**Grant Funding to Support People Seeking Asylum in Leeds 2023 – 2025**

**Summary of Funded Activity**

**Our Approach:** In Leeds, our [Strategic, Inclusive and Coordinated Approach to Migration](https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s224708/Migration%20in%20Leeds%20Strategy.pdf) sets out our long-term strategic direction on migration.

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| **Our vision:** Leeds is a welcoming and compassionate city for all new and existing communities. A place where people feel safe and connected, contributions are valued and celebrated and individuals, families and communities can reach their full potential. Our aim is to ensure people who migrate to Leeds are able to establish their lives quickly, with appropriate, efficient and effective support and services available as needed. |

**Background:** Leeds City Council received funding from the Home Office in relation to the asylum agenda. As a result, the council was able to offer one round of grant funding to the third sector to support people in Leeds who are going through the asylum process.

**Aims and objectives:** The asylum grant funding aims to strengthen the local support arrangements for people living in Leeds who are seeking asylum, and for those who have been granted asylum status during the ‘28 day’ move on period (newly granted refugees). Programmes, projects and activity aim to work toward improved accessibility, coordination across the city and outcomes for these client groups; whilst utilising, strengthening and building on existing structures, to achieve the following outcomes:

* **Asylum grant funding - outcomes:** People seeking asylum and newly granted refugees will:
  + Have a **clear understanding of their rights, entitlements, and responsibilities** as residents in the city.
  + Be **better informed** of services and **better able to navigate the city.**
  + Have **improved access** **to appropriate** **services** to address need.
  + Have **access to specialist services providing advice and support** throughout the asylum process. This includes at the point of receiving **positive and negative decisions** and for those who have fallen into **destitution**.
  + Have **knowledge and information** to make **informed choices and decisions** through the support of specialist services.
  + Have **improved health, mental health, and wellbeing**.
  + Have **improved English language and the skills** needed for life.
  + Have **improved access** **and** **increased participation** in local activities and volunteering opportunities.

**Funding overview:** The total amount of funding available was £600,000 for activity delivered between November 2023 to June 2025. Applicants were able to apply for a minimum of £5,000 to a maximum of £50,000, with most grants awarded in the region of £30k-35k. Funding provided opportunities for new and innovative activity, as well as funding for the continuation of existing programmes and activities. Activity will be delivered in venues throughout the city including Home Office contingency accommodation (hotels).

**Summary of funded activity:** To enable service user access to funded activity, and to maximise opportunities for partnership working, the below table lists the funded organisations and provides detail of the delivery activity. The funding has enabled a wide range of activity including:

* Health, mental health and well-being,
* Advocacy and support to improve understanding of the asylum process,
* ESOL/English language learning and skills development,
* Legal advice and representation,
* Move-on support for newly granted refugees,
* Destitution accommodation while seeking sustainable routes out of destitution.

