>
		80,539.71		54,988.54
<b>(Loss) Surplus Generated from Operations</b>				
		52,824.87		22,152.41
<b>Profits (Losses) transferred to Revenue Reserves</b>				
		52,824.87		22,152.41
		=====		=====



**Asylum Refugee Community Blackburn**

**Registered Charity No : 1188910**

**Balance Sheet**

**31 August 2022**

	£	£	2021 £	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Laptops & Printers	1,655.00		2,367.07	
Less : Depreciation	497.00		712.07	
	<u>                    </u>	1,158.00	<u>                    </u>	1,655.00
 <b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash at bank-3840	92,395.07		37,280.07	
West Pennine Methodist Circuit (Debtor)	0.00		2,186.41	
Petty Cash in Hand	0.00		0.00	
	<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>	
	92,395.07		39,466.48	
 <b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Accrued Charges	425.00		350.00	
Wages	0.00		0.00	
Pensions	580.20		215.72	
PAYE & NI	1,127.24		0.00	
	<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>	
	2,132.44		565.72	
 <b>Net Current Assets</b>		90,262.63		38,900.76
		<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>
		91,420.63		40,555.76
 <b>Less :     Restricted Funding re Tinta Ali</b>		(1,740.00)		(3,700.00)
		<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>
		89,680.63		36,855.76
		<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>
 <b>Represented by</b>				
Reserves brought forward		36,855.76		
Capital Introduced				
HSBC (share of Balance)			4,280.95	
Methodist Circuit Current Account			10,422.40	
	<u>                    </u>	0.00	<u>                    </u>	14,703.35
 <b>Add: Surplus (Deficit) for the year</b>		52,824.87		22,152.41
		<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>
		89,680.63		36,855.76
		<u>                    </u>		<u>                    </u>

**For the year ended 31 August 2022**

## **ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **Accounting Principles**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and with applicable Accounting Standards.

### **Depreciation**

Depreciation has been calculated to write off the net book values of fixed assets over their expected economic lives at the following annual rates.

Computer Equipment	30 % on reducing balance
--------------------	--------------------------

## **2. TURNOVER**

Turnover for the year was £133,364 and represents various charitable grants and donations received in the year

## **3. CORPORATION TAX**

Corporation tax is charged in the accounts in the period to which it relates.

The amount of Corporation tax due on Non-Charitable trading activities for the year was £ Nil.

## **4. CONTINUING OPERATIONS**

None of the charity's activities were acquired or discontinued during the year.

## **5 TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES**

The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the loss for the financial period detailed herewith

## **Independent Examiner's Report**

### **To the Trustees and Members of Asylum and Refugee Community, Blackburn**

I report on the Accounts and Financial Statements on pages 1 to 2 which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 3.

#### **Responsibilities of the Trustees and Committee.**

It is the charity's committee's responsibility to prepare accounts and financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the committee are required to :

- i) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- ii) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- iii) Prepare the accounts and financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue to operate.

The committee is also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking responsible steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

#### **Respective responsibility of Trustees and Examiner.**

As described above the charity's trustees and committee are responsible for the preparation of accounts and financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

#### **Basis of Independent Examiner's report.**

My examination was conducted in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. The examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts and financial statements presented with those records and making such limited enquiries of the officers of the charity as we considered necessary for the purposes of this report. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. These procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

#### **Independent Examiner's Statement of Opinion**

In connection with my examination it is my opinion that;

- a) The financial statements are in agreement with the books and records kept by the charity and that the accounting records have been maintained in accordance with section 145 of the 2011 Act



b) Having read only to, and on the basis of, the information contained in those accounting records the accounts and financial statements have been drawn up in a manner consistent with the accounting requirements specified in the 2011 Act;

No matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect of the requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met.

No matter has come to my attention, to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Bennett', with a large, stylized initial 'G' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

**Graham Bennett FFA. FAIA.**  
**Bennett & Co. Accountants**  
**Spring House 194-196 Union Road**  
**Oswaldtwistle**  
**Accrington BB5 3EG**

**11 January 2023.**

**ASYLUM AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY BLACKBURN**

**Registered Charity No: 1188910**

**ACCOUNTS &**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**for the year ended 31 August 2023**



**Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn**

**Contents Page**

**For the period ended 31 August 2023**

<b>Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure Account</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>	<b>5</b>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 August 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1188910

Set out on pages

3 to 5

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 08 / 2023**.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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:

Date:

18/04/2024

Name:

David Marriott FCA

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

ICAEW

<b>Address:</b>	Suite 10B The Beehive, Lions Drive
	Shadsworth Business Park, Blackburn
	BB1 2QS

