



DERBY
REFUGEE
FORUM



2025 / 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Derby Refugee Forum,
99 Curzon Street, Derby, DE1 1LN
info@derbyrefugeeforum.org
www.derbyrefugeeforum.org
01332 347497

FOREWORD

Joan Stannard, Chair

I can't believe another year has gone by and I am once again tasked with writing the annual report.

It has been a year of progress, with policies added and updated. Our logo, website, and email have all been refreshed to better reflect the organisation we are today, thanks to our young and very competent staff. The security system has also been updated to improve the safety of our clients, volunteers, and staff. As always, we are grateful for the support of the Bosnia Herzegovina Association in providing us with their premises and encouraging Derby Refugee Forum in all that we do. Particular thanks go to Ferid for keeping our accounts in such excellent order, and to Nedzad, who always has an eye on our wellbeing.

The number of visits to the centre remains high. Many people come for the soup, snacks, and friendship, while others attend our English classes and workshops. The main focus of our work is the advice sessions. These are used particularly by those who receive leave to remain and need guidance with opening bank accounts, applying for Universal Credit, and navigating the housing system. There remains a severe shortage of suitable housing, and many single men and women spend nights sleeping rough, using sleeping bags provided by DRF before securing hostel accommodation or shared private rented housing.

The asylum seekers and refugees who come to us are incredibly grateful for the support, welcome, and positive atmosphere created by our staff and volunteers. This year, we have welcomed people travelling from Nottingham, Birmingham, Burton, and even London to access our services, despite no longer living in Derby. We cannot solve every problem, but they know we will persevere and do our very best to help them.

Throughout the year, we have welcomed many children and young babies with their parents. It is always wonderful to hear about their progress from their mums and dads when they return to visit us. I am also continually struck by how children from every corner of the world respond in exactly the same way with giggles and smiles to simple games such as peek-a-boo, running up the stairs away from a parent, or knocking down a tower of bricks. We are all born with the ability to laugh and have fun. May we continue to nurture that joy and offer a place of respite at DRF for those escaping war, persecution, and desperate situations. Thanks to everyone who organises and leads workshops and events that support wellbeing, integration, and a greater understanding of life in the UK.

Thanks also to those who donate money, food, toiletries, household items, clothing, sleeping bags, and other essential items. Many churches, individuals, and organisations support us throughout the year. Without your continued generosity, it would be difficult for DRF to survive.

Finally, many thanks to all our volunteers who give so many hours each week to ensure the smooth running of DRF. We simply could not operate without you or without our dedicated staff, who co-ordinate our services so efficiently.

May we continue to offer a place of refuge for many years to come.

Joan Stannard



OUR ORGANISATION

The Derby Refugee Forum was established in 2002 and is a registered charity, currently operating from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Centre in Derby. We are run almost entirely by a dedicated team of volunteers who work tirelessly to support refugees and people seeking asylum. We provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where individuals can access practical help, emotional support and opportunities to rebuild their lives. Our aim is to empower people as they navigate the asylum system and work towards integration into the local community.

OUR CORE SERVICES

Advice & Support

We hold free drop-in advice sessions every Tuesday and Thursday, offering one-to-one guidance on housing, benefits, legal support, healthcare access and more. We also provide signposting to specialist services when needed.

Basic Needs Assistance

For individuals facing destitution, we offer emergency food parcels, toiletries and sleeping bags.

Education & Skills

We offer weekly English classes on a drop-in basis, designed to be accessible to those with varying schedules and learning needs. These classes build confidence and are a key part of helping people integrate and access further opportunities.

Workshops & Wellbeing Activities

We run regular workshops and creative sessions focused on practical life skills, wellbeing and community engagement. Topics range from mental health and hate crime awareness to CV writing, budgeting and art therapy.

Social Events & Trips

Throughout the year we organise cultural outings, celebrations, and community events—from Eid and Christmas parties, to trips to local theatres, football matches and community gardens. These help reduce isolation and promote belonging.

Safe Space & Community

We offer a welcoming, confidential space where individuals can share their concerns and feel supported without judgment.



OUR MISSION

Supporting sanctuary seekers in Derby through advice, education and community

Our mission is to provide compassionate, accessible and practical support to refugees and asylum seekers in Derby, empowering them to overcome challenges, integrate into society, and rebuild their lives with dignity. We strive to create a safe and welcoming environment where individuals can access advice, education, basic needs and community connections, while raising awareness of the difficulties faced by those seeking sanctuary.



