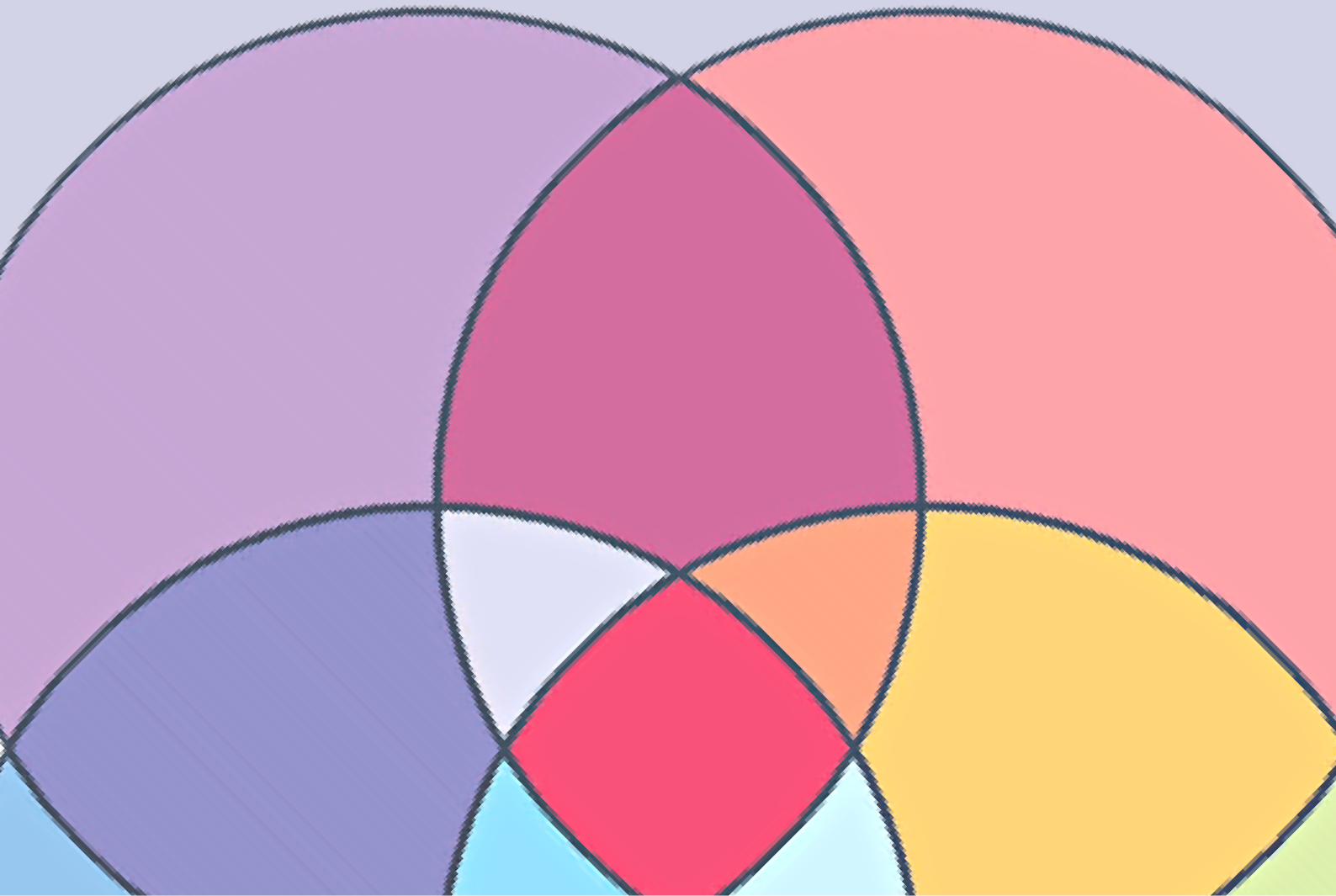


# **BORDERLANDS**

from exclusion to

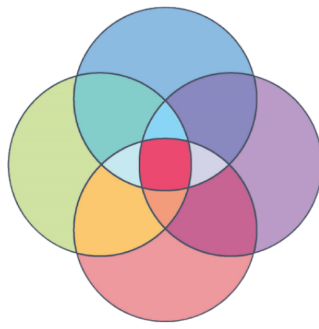
**BELONGING**

## Impact Report 2022-2023





**BORDERLANDS**  
from exclusion to  
**BELONGING**



# **BORDERLANDS**

from exclusion to  
**BELONGING**

## Table of contents

03 - CEO's Introduction	15- Wellbeing Wednesdays
05- A Farewell	17- Outreach Work
06- Welcome Centre	18- A Member's Journey
08- Food	22- Volunteers
10- Mentoring Project	25- Finance Report
12- Learning Project	27- Stronger Together
14- Workshops and Trips	28- Thank you

Staff training day,  
August 2022



# CEO's Introduction

“ Dear Reader,

Another year has passed, and Borderlands has been busier than ever! It's both a privilege and an honour to open this report, shining a light on the exciting developments we've brought to Borderlands in the past 12 challenging yet profoundly enlightening months.

At the time of writing this introductory section of the report, the new Immigration Bill has recently passed through the Lords and Commons, becoming an Act. An act tearing up the system aimed at protecting those seeking safety and sanctuary.

In the past months staff, trustees together with volunteers and members have gathered their minds and hearts to build a stronger and more resilient organisation to face the upcoming challenges, to respond to the ever-increasing hostile environment and, consequently, to the higher needs of the people we work alongside.

We worked hard on our 3-year strategic plan. This important piece work was led by an external professional consultant that helped us design a roadmap supporting the future direction of the charity. We strengthened our board of trustees and made this more resilient.

We introduced new wellbeing and health focused activities to support our members in these difficult times. We demonstrated our flexible response to new changes by creating new outreach roles to support residents in contingency hotels.

Borderlands keep investing in training staff, volunteers and members so we can all learn from each other and support each other better. All of this, while strengthening our partnership with other Bristol Refugee Aylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP) partners and new funders.