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| **Organisation** | **Organisational Aims / Objectives** | **Start Date** | **End Date** | **Project Description** |
| Leeds Destitute Asylum-seekers Support (LEDAS) | LEDAS provides housing and support to destitute asylum seekers who have no recourse to public funds and no permission to work whilst sustainable routes out of destitution are identified. | 1st November 2023 | 30th April 2025 | LEDAS will deliver the project through provision of destitution accommodation to residents with support to meet daily living needs, access health and social care agencies, and activities. LEDAS will ensure regular contact and co-operation with case workers and legal representatives and will complement the provision of destitution accommodation offered by other agencies by supporting people with more complex cases and needs, including physical disability and mental illness. |
| Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS) | PAFRAS aims to end destitution, increase access to social justice and advocate for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Leeds. | 1st February 2024 | 31st March 2025 | Using an asylum guide model and the Right to Remain toolkit, PAFRAS will develop a pilot project, delivering information sessions to people seeking asylum who are staying in 2 contingency accommodation hotels in Leeds.  An Asylum Guides Coordinator will deliver face to face sessions and aim to train volunteers who speak community languages, to deliver sessions. |
| Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS) | PAFRAS aims to end destitution, increase access to social justice and advocate for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Leeds. | 1st April 2024 | 31st March 2025 | PAFRAS will provide casework support to people seeking asylum, living in Leeds, who are destitute or at risk of destitution. Casework will focus on crisis prevention, supporting people to find sustainable routes out of destitution, while also working preventatively with people prior to receiving a decision on their asylum application. |
| Christ Church Armley Community Projects Ltd | Meeting Point is the social project of Christ Church Armley Community Projects Ltd (CCACP) and provides services and activities for refugees and people seeking asylum through all stages of the asylum journey. | 1st April 2024 | 31st March 2025 | Meeting Point will continue their weekly drop-in providing a welcoming, secure and friendly atmosphere including food parcels, hot meals, refreshments, toiletries, clothing, activities as well as support, advocacy and hardship payments. In addition, a women's group, English classes, an allotment group, and trips/activities. |
| Conversation Club Leeds | The Conversation Club Leeds support social inclusion with people seeking asylum and refugees by providing practice in the use of the English language and providing social and cultural activities. | 1st November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | The Conversation Club will sustain the twice weekly activity to practice the use of English, assistance with applications for ESOL classes and navigating Home Office, benefits, healthcare, housing and activities. Further develop links with a range of other institutions in the city and surrounding areas including activities and outings e.g. museums, concerts and plays. The maintenance of coordination meetings with volunteers and website/social media presence. |
| Give A Gift | Give a Gift support people who have become destitute with emergency provision, cultural food and other essential items, whilst delivering advice, information and guidance on legal options, housing, accessing alternative support and running a mental wellbeing scheme for people seeking asylum. | 1st November 2023 | 31st March 2025 | Give a Gift will deliver through a three-pronged approach that will see:  i) The employment of a 4 day a week advocacy and support officer to coordinate the casework and to liaise directly with service users and the partner agencies.  ii) Correlation with existing services to support the physical and mental health wellbeing of the target group.  iii) A structured signposting and referral system with partner agencies that enables the users to better navigate local services, increase their understanding of the legal process and find sustainable routes out of destitution. |
| Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network (LASSN) | LASSN's Welcome and Connect service has been designed to be the mortar between the bricks of services like Manuel Bravo, Solace, PAFRAS and RETAS. Volunteer and group activities enable services like these to work most effectively, as Welcome and Connect support clients to arrive on time, well prepared and in the right headspace to accept help and support. | 1st January 2024 | 31st December 2024 | LASSN’s Welcome and Connect volunteer role is to welcome refugees and asylum seekers to the city and assist them with making new and meaningful connections. Clients can refer themselves or be referred by people they know (e.g. welfare support staff, social prescribers, GPs, advice agencies etc.). Following initial assessment, clients are matched with either: group support (social groups which meet across the city, whose aim is to explore available support; or to fulfil personal or professional development goals e.g. enrolling at college, learning English, finding mental health support etc) or offered 1:1 support. |
| Leeds City of Sanctuary | Leeds City of Sanctuary is a long-standing network of people and organisations all working together to ensure Leeds is a city of sanctuary by spreading a culture of welcome and inclusion. | 1st February 2024 | 31st October 2024 | The funding will allow the Leeds City of Sanctuary Group to provide travel expenses to volunteers for attendance at public events and meetings. |
| Mafwa Theatre | Mafwa Theatre brings refugees, asylum seekers and settled communities together to celebrate diversity. Mafwa Theatre runs creative workshops for people in Leeds to learn new skills, make new friends and have fun. | 1st September 2024 | 30th June 2025 | Mafwa Theatre will provide sessions which bring people from different communities together to improve their mental health through creative activity such as drama games, roleplay and storytelling. Facilitators are trained in trauma-informed practice and bring this approach to sessions. All sessions include grounding exercises and an opportunity for physical activity to support mental wellbeing. The group enables women to develop a strong support network, working on a peer support model. |
| Manuel Bravo Project | Manuel Bravo Project provides legal advice and representation to vulnerable asylum seekers who are unable to access Legal Aid or other means of legal representation. | 1st March 2024 | 1st February 2025 | Manuel Bravo will increase capacity through OISC Level 3 Caseworker/Solicitor and OISC level 2, including interpreting costs to increase essential legal advice to vulnerable asylum seekers. This role will provide complex casework as well as one-off outreach advice with professional interpreting services available due to the level of complex work required. |