FIGURES, IMPACT & HIGHLIGHTS



52
Nationalities

201
English
Classes

158
Sleeping
Bags



2,476
Advice
Sessions



71
Food
Parcels

43
Lidl
Vouchers

48
Workshops

FIGURES & IMPACT

ADVICE SESSIONS

From June 2025 to May 2026, the Derby Refugee Forum delivered a total of 2,476 advice sessions, supporting 994 individuals. This represents a 22.6% increase in the number of individuals supported compared with the previous year, reflecting the continued and growing demand for our services. On average, we delivered approximately 206 advice sessions per month, highlighting the sustained need for accessible advice and support within the community.

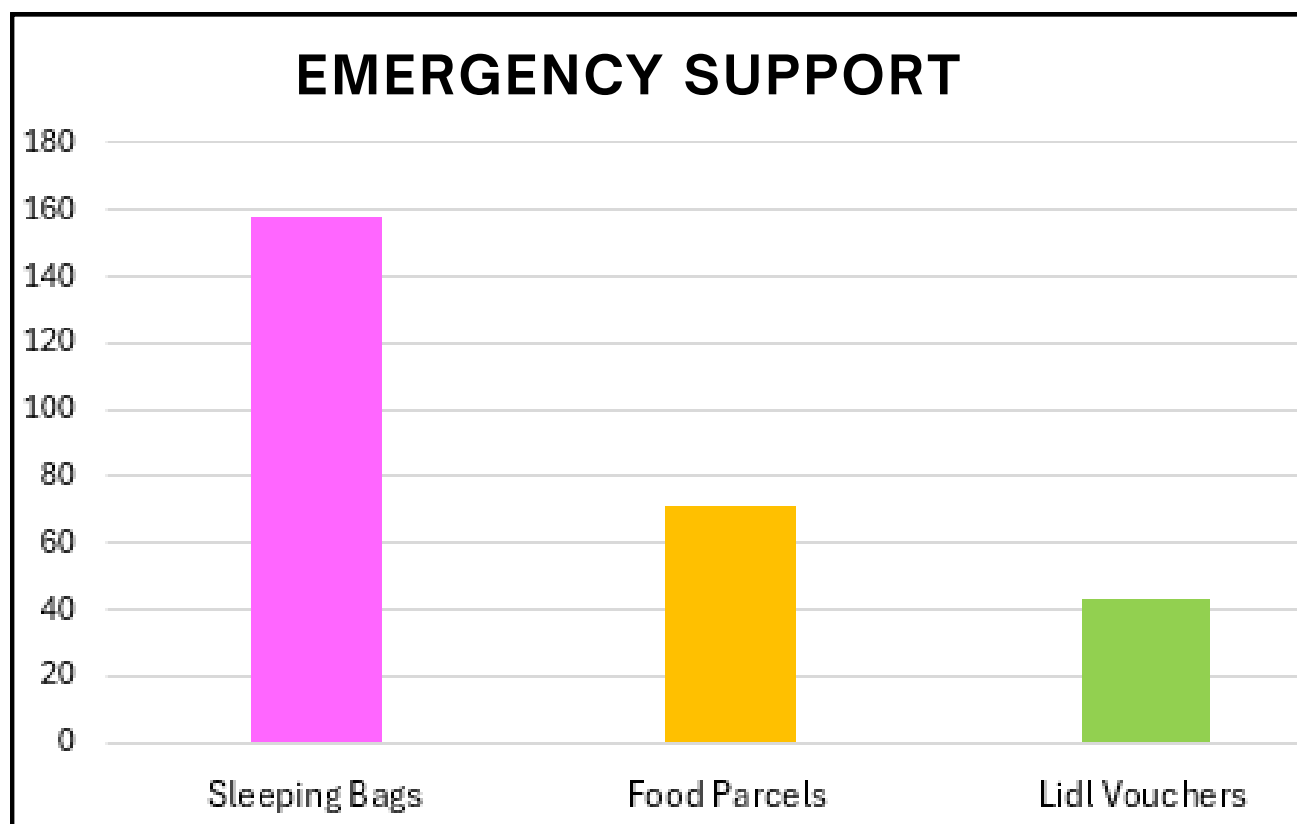
A significant factor contributing to this increase has been the growing need for support during the move-on process following a positive decision on an individual's immigration status. Clients often require guidance as they transition towards greater independence, particularly when navigating homelessness and housing, managing household bills and accessing benefits and welfare support.