As I write this, I am about to temporarily leave my position as CEO of this amazing charity as I'm soon off to start my maternity leave. I am leaving the charity in the capable hands of a highly passionate, committed and professional team of human beings who, together with everyone coming through our doors, keep inspiring my work.

I wish you a happy reading and to all Borderlands team, I wish a year of Warmth, Sharing, Dignity and Respect.

Susanna Revolti  
Chief Executive Officer

Little Amal Bristol,  
June 2022



ST NICHOLAS  
BRISTOL  
Cit  
Building a culture of

# A farewell...

It has been my privilege to have served as Chair of Trustees since the foundation in 2011 of our life-giving Charity. We have served our members whom sadly have been marginalised by our unjust and too often brutal asylum and immigration systems. I am so grateful for having been able to establish and serve Borderlands over these years.

As you know the Charity grew out of many years of work and service in this field by St Nicholas of Tolentino Church and still expresses the church's commitment to mission and care of people of all faiths and none who come to our land and our city seeking sanctuary. You bring so many gifts and especially your courage in facing so many trials and dangers of your journey to safety. We admire you greatly. The church's support for and love of Borderlands and its members remains steadfast.

Over these years the work and scope of services provided by Borderlands has grown immensely. This past year has seen great expansion, especially as we seek to reach out to the many people who are forced to live in the hotels while deprived of the right to work or seek their own accommodation.

But the time has come for fresh leadership and others' skills to guide and develop this important work of love made practical and courageous. I am delighted and full of confidence as I 'pass the baton' on to our new Chair, Kimberlee Carstensen, and to the refreshed Board of Trustees. I want you all to know, staff, volunteers, members and Trustees of my on-going personal support and that of St Nick's Church. We will continue championing the work of the Charity and giving any support that Borderlands needs.

Rev Richard McKay

# Welcome Centre

"Having a big hot lunch once a week makes me feel at home! It's really nice because you feel like you are sitting with a family."