| Manuel Bravo Project Chapeltown Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) | Manuel Bravo Project (MBP) and Chapeltown Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB) emerged as the two parties who had the necessary structure and accreditation to undertake partnership work around legal advice delivery at OISC Level 1 as part of a wider Immigration and Asylum Advice Strategy for Leeds. | 1st November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | This partnership will deliver an OISC Level 1 outreach service as well as thematic clinics twice a month across a range of matters affecting people seeking asylum in Leeds. These include travel documents, nationality queries and Leave in Line applications. These sessions will be delivered by trained volunteers under supervision of CAB, using their OISC exempt status at Level 1. The project intends to provide support for volunteers to work towards the OISC level 1 exam alongside this practical experience of advice. A key purpose of the project (aside from service delivery) is to equip communities with the knowledge they need to make positive changes in their own lives, build non-traditional pathways into law, promote empowerment and create resilience post-project. |
| National Childbirth Trust (NCT) | The National Childbirth Trust, a charity that supports people as they become parents through antenatal and postnatal courses, brings people together to share information and experiences of pregnancy and birth. The peer support programme support parents experiencing challenges with mental health, social isolation or other unmet needs. | 1st November 2023 | 1st March 2025 | The project will enable support to those who are new refugees, seeking asylum or have no recourse to public funds, who are experiencing homelessness, financial hardship and multiple disadvantages, through critical intervention and specialist weekly antenatal and postnatal education drop-in sessions. |
| Our Lady of Kirkstall (part of the Diocese of Leeds) | Our Lady of Kirkstall provide welcome for people seeking asylum and refugees in Leeds and a range of support activities and community engagement to encourage integration. | 1st November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | The project will be delivered through the management committee and 30 existing volunteers at 1 Home Office contingency accommodation (hotel). Provision will include support with collection and distribution of clothing and equipment, social events, trips, Finding Your Voice courses to increase confidence in English and awareness raising training for local community (schools, faith centres, community halls). |
| Refugee Education Training Advice Service (RETAS) and Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network (LASSN) | RETAS’ purpose is to provide refugees and asylum seekers with the tools and knowledge to become independent, to integrate and thrive in our communities.   LASSN works to address the unmet needs of those seeking asylum within the city. | 1st November 2023 | 31st March 2025 | This partnership will make transport more readily accessible to those housed in Home Office contingency accommodation hotels to improve access to integral services addressing need across the city, including ESOL, specialist advice and activities focused on wellbeing. |
| British Refugee Council | British Refugee Council work with refugees and people seeing asylum providing a range of support including crisis advice, mental health, counselling and practical support to help people to settle and integrate. | 1st November 2023 | 30th April 2024 | British Refugee Council will deliver activities in 1 Home Office contingency accommodation hotel which includes raising clients’ awareness of their rights and entitlements; facilitating group wellbeing sessions focussed on mental health; supporting clients to secure legal representation; and supporting client engagement in volunteering. |
| St Vincent’s Leeds | St Vincent’s Leeds’ primary objective is to address local poverty in all its forms. Activity includes debt and financial support; immigration advice to vulnerable people; improved mental health activities; addressing food, clothing and furniture poverty and ESOL classes. | 1st November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | St Vincent's will deliver regular weekly ESOL sessions in 1 Home Office Contingency accommodation hotel, working in partnership with Mears to ensure the help is getting to the most vulnerable people. In addition, the project aims to provide transport costs for people seeking asylum to engage with other ESOL classes and support in Leeds. |
| Sunflower ESOL | Sunflower ESOL provide ESOL Classes around Leeds. | 14th November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | The project will deliver gardening sessions with English support at different locations across Leeds, for people who are seeking asylum. The project will also engage with other services to maximise engagement opportunities. |
| RETAS Leeds | RETAS supports the social, cultural and economic integration of refugees and asylum seekers through a range of support and activities including wellbeing. | 1st November 2023 | 31st March 2025 | This funding will allow the current 28-day move-on service to expand, as well as increase access and capacity to ensure as many as possible can benefit by participating in a range of activities such as English language classes, knowledge about local cultures and customs, improve general wellbeing. |
| The Children’s Society | The Children's Society provide specialist support that empowers young people to make positive changes and rediscover their hope. | 1st May 2024 | 30th June 2025 | The funding will enable the continuation of advocacy and wellbeing provision to young people. Activity includes a co-delivered youthwork session with Leeds Playhouse, one to one advocacy, mentoring and befriending support. |
| Unity in Poverty Action (UPA) in partnership with WYDAN and St Monica’s Housing | UPA work to tackle poverty in Leeds through a range of areas including establishing and maintaining networks, inputting into citywide partnerships and strategies, information sharing and connecting church communities, and wider to develop shared learning. | 1st November 2023 | 30th June 2025 | The project targets support for both male and female asylum seekers who have found themselves destitute as work takes place to enable them to re-enter the asylum process. In addition, the project addresses the need to ensure that collaborations are taking place to support this client group. WYDAN and St Monica’s are responsible for frontline activities while UPA will deliver on citywide collaboration and overall evaluation of this project. |
| Women’s Health Matters (WHM) | Women’s Health Matters champions freedom for disadvantaged women and girls so they may have a fair chance at a better life. Being forced to flee their countries and moving to unfamiliar places adds to people’s feelings of helplessness. | 1st January 2024 | 30th June 2025 | The project will deliver a weekly peer support group where participants engage in sessions covering self-care, wellbeing, health, therapeutic arts, and visits from partner organisations such as PAFRAS, LASSN, and RETAS to learn about support services in Leeds. The target beneficiaries will be women who are seeking asylum and those who have recently received refugee status. |
| Zest - Health for Life | Zest - Health for Life work with disadvantaged communities in Leeds to promote happy and healthy lifestyles. | 1st March 2024 | 29th February 2025 | The project facilitates connections, friendships and social inclusion through a welcome café that will share recipes, demonstrate and follow along practical cooking skills, unlock confidence, improve skills, make networks and improve employability skills. |
| Solace | Solace support displaced people living with the effects of trauma and persecution. Solace provides psychotherapy to refugees and people seeking asylum whereby specialist practitioners provide talking therapy utilising trained interpreters. | 1st January 2024 | 30th June 2025 | The funding will enable Solace to respond to the urgent need for therapeutic support for people seeking asylum, as well as support for staff and volunteers working within specialist organisations. |