The most common issues brought to our advice sessions included:

- Housing and homelessness
- Navigating household bills and managing finances
- Accessing benefits and welfare support
- Support with the move-on process

Our advice service provides tailored, practical support to help individuals understand their rights, access essential services and successfully navigate these often complex processes.

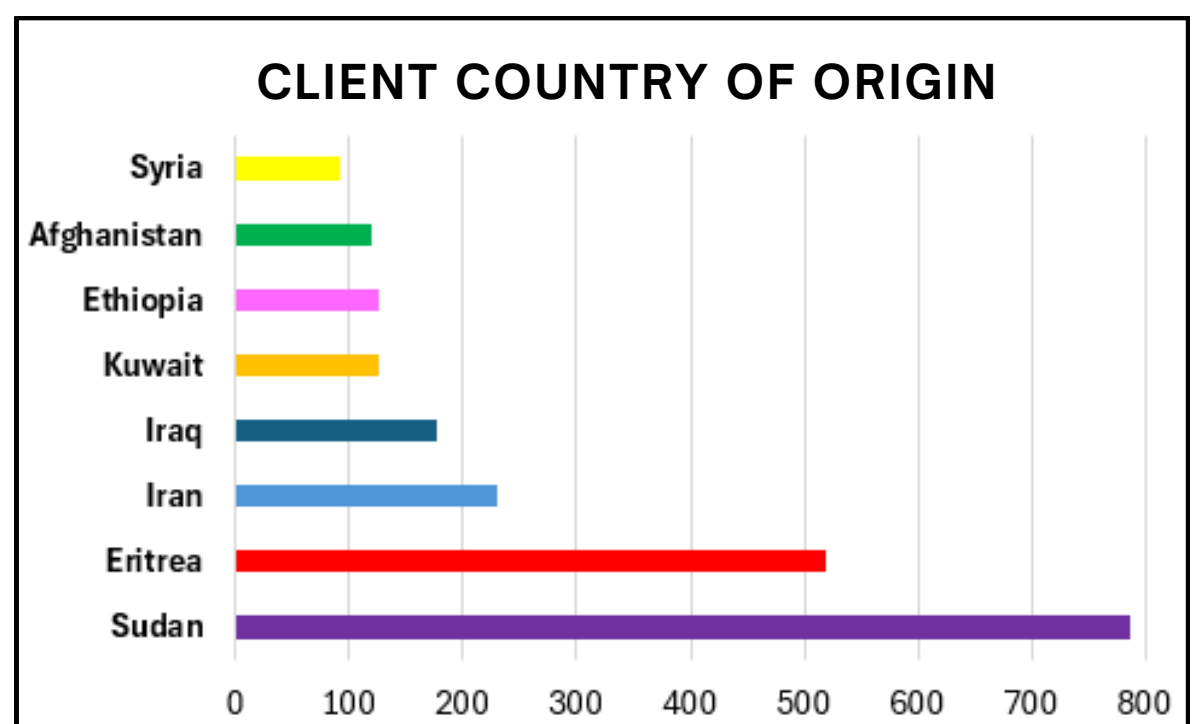




In addition to our advice services, DRF continues to provide practical support to clients facing financial hardship and struggling to meet their basic needs. This practical support has been an important part of our wider service, helping to address immediate needs and reduce the pressures faced by clients during difficult circumstances.

During the year, we distributed 158 sleeping bags to individuals experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping and provided 71 food parcels to clients experiencing food insecurity. We also provided 43 Lidl vouchers, helping clients to purchase essential food and household items.

Our clients represented a diverse range of nationalities. The largest groups originated from Sudan (786), Eritrea (520), Iran (229), Iraq (176), Kuwait (126), Ethiopia (125), Afghanistan (120), and Syria (91). These figures highlight the diversity of the communities we support and reinforce the importance of providing accessible, culturally informed services that respond to the individual needs of our clients.