Kurdish member

Borderlands' Welcome Centre is a **safe, trusted** and well-known space for asylum seekers and refugees to get support, make connections and **build community** in their new home in Bristol.

Open on Mondays and Tuesdays at the Assisi Centre in Easton, we provide:

- **a friendly welcome** helping new arrivals access Borderlands projects and wider support in Bristol.
- **a delicious and nourishing shared hot meal**, breakfast table and 'social supermarket' where members can choose fruit, vegetables and groceries to take home.
- **a social space with a cafe vibe** where members can use the internet, have a drink, socialise or read the paper, with board games and a football table.
- **one-to-one support** to help people solve problems they are facing, advocating on their behalf and referring them to relevant services.
- **an art table** where members can enjoy a safe, creative atmosphere, illustrate feelings they may not be able to express in words, and find some relief from fear, anxiety and stress.
- **local excursions to help people get to know the Bristol** area, including guided walks, boat trips round the harbour, visits to local museums and attractions and an annual trip to the seaside.
- **hosting agencies offering specialist advice** or support including Herbalists without Borders. We also invite organisations in to run workshops such as print-making, floristry, cooking, film-making, music therapy and public speaking.



This year our Welcome Centre supported over **300 asylum seekers and refugees**, including **welcoming 170 people for the first time.**

*Hot lunch,  
Borderlands 2022*



# Food

The cost of living crisis has had a huge impact on our members; most live on very low or zero incomes, and those with cash often have to choose between buying healthy ingredients or a bus ticket for an essential appointment.

The food provided in initial accommodation hotels is usually very poor quality, lacking nutrition and often inappropriate. All of these factors have significantly increased demand for our weekly hot meal and social supermarket, and this year we expanded our food provision to benefit around **150** members and their families each week.

Food continues to be very important to us at Borderlands: our members come together once a week to share a nourishing and delicious meal, creating social connections and friendships. The diversity of our community is reflected in our kitchen, as volunteer chefs from different parts of the world cooked and delighted us with amazing food and recipes.

This year we organised a workshop delivered by Tiffins, a local Gujarati Indian food business, who taught our chefs how to cook authentic, regional Indian foods. We hope to offer these cookery workshops to all our members next year, to help them turn the food from our social supermarket into culturally appropriate meals for their families.

Working with our partners, we organised an Eid celebration at the Trinity Centre in Easton for around **150** people, open to all faiths and none. The event was a great success, with a delicious hot lunch, craft and play activities for children and music and dancing.



*Kitchen training, July 2022*

Our Social supermarket saw **3851** households during the year. That is **80 people** on average per week receiving food for their households.



We have wonderful chefs of different nationalities; in 2022/23 we had chefs share their skills from **Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka, and Syria.**

We had **49** super volunteers come and help us in 2022.



We served on average **70 people per week** a nutritious hot meal.



# Mentoring project

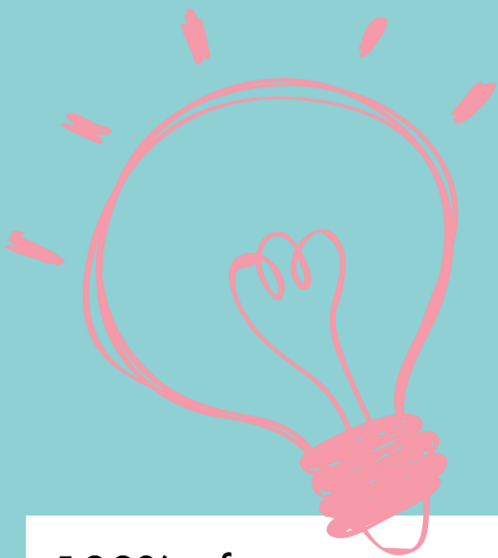
Our Mentoring Project provides one-to-one practical and emotional support from trained volunteer mentors to support asylum seekers and refugees achieve some personal goals over six to nine months. Mentors help mentees to get to know Bristol, find volunteer placements and jobs, improve conversational English, access education or training, and cope with isolation and anxiety.