<b>Section B</b>	<b>Disclosure</b>
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

--

**Income & Expenditure Account**  
**Year Ended 31 August 2023**

	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>			
Grants	41,027.90		
Donations	26,915.41		
Miscellaneous Income	<u>2,176.34</u>		
			70,119.65
<b>Less Expenditure and Overheads</b>			
<b>Direct Restricted Expenses</b>			
Equipment & Consumables		860.80	
External Services		10,000.00	
Lamplight Training & Database		444.00	
Memberships		2,200.00	
Other Expenses		2,812.53	
Accountancy Fees		937.30	
Rent		18,143.77	
Room Hire		486.64	
Staff Wages		51,592.80	
Stationery		811.16	
Sundry Expenses		361.43	
Telephone & Internet		3,442.97	
Travel Expenses		914.00	
Workshop Fees		<u>6,951.00</u>	
			99,958.40
<b>Administration Expenses</b>			
Staff Wages		29,292.34	
Staff Training Costs		0.00	
Pension Fees		180.00	
External Services		8,998.00	
Staff & Volunteer Expenses		193.31	
Client, Socials & Charity Expenses		3,166.46	
Advertising		0.00	
Postage		0.00	
Accountancy Fees		652.00	
Funding Application Expenses		0.00	
Bank & Card Fees		60.00	
Travel Expenses		93.31	
Website Fees		0.00	
Rent, Electricity & Water		387.95	
Insurance		0.00	
Computer Expenses		67.50	
Repairs & Sundry Equipment		125.72	
Due Diligence Checks		60.00	
Sundry Expenses		499.39	
Depreciation of Assets		<u>500.28</u>	
			44,276.26
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<u>144,234.66</u>
<b>Surplus (Deficit) Generated from Operations</b>			(74,115.01)
<b>Profits (Losses) transferred to Revenue Reserves</b>			<u><u>(74,115.01)</u></u>

**Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn Charity No : 1188910**

**Balance Sheet**

**Year Ended 31 August 2023**

	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Computer Equipment	2,012.99	
Less: Depreciation	<u>997.28</u>	
		1,015.71
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank	65,290.25	
Petty Cash in Hand	<u>18.74</u>	
		65,308.99
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accrued Charges	852.00	
Deferred Grant Income	48,517.28	
Pensions	0.00	
PAYE & NI	<u>1,389.80</u>	
		50,759.08
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>14,549.91</u>
		15,565.62
<b>Less : Restricted Funding &amp; Grants</b>		0.00
		<u>15,565.62</u>
<b>Reprersented by :</b>		
Revenue Reserves brought forward		89,680.63
Capital Introduced		0.00
Surplus (Deficit) for the year		(74,115.01)
		<u>15,565.62</u>



Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the period ended 31 August 2023

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Accounting Principles**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 with applicable Accounting Standards.

**Depreciation**

Depreciation has been calculated to write off the net book values of fixed assets over their expected economic lives at the following annual rates.

Computer Equipment	33% on reducing balance
--------------------	-------------------------

**2. INCOME**

Turnover for the year was £118,637 (2022 £133,365) and represents the £77,905 restricted and £40,732 unrestricted funding grants and donations received from various sources and during the year.

**3. CORPORATION TAX**

Corporation tax is charged in the accounts in the period to which it relates.

The amount of corporate tax due on non-mutual trading activities for the year was £ nil.

**4. CONTINUING OPERATIONS**

None of the charity's activities were acquired or discontinued during the year.

**5. TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES**

The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the profit for the financial period detailed herewith.

**ASYLUM AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY BLACKBURN**

**Registered Charity No: 1188910**

**ACCOUNTS &**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**for the year ended 31 August 2023**

**Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn**

**Contents Page**

**For the period ended 31 August 2023**

<b>Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Income &amp; Expenditure Account</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>	<b>5</b>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 August 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1188910

Set out on pages

3 to 5

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

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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:

Date:

18/04/2024

Name:

David Marriott FCA

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

ICAEW



<b>Address:</b>	Suite 10B The Beehive, Lions Drive
	Shadsworth Business Park, Blackburn
	BB1 2QS

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**Year Ended 31 August 2023**

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<b>Profits (Losses) transferred to Revenue Reserves</b>			<u><u>(74,115.01)</u></u>

**Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn Charity No : 1188910**

**Balance Sheet**

**Year Ended 31 August 2023**

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Less: Depreciation	<u>997.28</u>	
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Asylum and Refugee Community Blackburn

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the period ended 31 August 2023

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