EDUCATION & SKILLS SUPPORT

English classes remain an important part of our integration support, helping clients to develop their language skills and build confidence in everyday life. Over the reporting period, we delivered:

- 201 English sessions
- Supporting 261 individuals
- 1,302 total attendances

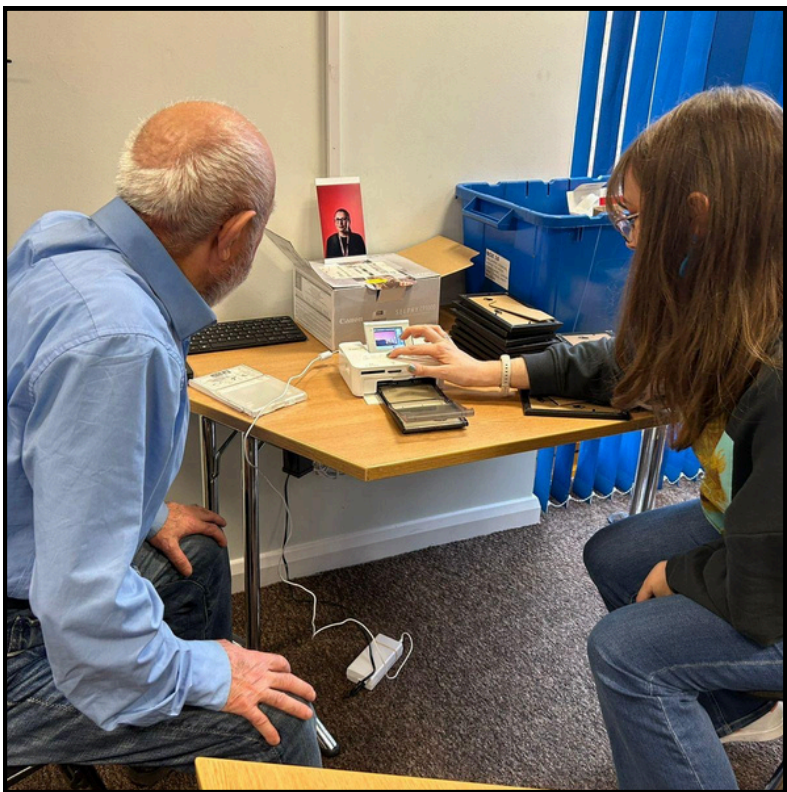
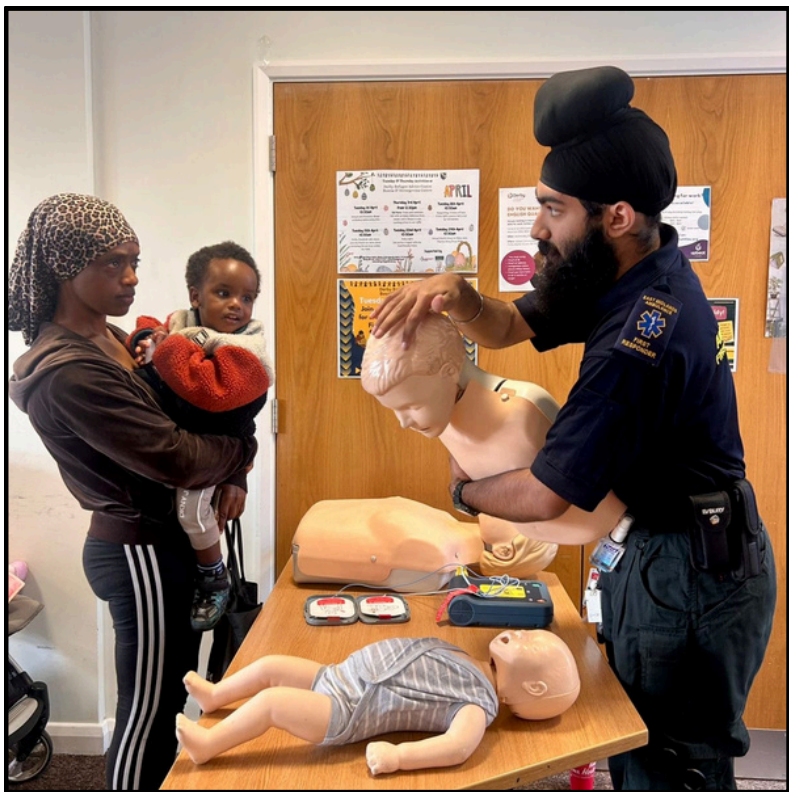
Our drop-in approach allows clients to access English support around their existing commitments, making the classes flexible and accessible to those who may face barriers to attending more formal or structured courses.