Most importantly, they stand in solidarity with their mentees as they navigate the complex and challenging process of claiming asylum in the UK, as well as with resettlement after they receive leave to remain.

Mentors and mentees meet once a week for at least an hour and are available by phone or social media at agreed times for more support if needed. We offer a thorough training for our mentors before they join the programme and support them through regular supervision and training.

***Moes mentor, Luke, supported him to find employment in Bristol. In their meetings, they discussed writing CVs and practised interview techniques. Moe successfully applied for a job and now works for Bristol Hospitality Network.***

***One partnership was focused on finding education for the mentee with the hope of securing a job in the future. During the partnership, the mentor helped the mentee on to an Administration course with Monarch Education and English classes at City of Bristol College. As a result of the courses, the mentee secured an admin job at Horfield Doctors Surgery four days a week.***



**100%** of our mentees felt their spoken English had improved.

**85%** say their written English improved and **85%** say their reading improved.

**45%** found jobs with the NHS, other charities in the sector and with businesses (employment is only an option for refugees as asylum seekers are not allowed to work).



**40%** got involved in volunteering and **75%** went into education or training during their mentoring partnership.

**60%** moved into more secure housing.




# Learning project

Our Learning Project offers classes in English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and helps our members to explore other learning opportunities. We focus on providing pre-entry and entry level 1 classes for those who speak little or no English as they are most at risk of isolation and exclusion. We also support our learners through creative activities, including working with Phosphorus Theatre and Bristol Old Vic to teach English through theatre and body language and running a weekly reading and poetry group. We work closely with other local ESOL providers in the refugee sector, meeting regularly to collaborate and share training, ideas and volunteers.

"I am happy. Lessons are interesting. The class is friendly. I am confident. My English is getting better. My vocabulary is increasing. My teacher is good."

"I have learnt more in one week at Borderlands than I ever learnt before! I love coming here. The class is really nice and everyone is friendly and welcoming. Here I am not shy and I feel I can ask questions. The teacher always takes the time to explain things."

In **2022-2023**, there were over **200 referrals** to our English classes.



**10 members** performed on stage at The Old Vic in a production called *All the beds I have slept in*.



This year we provided eight English classes per week, **supporting 60 asylum seekers and refugees** to navigate the asylum process, make friends, study and build independence.



Each class has **one fully qualified teacher** and **teaching assistant** for **12 students**. This ensures each student gets the support they need.

# Workshops and trips

This year, we organised a six-week Floristry Course in collaboration with **Bread and Roses – a charity who run floristry training for refugee women around the world.**

Eight women were invited to come and learn how to arrange flowers in a calm and friendly environment led by two wonderful florists. The florists offered employment advice and entrepreneurial conversations about how to work with flowers, and the feedback we received was fantastic.

We also enjoyed our annual beach trip to Exmouth in August to enjoy the beautiful Devon coast and fresh sea air - an opportunity to get out of Bristol, relax and get to know each other.

We also collaborated with a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Bath, Michelle James, whose thesis considers the impact of community-based welfare support on the **wellbeing of asylum seekers in the UK.**

As part of her research, Michelle carried out **a photography project with 10 Borderlands members** who took photos of what makes their lives easier and happier, and what makes them harder.

The resulting exhibition, 'Being Human', was displayed at the Lecture Theatre Foyer at the University of Bristol.



*Being Human exhibition,  
July 2022*





**In January 2023, Borderlands collaborated with International Arts** as part of their Transmission project.

Six groups, from six countries, all created their own radio dramas which were submitted to the international festival.

**Our members learnt how to translate, act, record and edit their own play** - all with the support of professional directors and technicians.

We also benefited from the expertise of our members so that the play, originally set in Europe, **better reflected the experiences of our members.**

**Borderlands submitted the only Pashto play of the festival and one of our members had the chance to go to Albania to represent us.** It was an incredible experience and we look forward to creating more work like this in the future.

# Wellbeing Wednesdays

**On Wednesdays we offer a range of activities to improve health and wellbeing.** Activities include:

· **Fortnightly Sleep and Relaxation sessions** for members who have difficulty sleeping due to anxiety, nightmares and flashbacks, facilitated by Recovery Coordinators from Hope: Asylum Seekers and Refugees Trauma Service.

