

**Refugee Integration Programme**

**Brief for Collaborative Delivery of the Refugee Integration Programme**

**January 2025**

**Introduction**

Funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority and in response to the known gaps in integration-focused provision for people seeking asylum and new refugees in Greater Manchester, as well as the individual and system-level risks created by increasing numbers of asylum decisions since 2023,we are seeking to partner with 3 VCFSE organisations to boost integration, wellbeing, employability and skills offer to people seeking asylum and refugees living in Bolton with a structured programme over 2 years between the 3 successful delivery partners.

The programme is embedded in Live Well, Bolton’s commitment to everyday support in every neighbourhood for everyone. It seeks to deliver on Live Well commitments by shifting resources to VCFSE organisations, recognising the inter-connectedness of economic inclusion with prevention and social connection and by emphasising community-led and locally delivered provision that responds to the priorities and needs of the individuals it seeks to serve. By seeking to invest in community-based and VCFSE-led provision, it also joins up employment and skills with health and wider support to provide truly person-centred offers for a group that too often misses out.

We know that language levels and housing are the greatest barriers to new refugees finding sustainable employment. People with asylum backgrounds and refugee households are significantly over-represented in GM’s homelessness accommodation and rough sleeping populations. We also know that when people receive their status, they are frequently unprepared for independent living in the UK, lack confidence and lack basic community supports that give them a strong enough foundation to pursue their goals. At the same time in a number of LAs, ESOL waiting lists are long, even when a person has a class place a range of barriers often prevent them from attending formal classrooms settings and there are worrying gaps in the availability of pre-entry provision. Where pre-entry provision is offered by VCFSE organisations, it is frequently delivered without local or national government funding.

Access barriers to English language education, volunteering and employability supports mean missed opportunities to build relationships, support understanding of how to navigate life in GM, build positive community links that combat anti-asylum sentiment and help ensure that people are as work-ready and tenancy-ready as possible.

**Overall aim**

All new refugees and people seeking asylum who are resident in GM are able to access English language education, employability and employment support that is culturally- and trauma-informed and suitable to their skills and needs. This provision should be targeted to their needs in terms of accessibility and overall design – taking into account cultural diversity, experiences in the asylum system and integration needs – and maximise their opportunities to enter meaningful employment, settle and thrive in GM.

**Objectives**

Forpeople seeking asylum and people granted international protection living in Greater Manchester, the Programme will seek to:

1. Improve access and attendance to **English language** education that meets individual needs.
2. Improve **confidence, community connection and wellbeing** as a route to employability and skills-building.
3. Improve **digital literacy and inclusion**.
4. Improve access to appropriate **literacy, numeracy** and **vocational training** to remove barriers to employment.
5. Improve access to suitable and sustainable **employment.**

We are inviting proposals from local VCFSE sector organisations to partner with us over the 2 year period to a deliver a holistic programme of learning that will support people to navigate life in the UK in trauma and culturally informed spaces. The 3 organisations that are successful must work collaboratively to share good practice, learning from delivery of the programme and work together to best utilise expertise within each organisation that to benefit all participants in the programme. The programme will be co-ordinated by Bolton Council. VCFSE partners must comply with the quality assurance mechanisms that we will put in process for the duration of the project including monitoring, quarterly reporting and attendance at steering group meetings and training events. The programme for each organisation must include:

* 6 hours of structured English Language learning per week delivered by a qualified ESOL tutor
* 2 hours per week informal conversation class delivered by a qualified ESOL tutor.
* Provision of onsite childcare within your organisation staffed by playworkers and separate to the English language provision.
* Activities to engage hard to reach cohorts
* Cultural events

**Submission Procedure**

We ask you to provide a brief proposal outlining:

* **How you would engage hard to reach refugee and asylum seeker cohorts dispersed across Bolton including those in SERCO accommodation and hotels.**
* **How you would deliver the structured programme of learning and the conversation classes**
* **How your organisation can facilitate onsite childcare**
* **How you plan to engage women who are not accessing learning or skills provision**
* **What activities you would plan to engage young, single men**
* **Examples of cultural activities you could deliver with your partners/participants to promote integration**
* **A proven track record of working with individuals that are seeking asylum and/or refugees**

**Closing date for submissions is Tuesday 25th February.**

Submissions will be reviewed by the panel **by 28th February.**

Successful applicants informed by **Friday 4th March**.

*Please note that, because of the high number of submissions we are expecting, we will only be able to give limited feedback. Please assume that you have not been selected if you have not heard by***4th March.**

**Submissions should be sent to:**

Indira Mclean

Bolton Libraries and Museum Services

Le Mans Crescent

Bolton

BL1 1SE

indira.mclean@bolton.gov.uk