WORKSHOPS & WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

To further support integration and wellbeing, DRF delivered a varied programme of workshops and activities throughout the year, providing opportunities for clients to learn and connect with others. The workshops covered a wide range of practical and wellbeing topics. Examples of our sessions included access schemes with Severn Trent, gardening for mental wellbeing, art therapy, and hate crime awareness and reporting.

During the reporting period, we delivered 48 workshops, engaging 218 individuals, with a total of 458 attendances.

1,760		
Total attendances		
1,302		458
English class attendances		Workshop & activity attendances



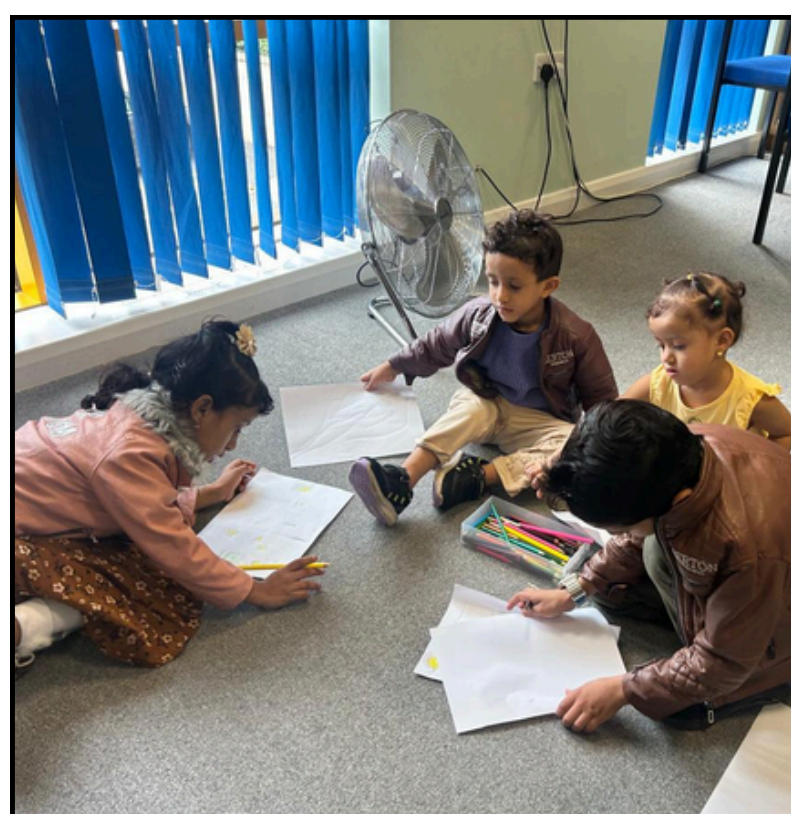
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL COHESION

DRF continues to place a strong emphasis on community integration and social inclusion, creating opportunities for clients to come together, celebrate different cultures and take part in activities within the wider community.

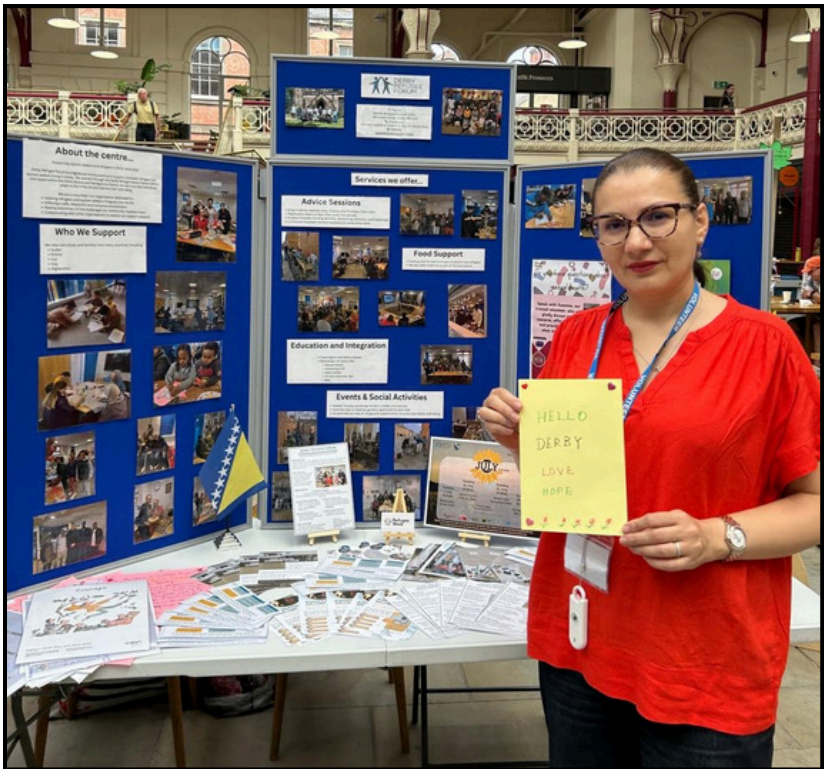
Throughout the year, we organised and participated in a range of events and activities, including:

