



Suffolk Refugee Support Summer 2020 Newsletter

www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk

38 St Matthew's Street, IPSWICH, Suffolk IP1 3EP

Registered Charity Number: 1078794



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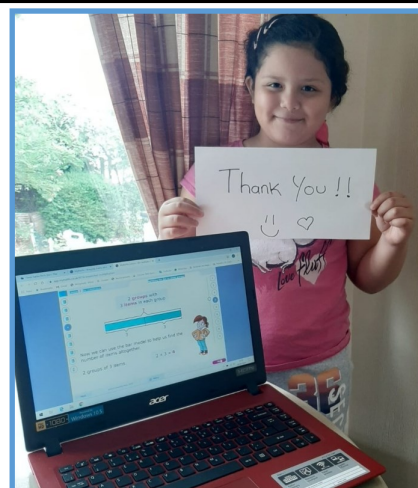
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Suffolk Refugee Support coronavirus update

We know the last few months have been a difficult and distressing time for many people, and our thoughts remain with all those directly affected by Covid-19. At Suffolk Refugee Support we are proud of the work our staff and amazing volunteers have done to care for refugees and asylum seekers. We have delivered more than 2000 advice contacts remotely since lockdown began, helping people with health and mental health issues, education and training, destitution and emergency support, along with English tuition and 1-1 support, group work, skills exchange and hundreds of weekly welfare checks. We have also delivered laptops to those most disadvantaged by the interruption to schooling (see page 3).



We are currently planning a phased reopening of our face-to-face services for those who need it most. Our Sports Activities Coordinator has already held socially distanced outdoor fitness sessions with small groups of young people, and we are working to make our office 'Covid secure' for a reduced, fully risk-assessed advice service. In addition to installing larger items, such as a new intercom system and mobile perspex screens, we are taking into account the needs of those we support—for instance, we are ordering visors rather than face masks for our staff as we realise how important it might be to see a welcoming smile after all this time.

Some messages from our clients

Thank you for ringing. You are the only person who is ringing regularly to see how we are doing.

I wanted to say a big thank you for all the help and support you have given myself and my wife. Thank you for everything you have done.

Thank you for ringing the school with an interpreter for me. I would have had no idea what was going on.

Thank you for all your support with my son. You have always listened to me and I can trust you.

I feel you are like counsellor to me. I know you are not but all the help you give me to feel well it feels like this.

Thank you for listening to me whilst I cried.

We find the phone calls from SRS very reassuring.

Supported by:



Refugees doing vital work during coronavirus

For Refugee Week in June we highlighted some of the refugees carrying out unsung key worker roles in Suffolk during coronavirus. Seraphine works as a carer in a care home for older people in Ipswich. She told us:

I enjoy working with people and being able to help as much as I can. It is an emotional job for me because I have to help people do things they normally did for themselves but due to old age or disabilities cannot manage anymore. My job also provides me with a lot of learning in terms of English culture.

I normally work night shifts and sleep during the day when my children have gone to school but during coronavirus it has been difficult because they don't go to school. I have to sleep just a short time so that I can help my children while my husband works.

I feared catching coronavirus through work, but I felt that it is my duty to help even more because this is the time those people that I help need me the most. I feel privileged that I have been able to help during this difficult time.

It brings me joy to help people while talking to them and how they appreciate the help I provide. People in the care home can be lonely without anyone from outside to talk to, especially during this time when no visitors are allowed. Sometimes I stay longer than my time, just to talk to someone who might need to talk.



You can read more stories of refugees doing vital work during the pandemic in the [East Anglian Daily Times here](#), including a social worker, a hospital cleaner, a test and trace worker and Adib (pictured above), whose supermarket have been delivering to vulnerable people. You can also hear Adib and ourselves speaking on [BBC Radio Suffolk here](#) [3:07:45 in, until 15 July].

For Refugee Week we also ran a fun (and very competitive!) online quiz, and created [an online wall](#) of powerful refugee thoughts on life, the future and a post-Covid world. Thank you to everyone who took part or supported us!

"The world I have in mind is a very different world after Corona...there is knowledge, love and friendship between people...there is equal food and shelter for everyone." - a refugee's thoughts from our online wall

Your donations changing the lives of young people

We know that missing school might disproportionately affect some of the young people and families we work with. Many have already had their education interrupted by displacement and traumatic experiences, and do not have the resources to keep up with home schooling. As well as liaising with schools, we realised early in lockdown that lack of IT resource and internet access would be a barrier to education, and fundraised, through our own computer appeal fund and the [Suffolk Coronavirus Community Fund](#) (launched by Suffolk Community Foundation) to provide laptops and data for the most disadvantaged families and students. We're delighted that these have now been sourced, safely set up and delivered, and are currently being used to transform the educational and life chances of vulnerable young people we support. A huge thank you to everyone whose generous donations made this possible! If you would like to make a regular donation to our work so we can continue to meet urgent needs, you can do so through [our website here](#), or via [Virgin Money Giving here](#). Thank you!



SRS YouTube Channel

During lockdown, as part of our new Skills Exchange project and to get important information to our clients, we have been posting regular videos on [our YouTube channel](#). Topics covered so far include healthy eating, home workouts, scams awareness and how to avoid grooming and exploitation—all aimed at the young people we work with—as well as videos on how to write a CV, how to access free online learning, how to make hummus and healthy salads (right), how to do henna hand-painting and how to make a handcrafted paper basket!