· **Weekly Sewing classes** through Bridges for Communities Stitching Together programme, which enables women to create beautiful textile-based art, practise English, make friends and gain confidence.

· **Weekly Yoga classes** for women and **Fitness classes** for men **taught by an ex Borderlands member.**



*Sewing class Borderlands,  
April 2022*

# Outreach Work



We supported 207 people this year with our weekly drop-in service at the Initial Accommodation hotel in Filton. As well as providing signposting and problem-solving support and assisting with health assessments and referrals, we have distributed sim cards and mobile phones (provided by Bristol Red Cross) for those who needed them.

We also helped around 50 residents a week to get out and about and access essential transport by distributing group bus tickets (funded by Bristol Red Cross), and are seeking a more permanent solution to address transport issues. We are still working to address the lack of access to education. Some residents who have bikes or volunteer with us now access our English classes.

Work in the Filton hotel has been a collaborative effort from the Bristol refugee sector. We have worked hard with our partner organisations to coordinate support and make the hotel as welcoming and full of activities as possible.

We have developed a successful partnership with Bristol Mind and will continue to work together to deliver our Drop-ins and coordinate other activities.

Although there remain huge challenges, the situation in the hotel has greatly improved since early 2022. One resident said recently: "It's so much better now because we have things to do, there are activities." All the waiting and lack of information can really get people down so offering people something to do has made a world of difference.

Borderlands,  
Social Supermarket



# A member's journey

Like many of our members, Amir came to Borderlands without many friends or any knowledge of other organisations that could help him. Below he describes how he felt when he first arrived at our doors and how Borderlands has helped him:

*"I came to Bristol after a long and exhausting journey. The first two or three months I didn't have any connection with the community, I didn't leave the hotel I was in. After some time, I looked for charities that worked with refugees and I found Borderlands. I made a phone call, and the person who answered the phone was very friendly and welcoming. The first minute I arrived at Borderlands a staff member came and asked me about my situation, where I was living, and tried to be aware of my situation to give me the right help. The same day, I asked for volunteering, and started working at the breakfast table and later in the social supermarket. I felt part of this organisation from the first week. There's a lovely environment and I felt comfortable and sometimes there are special activities I love to join like exhibitions or trips."*

# Where do our members come from?

- Afghanistan
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Iraq
- Iran
- Ukraine
- Libya
- Pakistan

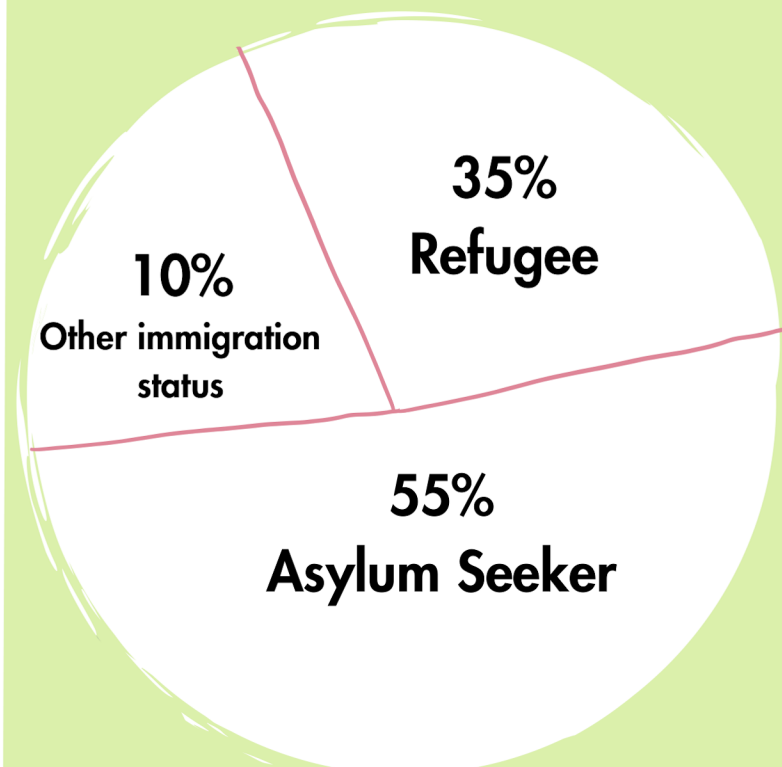
...our members come from many different places, most fleeing some of the world's most dangerous and repressive countries.