- Eid celebration, bringing clients together to celebrate and share in cultural and religious traditions
- Trip to Derby Cathedral, providing an opportunity to explore a local place of significance
- Trip to Artcore, introducing clients to a local arts organisation and the creative activities it offers
- Outreach at Crich School, strengthening connections with local schools and the wider community
- Refugee Week, celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary, while helping to create a welcoming environment for new arrivals
- Christmas party, bringing clients together to celebrate the festive season
- Halloween party, providing a fun and social activity for clients and families

These activities provided opportunities for people to build relationships, experience new places and activities, and feel more connected to both DRF and the wider Derby community.



MORE OF OUR EVENTS, WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES



VOICES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Feedback from the people we support

"DRF is a safe,
confidential and non-
judgemental place"

"DRF friendly support
made a huge
difference"

"DRF knows refugees
and asylum seekers
best"

"I get advise if I need
help and I can improve
my English also"

"DRF has provided
helpful and reliable
support and I
appreciate the
assistance I have
received"

"I get the support which
I can't get elsewhere. I
want the positive
environment at the
centre to continue"

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers continue to play a fundamental role in the work of Derby Refugee Forum. Their time, skills and commitment enable us to offer a welcoming and supportive service to our clients. From supporting clients with practical tasks and appointments to assisting with classes, activities and day-to-day operations, our volunteers contribute in countless ways. Their dedication is essential to the delivery of our services and without them much of the work we do simply would not be possible.

This year, we also asked our volunteers to share their experiences of volunteering with DRF.

"I always reccomend to others to work with DRF because when you work you feel happy inside"

"I am working with great people and they are very helpful and they work and help clients with all the support they can"

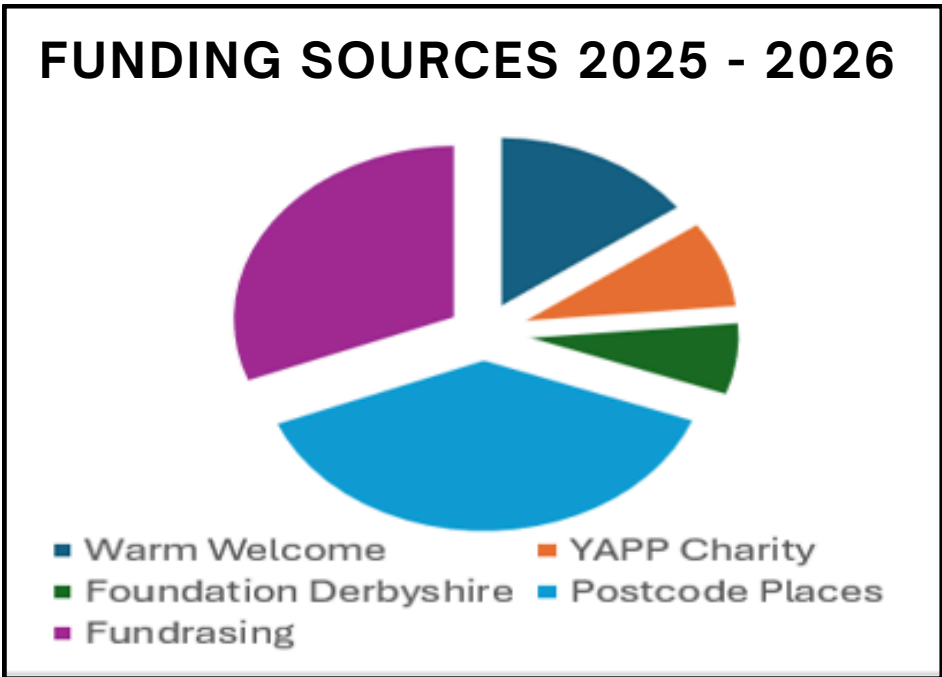
"I feel useful knowing that I've made a difference to peoples lives"

