

BORDERLANDS

from exclusion to

BELONGING

Referral Guidelines Mentoring Project

Borderlands (South West) Ltd Registered Charity No: 1143313

Please read the following guidelines before submitting a referral to the Mentoring Project

→ [Please click here to access the referral form](#)

Key Information

The mentoring project pairs an asylum seeker or refugee over the age of 18 (we will consider other migrants with irregular status on a case-by-case basis) with a volunteer mentor for an initial period of 6 months in a mentoring partnership. Occasionally partnerships are extended or curtailed but most partnerships will be for the 6-month period. During these 6 months, the partnership meets weekly in public places e.g. libraries, cafes or for walks outside to work towards goals which have been agreed at the start of the project.

The partnership aims to support refugees and asylum seekers to develop the skills and confidence to allow them to be more self-sufficient, better linked in with their community and closer to achieving their own goals without further support. **Currently mentoring partnerships require intermediate conversational English in order to be successful.** If you have an individual with little or no English who you think would benefit from a mentor then please do not refer them into the project but contact one of the Mentoring Managers. We are not able to provide interpreters. **Please also note we do not accept people experiencing significantly high needs that are not being professionally addressed elsewhere.**

Mentoring Partnership Goals

The goals agreed at the start of the mentoring partnership are wide ranging depending on the specific needs, situation and ambitions of the mentee. Examples of the sort of goals that previous partnerships have focused on are:

- Support for newly arrived mentees to get to know Bristol, find and join local groups and understand what services they can access and how

- Support mentee in navigating the asylum system
- Support for refugees to look for jobs, manage their finances, look for suitable accommodation options, get a driving license and practice for the Life in the UK citizenship test
- Support for mentees to access education, either through additional tutoring in required skills, e.g. English, Maths or through applying for scholarships or looking for college places
- Support to find volunteering opportunities
- Signposting to appropriate mental health services
- Emotional support

A mentoring partnership is not...

Therapeutic: although mentors often provide emotional support to mentees through difficult times in their lives, it is not a therapeutic intervention, **and may be unsuitable for people who are struggling with complex mental health needs.**

Friendship: although many elements of the partnership are social and, in fact a friendship may develop through the meetings, the partnership is goal orientated with a focus on developing skills, confidence and community engagement. The project **aims to build the mentee's independence, not dependence on the mentor.**

Eligibility criteria to be a *mentee*

Mentees should be asylum seekers or refugees. We will act on our discretion whether to accept referrals for individuals with wider immigration issues or undocumented migrants.

Mentees should reside either in the Bristol city or South Gloucestershire area.

Mentees should have a beginners conversational English. They should be able to answer a text or call and arrange the next mentoring meeting with their mentor.

Please remember that no interpreters will be available during the mentoring sessions.

Mentees should have clear goals to join the project. Ideally there should be three or more goals to focus on.

Mentee should have availability to join the project for 6 months, and to meet mentor once a week.


The project strives to support vulnerable and isolated people, however where there are complex needs a discussion with you will be necessary in order to accept the referral. We ask referrers to kindly remember that mentors are not counsellors and mentoring partnerships are difficult to develop if the mentee doesn't engage due to their mental health conditions. In such cases, mentees might benefit more from psychological support than from having a mentor.

Mentees should be aged 18 years old and over. Mentees and mentors are only allowed to meet in public spaces (e.g. libraries, cafes, community centres, etc.). In rare circumstances a discussion between mentor, mentee and mentoring manager - and if appropriate with the referrer - will be necessary if there is a need/wish of a house visit.

Referrals Process

After receiving a referral, the Mentoring Managers will first get in touch with the referrer to have a conversation about the referral. If the potential mentee is suitable, the Mentoring Managers will meet with the mentee in person and conduct a needs/risk assessment, as well as assessing their level of English and to ensure the potential mentee understands exactly what mentoring is and is not.

If the mentoring manager does not think it is an appropriate referral they will explain this to the potential mentee and may refer the individual on to other support which may be more appropriate. If the manager confirms the referral then they will look to match the mentee with a volunteer mentor as quickly as possible. The mentee will be given an idea of how long this process may take.



Partner agencies are encouraged to make referrals into the mentoring project, when doing so please do consider the information provided here to think about whether or not it is an appropriate referral. Any suggestions about the type of mentor for the person you want to refer to are very welcome.

Where possible the mentoring manager may update referrers on the process of the referral, especially if the manager is unable to get in touch with the potential mentee, or considers them inappropriate for the mentoring programme. If at any point you want to check on the progress of a referral, talk through a potential referral or find out more information about the project and how we can work together, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the Mentoring Managers (contact details at the bottom of the page).



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