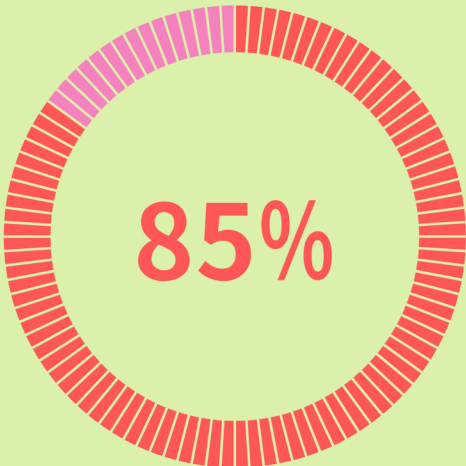
"I have made many friends. We communicate with many people from different cultures. We have the opportunity at Borderlands to create community.

That's our great achievement. It's great to connect people from different nationalities, backgrounds, and cultures."  
(Member)

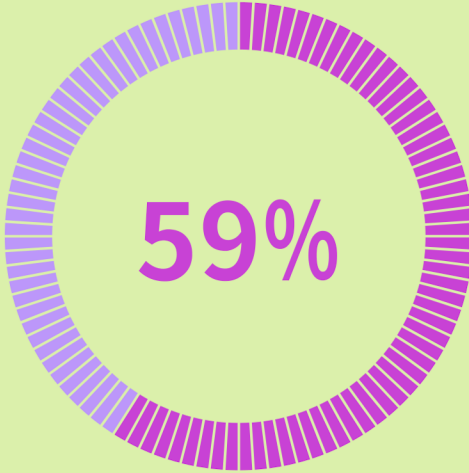
## Status



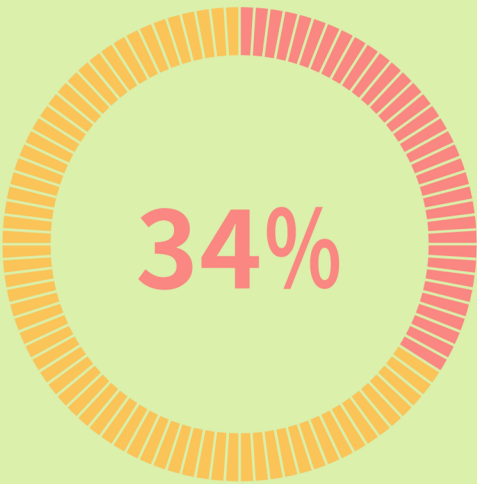
*A members' survey conducted in December 2022 concluded that...*



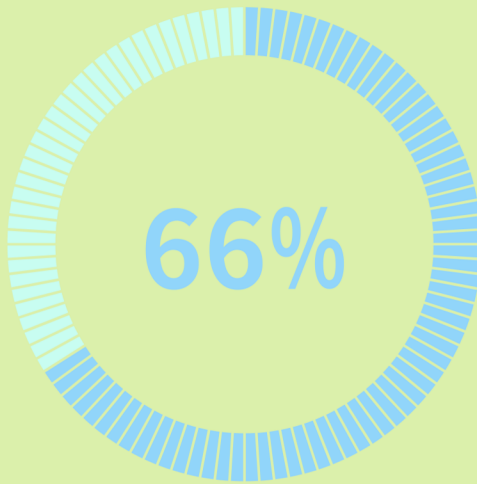
of members said they feel part of Borderlands community.



feel a lot more independent since becoming a Borderlands member.



said Borderlands has helped them to improve their English.



said Borderlands has helped them or helped them a lot in difficult times.