"I have got a lot of experience in many fields volunteering at DRF and made many new friends"

FINANCE REVIEW

Fundraising Income

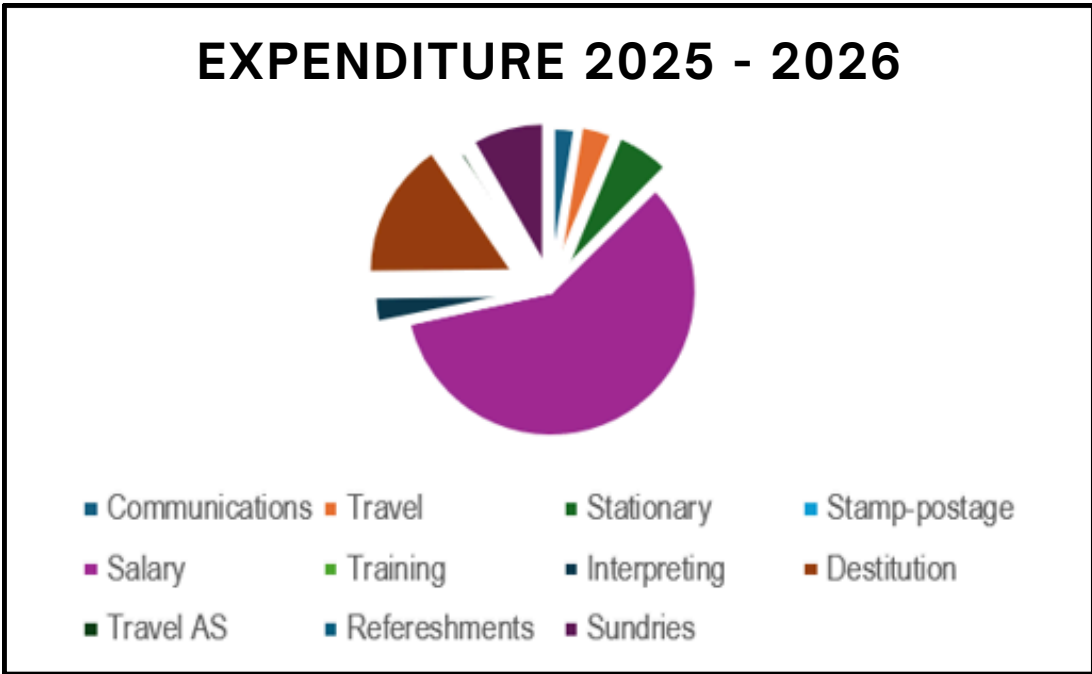
Unrestricted income was generated through donations, church and event collections, volunteer fundraising, and direct payments. We received 104 donations, ranging from £5 to over £1,000, with regular monthly donors making an important contribution. We also secured grants of £5,300 from Warm Welcome, £3,000 from YAPP, £2,500 from Foundation Derbyshire, and £13,500 from Postcode Places. In 2026–2027, fundraising will remain a key priority, with a focus on larger charitable funders, including the Allen Lane Foundation, and exploring new funding opportunities to support our growing activities.



Expenditure

Expenditure during the year reflected the activities of Derby Refugee Forum and DRAC, including staff salaries, emergency food and hot drinks supported through the Warm Welcome Fund, volunteer travel and interpreting costs, destitution support, and stationery. Accommodation, part of staff salaries, insurance, and activity room costs were supported through joint funding with DBHCA. HSBC banking charges were waived during the final two months, while online banking has reduced paperwork and administration time.

A fraudulent transaction involving a mobile phone purchase through Tesco Mobile was reported, but approximately £100 remains unrecovered.