Suffolk Refugee Support statement

As an organisation working closely with people from BAME communities every day, we stand alongside the Black Lives Matter movement and those protesting the death of George Floyd and others, and know that incidents like this and the structural issues underlying them affect the people we support and care about. We also vow to listen and learn, to work with friends and colleagues and to redouble our own efforts to actively encourage equality of rights and opportunities and promote the voices of black and minority ethnic people.



Volunteers Required!!!

Are you interested in helping young refugees?

We are seeking volunteers to help with Sports, Health Advice and Community Engagement in the evenings and school holidays.



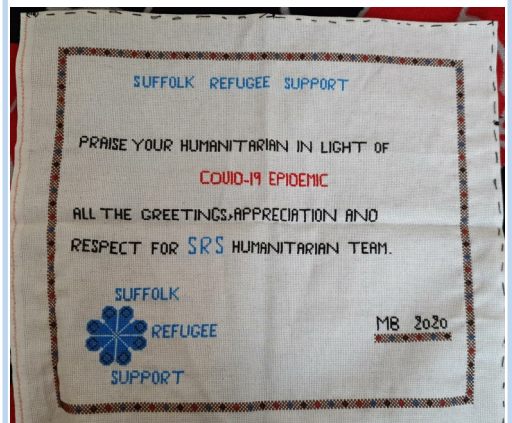
We will ensure all events are conducted in a safe and socially distanced manner.



Please contact Kyler Jackson or Ellie Roberts for more information:

kjackson@suffolkrefugee.org.uk / 07398583851
eroberts@suffolkrefugee.org.uk / 07385 583320

We were really touched to receive this beautiful piece of needlework recently from a client we have supported closely throughout lockdown and helped with items so she can stay occupied and practice her sewing skills!



STOP PRESS!

The deadline for our part-time Employment Skills Assessor vacancy, to support refugees and asylum seekers to access training and employment, is Monday 13 July—[full details and application pack here](#)

Puzzles, board games and bikes—thank you!

It was lovely recently to be able to deliver a wide range of board games and puzzles to young people we support to help keep them occupied and active. A big thank you to everyone who donated such a great selection! And our huge gratitude also to our amazing supporters who responded to our recent appeal for a bike to help a young man get to school. Your incredible generosity means we have been able to deliver a total of five bikes, along with helmets, locks and lights, to young people who can now attend school, appointments, and our socially distanced Sports Activities Group safely without having to use public transport!



Voluntary placement and work space needed—can you help?

Zakaria (right) is a 19 year old refugee from Sudan. He has just completed his GCSEs and is hoping to do an Access course in September before going to university to study Nursing. He would love to gain some experience in a nursing or healthcare-related field. If you might be able to help with a voluntary work placement please contact Cathy, our Youth Coordinator: cgonzalez@suffolkrefugee.org.uk

Maria is a [refugee entrepreneur](#) we work with who has her own ethical lingerie label and has been creating stunning handmade face masks for women. She is also looking for a space in Ipswich to rent for her seamstress work and customer appointments - if you can help please contact Maria through [her Etsy page](#) or message Jodi: jpeck@suffolkrefugee.org.uk.



UNHCR Global Trends Report

The UNHCR's annual [Global Trends report](#) was released recently, and more than ever it makes for shocking reading. Its key findings include:

- 79.5 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, a record figure, meaning for the first time 1% of the world's entire population is displaced
- 26 million of those are refugees (i.e. displaced outside their own country)
- 100 million people have been newly displaced over the last decade
- 85% of refugees are hosted in developing countries
- 2 million new asylum claims were registered in 2019 (35,000 in the UK)



SRS join asylum support campaign

The asylum seekers we work with have faced additional financial demands and pressures during coronavirus—including increased food prices, costs of medication, home schooling and mobile phone credit/data. But while Universal Credit was given a £20 weekly uplift, asylum support remained the same for nearly three months before increasing by just £1.85 to £39.60 per week. We believe this is not enough to meet the needs of those with the least resources to cope with the crisis. Therefore we have [joined 250 other organisations](#) calling on the Home Secretary to give asylum seekers the same temporary £20 uplift.

Refugees in the media

Sometimes the issues we deal with are particularly difficult and traumatic. An 11-year-old girl, whose mother we have supported for some time, was at serious risk of deportation and Female Genital Mutilation until Suffolk County Council obtained a last minute protection order recently. So we're very disappointed to see the Home Office continue to refuse to grant her asylum—[read more here](#). We were, however, delighted that Maria (see above) featured in a lovely [Refugee Week piece](#) in the Metro newspaper about refugees helping the UK during the pandemic (and to get a mention ourselves!), and finally, you can listen to us on [Radio Suffolk here](#) [2:07:30 in] alongside Osama, a refugee from Egypt, talking about his time as an asylum seeker in Ipswich, his affection for the town and his future ambitions!

We hope you've enjoyed our latest newsletter—we'd love to hear from you with your feedback or if you'd like to find out further information. If you received this newsletter indirectly, and would like to join our mailing list, please email our administrator: mwalker@suffolkrefugee.org.uk

Thank you again for all your support, donations and volunteering - we really couldn't manage without you!