# Volunteers

**A team of over 60 volunteers** delivers most of our frontline work, around **50% of whom are asylum seekers and refugees**. They include chefs and kitchen assistants, Welcome desk and Help volunteers, mentors, English language teachers, teaching assistants, drivers, IT support and office assistants. Our members have much to contribute in terms of skills, knowledge and lived experience, and volunteering can help them to make friends, gain skills and confidence and alleviate stress and anxiety while they wait to hear a decision on their case.

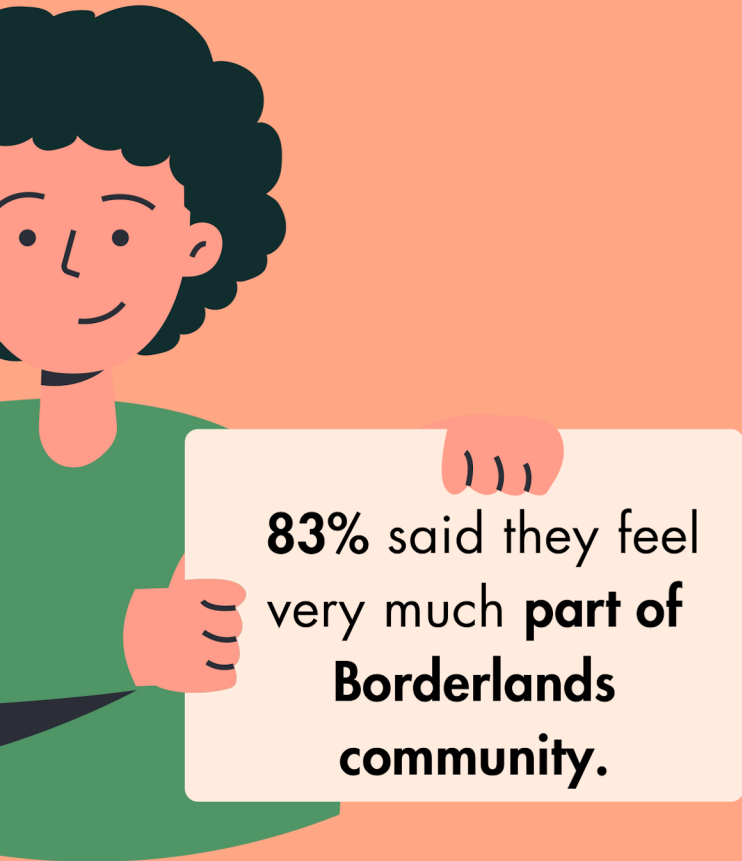
We provide all volunteers with training and guidance for their professional development, meeting one-to-one every six months to set new objectives and help understand which opportunities and career path they want to follow.



*Volunteer Picnic,  
July 2022*



*What our volunteers said...*



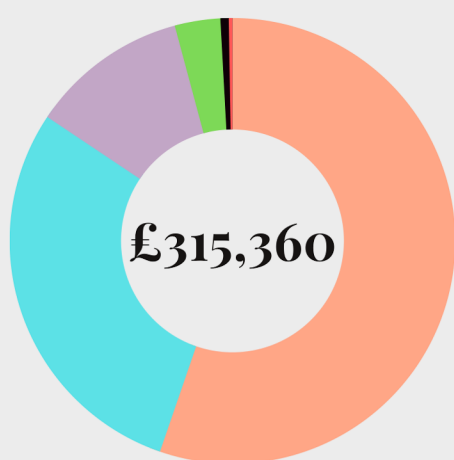


Borderlands welcome centre,  
August 2022

# Finance Review

Borderlands total income for 2022/23 was £315,360 with an expenditure of £274,000. Income and expenditure increased by around 25% and 18% on the previous year, respectively, due to the expansion of our work and our bigger staff team. Around 66% of our income in 2022-23 came from Trusts and Foundations, 18% came from local authorities, 12% came from individual donations (including gift aid) and 4% came from other sources (mainly rental income).