FINANCE REVIEW

Brief on Finances 2025-2026

Income		2025-2026		
2024	2025	Unrestr.	Restr.	Total
11800	Grants	0	11800	11800
8566	Donations	8666	0	8666
20366	TOTAL	8666	11800	20466
Expenditure:				
939	Office Cost	840	1785	2625
13222	Salaries Contrib.	11222	5860	17082
0	Rent & Room	0	0	0
	Hiring			
2243	Interpreting Cost	2068	0	2068
5140	Destitution Cost	217	4548	4765
0	Manag. Vol. cost	0	0	0
0	Equipment Cost	0	0	0
2353	Sundry	1680	731	2410
23897	TOTAL	16102	12924	29026
-3530	Year movement	8378	2676	11054
25819	Start of period	18019	4278	22289
0	Transfer between	0	0	0
22289	Carr. Forward	26397	6946	33343
Assets and Liabilities				
21789	Bank	32843		
500	Cash	500		
22289	Total assets	33343		
22289	Net Assets	33343		

Our joint funding programme with DBHCA, supported by the National Lottery, entered its third year and continues to provide important stability, covering accommodation, management support, fundraising capacity, and contributions towards the Project Coordinator and Learning & Training Coordinator salaries. This partnership has supported the organisation for over 14 years.

We were partially successful with funding applications this year, securing support from Foundation Derbyshire and Postcode Places, alongside other restricted funding and fundraising activities. This enabled us to meet our expenditure while maintaining reserves at a satisfactory level.

Looking ahead, securing new funding will be a priority. Based on our current financial position, we need to raise £23,000+ annually, including approximately £19,000 towards staffing costs. The Project Coordinator, supported by the Management Committee, will have a greater role in developing fundraising and funding applications.

We are grateful to all staff, volunteers, churches, community groups, and individual donors whose support and fundraising enable us to continue our work and meet the needs of our clients.

Ferid Kevric, Treasurer

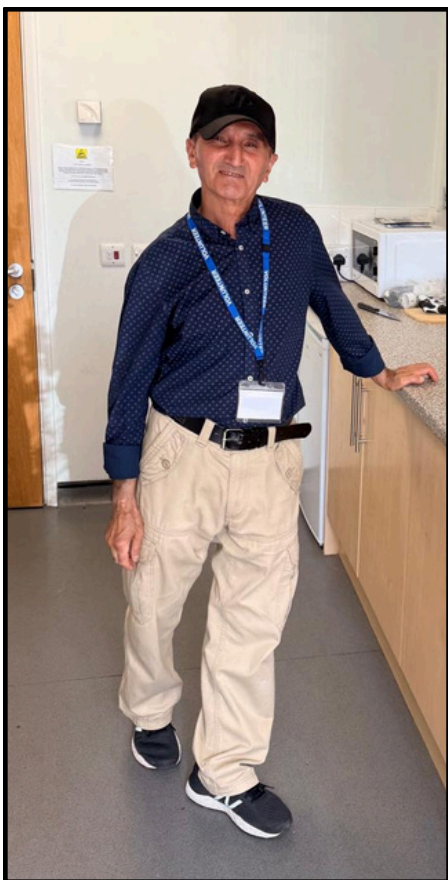


HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT DRF

There are many ways to support Derby Refugee Forum and make a difference to refugees and people seeking sanctuary in Derby.

VOLUNTEERING

Give your time and skills to support our services and activities.



MAKE A DONATION

Financial donations help us respond to urgent and changing needs.

Donate by bank transfer;

Derby Refugee Forum
HSBC
Sort Code: 40-19-15
Account Number: 12799650

DONATE ITEMS

Good-quality clothing, toiletries, and household items can help meet practical needs. Please contact us first to confirm what is currently needed as our storage space is limited.

DONATE FOOD

Help us provide food parcels to people experiencing hardship. Current priority items include: tinned goods, tea and coffee, long-life milk, cooking oil, pasta, rice and biscuits.



RAISE AWARENESS

Help us spread the word about DRF by sharing our work, supporting local events or raising awareness in your community. Every conversation helps build understanding and support for refugees and people seeking sanctuary.



Registered charity 1121582

To all those who have supported Derby Refugee Forum throughout the year – whether through your time, donations, resources, partnerships or simply by helping to raise awareness of our work – thank you.

Your generosity, encouragement and continued support enable us to provide vital services to refugees and people seeking sanctuary across Derby.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



Community Action



Foundation
Derbyshire

