



Suffolk Refugee Support Spring Newsletter 2025

www.suffolkrefugee.org.uk

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Registered Charity Number: 1078794

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SRS Sewing Group

Our refugee sewing group continues to go from strength to strength. The group, which meets weekly at the New Wolsey Theatre, makes many different styles of clothes, from traditional Afghan and Kurdish to modern European, as well as bags, cushions and aprons. Experienced dressmakers, some of whom learned to sew at an early age, taught by their mothers and grandmothers, pass on their expertise to others. It's a friendly place for women from different countries to meet, practice their English and learn new skills. Earlier this year we were delighted to see some of the fabulous costumes made by the group go on display at Ipswich Library and to have ITV Anglia visit the group and report live from the exhibition. You can watch the report and hear how the group helps people to socialise and settle in their new communities [here](#).



Refugee Football Group

Ipswich Town might not have got the results they hoped for on the pitch this season, but the ITFC Foundation continues to do fantastic work, including with our Refugee Football Group. Members of the group had a wonderful experience at the Foundation fixture recently, including a half time pitch walk (pictured) and meeting the players off the coach. Our group [was featured](#) in the build up to the fixture, including Nasser, a young man taking his refereeing qualifications. We were also excited to be part of a [visit](#) from His Royal Highness, The Duke of Gloucester, and for the group to feature in a lovely piece in the [Sports Gazette](#).



"I really enjoy the sense of community and teamwork. It's a great way to meet new people, stay active, and just have fun playing football. The sessions are welcoming and inclusive, making it easy for everyone to feel comfortable, no matter their skill level"

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Refugee and asylum factsheet

Do you know what percentage of the UK's population are refugees, where the UK ranks in Europe in terms of asylum applications, or how much an asylum seeker placed in a hotel receives per week? There can be much misinformation spread about the people we support, often with the aim of feeding hostile narratives, so we have created a comprehensive factsheet with clear, objective information, which we will keep updated on our [website here](#). We also [spoke to BBC Radio Suffolk](#) about some of the realities of refugee and asylum seeker experiences. Please do get in touch with us if you have any questions or would like any other information.

Citizenship changes—our response

We were shocked to learn earlier this year about a change of Home Office policy denying a path to citizenship to anyone arriving in the UK via 'dangerous journeys'. The majority of the people we have worked with over the last 25 years were forced to arrive through irregular routes because they had no other option. They have gone on to have their asylum claims recognised and many are now proud British citizens. Speaking to those people brings home how important citizenship is—for some it is the first time they have felt secure and able to rebuild their lives after years of displacement or statelessness. We believe citizenship is a vital part of making people feel safe, integrated, and with a stake in the future of their society, and this new guidance is cruel and counterproductive. If implemented, it will create a group of people for whom the UK is their permanent home but who will never feel fully accepted. You can read more of [our response here](#).

Meet the Professional Day

As part of our youth work we focus on preparing young people for the world of employment and understanding the wide range of options available to them. Recently we ran our first 'Meet the Professional' day with Suffolk New College, providing a chance for 40 young people to talk about career opportunities with different professionals, including a radiographer, carpenter, electrician, accountant, as well as Suffolk Police and Fire Service. Alongside great partnership working, the stall holders all commented on how lovely the young people were!



Fundraising for SRS

A huge thank you to DPL Group for choosing us as the charity for their Valentine's Ball this year and to all who gave so generously towards an incredible fundraising total. Daryas, a talented young musician we work with, [performed brilliantly](#) in front of 350 people on the night, with support from our friends at Status Creative CIC. Thanks also to the pupils and staff at Somerleyton Primary School, who held a non-uniform day, yard sale and rowing event to raise vital funds for our work.



Our work is needed urgently today more than ever—can you help us to continue supporting refugees in Suffolk? You can [donate securely](#) to us, take part in a sponsored event, set up a [GoFundMe page](#) or organise a fundraiser such as a quiz (we can provide refugee-themed rounds!). We'll be only too happy to support you whatever your idea! Thank you!!

SRS spring trips and outings

We have been out and about in the sunshine, helping our clients to access recreational opportunities, green spaces and new experiences.

As part of a Greater Anglia project to promote Harwich Haven as a visitor destination, a car-free day out was organised for adults and young people to travel around the area by train, ferry and bus, visiting attractions en route. Several Ukrainian families were warmly greeted by Landguard Fort Trust, while volunteers from the Harwich Society and Landguard Fort shared stories about the area's rich history. Children enjoyed the Easter trail, and we even tried on naval uniforms!

During the Easter holidays, some young Ukrainians and their responsible adults were invited to our office for an easter egg-making workshop. SRS volunteer Nadiia, owner of [Wonderland Bakehouse](#) in Ipswich, shared her professional secrets and positive attitude, helping to make this Easter feel special and homely for the families involved. Lush Ipswich also kindly invited a group of Ukrainian women to join their bath bombs-making workshop, giving our clients the chance to relax in a friendly atmosphere and enjoy a little pampering session.

For our Easter activities we also visited Christchurch Park in Ipswich with asylum-seeking families for an Easter scavenger hunt, picnic and fun and games, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and we took groups of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to a local owl sanctuary and a trampolining session—the young people involved had a great time and demonstrated some brilliant trampolining skills too!



Refugee Resettlement update

We continue to welcome families to Suffolk under the UK's resettlement schemes, many of whom are highly vulnerable and have waited a long time to find a place of safety. So far this year we have greeted three new families—all are settling in well and our team are working hard to secure school places, assess levels of English and enrol in classes, and introduce the families to the local area. One young man [spoke to BBC Radio Suffolk](#) about the welcome he has received here and his ambitions. Our small Ukraine team continues to deliver incredible results too,



which we will report on fully in the next newsletter. In the meantime, we were pleased to take part in a very moving vigil for Ukraine back in February (pictured), and for our Ukraine Programme Coordinator to share some [powerful thoughts](#) on the current situation with BBC Radio Suffolk.

**STOP
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We are recruiting!

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We are looking for a part time Facilities & IT Coordinator to join our team

Full details here: suffolkrefugee.org.uk/current-vacancies/

We hope you've enjoyed this newsletter—we'd love to hear from you with any feedback. If you received this indirectly, and would like to join our mailing list, please email us: office@suffolkrefugee.org.uk

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