## Our Income



Grants (restricted) £174,317

Grants (unrestricted) £91,799

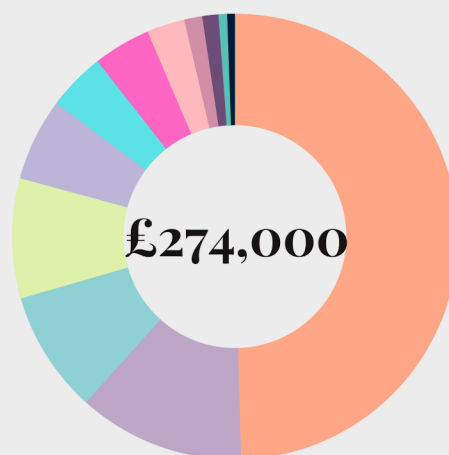
Individuals £36,085

Charitable activities £10,421

Gift aid £1,895

Investments £843

## Our Expenditure



Staff costs £162,577

Premises costs £25,786

Admin Costs £19,853

Consultancy £16,588

Drop-in Costs £11,630

Deprecation £10,681

Accountancy £9,952

Other staff costs £7,735

Other project costs £6,449

Insurance £1,560

Mentoring Costs £696

Legal expenses £500

*Bristol protest,  
a stand against the Nationality  
and Borders Bill 2022*

REFUGEES ARE  
WELCOME  
♥



# Stronger Together

We have put a lot of effort into strengthening our relationship with the local refugee sector this year, especially through the Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP).

Borderlands has been part of three BRASP task groups this year:

- **Lived experience leadership** – sharing success, learning and challenges around creating pathways for participation and leadership for those with lived experience;

- **Service coordination** – coordinating services and activities in the sector;

- **Advocacy** – making sure BRASP has a presence in strategic forums where key decisions and policies affecting asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol are discussed and taken; and

- **Information sharing** - exploring ways we can legally share information with other BRASP organisations in line with GDPR.

We have also built a strong relationship with **Bristol Mind** this year through our outreach work in the Filton hotel, which combines Borderlands' experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees with Bristol Mind's expertise in mental health.

On receiving refugee status, people are given just 28 days to find rental accommodation and secure a job and/or benefits and many people become homeless at this stage.

This year we made the decision to partner with **ACH** – a social housing provider with expertise in working with refugees. ACH provide management and support provision to the house that we purchased in 2017. **ACH** were able to undertake essential improvement works, including painting and decorating, installing new flooring and carrying out safety checks. They will use the house to provide safe and secure accommodation for refugees, providing additional support to enable them to settle, integrate and gain valuable skills through training.

# Thank you

We would like to thank all our funders this year, including the Albert Gubay Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Quartet Community Foundation, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, John James Bristol Foundation, Postcode Local Trust, Bristol Churches City Fund, Feeding Bristol and others, including those who prefer to be anonymous. We are also most grateful to the individuals, local businesses, social enterprises and charities who have made donations and supplied us with food for our hot meals and social supermarket. Last but not least, thank you to all our wonderful members, volunteers, partners, trustees and staff who are the heart and the soul of this organisation.





**BORDERLANDS**  
from exclusion to  
**BELONGING**

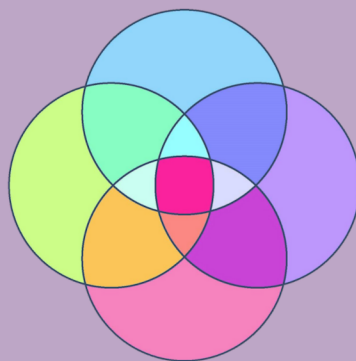
Borderlands South West LTD  
The Assisi Centre  
Lawfords Gate  
Bristol  
BS5 0RE

01179 04 04 79  
hello@borderlands.org.uk  
www.borderlands.uk.com

Follow us: @borderlandsbristol



Registered Charity No. 1143313



**BORDERLANDS**  
from exclusion to  
**BELONGING**

---

WARMTH   SHARING   DIGNITY   RESPECT   FOR EVERYONE