



2025-26

IMPACT REPORT

housing • support • advocacy



Hope, Dignity, and Change: Why Boaz Trust's work matters more than ever

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As we look back on the past 12 months, we are so grateful for your continued support and solidarity. We hope that this report gives you a glimpse into our impact during 2025-26, and that it encourages you as much as it encourages us.

In this report you'll find updates on our housing, support and advocacy work from April 2025 to March 2026. Also featured throughout are stories that centre the voices of people with lived experience of the asylum and immigration system, who are at the heart of all Boaz does.

Once you've finished reading, please do pass on this report to someone you know so that more people can hear these stories that so often go unheard.



In a year marked by shifting policies and increasing hostility towards people seeking sanctuary, our 2025-26 impact report offers a powerful testament to the resilience of individuals and the transformative effect of community support. The key themes running through our work over the past year are clear: the critical importance of safe housing; the value of holistic, person-centred support; and the need for ongoing advocacy in the face of increasingly restrictive government policies and deep, systemic injustice.

HOUSING AS A FOUNDATION FOR RECOVERY & GROWTH

The stories of Brktiy, Halima, and Samuel, who all have lived experience of the UK's asylum system, demonstrate that accommodation isn't just about securing a roof over your head. Having a safe place to stay can offer stability, improved wellbeing and in many cases, renewed hope. As Brktiy puts it, "Boaz was like my backbone... Boaz especially helped

me mentally because during that time waiting for status, I felt like I lost that positive mentality. But being supported by Boaz helped me to get that back."

HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Here at Boaz, our work goes beyond housing provision. We offer specialist, person-centred support, helping people access healthcare, legal advice, and employment opportunities. This year, over 800 individuals benefited from Boaz's support work across all our different services. In addition to housing-based work, our outreach work - including the Restricted Eligibility Support Service (RESS) and Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project (RHPP) - has been vital in reaching hundreds of people who are facing street homelessness for reasons linked to their immigration status.

SPEAKING UP FOR JUSTICE

This report also highlights our growing advocacy work, from local partnerships

to national lobbying. In a climate where policy proposals relating to "Earned Settlement" threaten to prolong uncertainty and increase homelessness and destitution, we strongly believe that our efforts to amplify the voices of those with lived experience are more important than ever.

A CALL TO ACTION

It can be hard to stay hopeful in such challenging times. But we wanted this report to offer a reminder that, even in this hostile environment, simple acts of solidarity and compassion can make a real difference. The courage of those who share their stories, and the support and commitment we experience across our wider Boaz community, show that hope is not just possible, it is visible, tangible, and urgently needed. Thank you for continuing to stand with us.



Words by Ros Holland
Chief Executive

If looking at the world around you makes you restless for justice, one way to respond is in hope is to give. Your support ensures this work can continue, despite a difficult funding climate for charities across the UK. **Scan the QR code to make a donation.**



Brktiy's story

"Boaz was like my backbone."

Being granted leave to remain is the moment many of the people we support are waiting for. It's a turning point that unlocks so many doors and brings hope of moving forward with life in the UK. But for Brktiy* [pronounced brick-tee], this moment came and she felt nothing.

"When I came here as a new asylum seeker, I thought I would get my status very quickly, but it took 10 years to get status. So when I got that status, I felt nothing because it wasted my time, my younger years and it affected me emotionally and mentally. So I didn't feel anything."



The asylum system is cruel. People like Brktiy spend years of their lives waiting in limbo, trapped in a dysfunctional system, denied the right to work, experiencing deterioration in their physical and mental health. And in recent years, this hostility has

bled out from policy and rhetoric onto our streets and into our communities.

When asked how she felt when she moved into a Boaz house after getting her refugee status, the contrast in Brktiy's response to this question was stark:

"It felt amazing. I was very happy when I got a Boaz house, compared with when I got refugee status. I still remember what the room looked like when I got the key. It was a small room, very clean."

Everyone who lives in Boaz housing is offered holistic, person-centred support that is tailored to the individual. This can include practical support with accessing healthcare or specialist services, finding educational, volunteering or employment opportunities and navigating UK systems like benefits and housing.

Boaz support workers are also there to listen, explain the options available to people and offer emotional support that shows them they are not alone. As we chat, Brktiy talks about the difference that this holistic support made to her life.

"Boaz was like my backbone. My support worker was checking on me every time

and if I needed anything they would support me with it. Boaz especially helped me mentally because during that time waiting for status, I felt like I lost that positive mentality. But being supported by Boaz helped me to get that back."

After moving into a Boaz house, things began to shift for Brktiy. She described the galvanising impact of having a safe place to call home:

"Boaz was power and energy for me. When I moved in, it empowered me to start working and start paying my bills because I wanted Boaz to support more people with my rent."



Brktiy* speaking on a panel at Family Night

Brktiy now works in housekeeping in a hotel. It's a varied role; she often helps out in other areas, going above and beyond her normal duties. Although most of her time is spent working, with the spare time she does have, Brktiy still chooses to focus on others.

"I love supporting people - especially those who don't have status. I also love visiting new mothers who have recently given birth to their children. I don't have that

much time to spend, but with my time, I like to do that."

It's clear that Brktiy has a heart for people, particularly for supporting those on the margins. Asked about the state of the current UK asylum system and what she thinks needs to change, Brktiy said:

"The first thing is people shouldn't be waiting for a long time to start working, to get employment. I think people should get their status as soon as possible and be supported with employment so that they can support the UK economy. It's a waste of time for people and somebody staying without status for a long time will affect the person but also the country."

ENGAGE WITH YOUR MP

Brktiy recently attended a mass lobby in Parliament to oppose the Government's "earned settlement" plans (read more on p. 16). **Could you raise this issue with your MP? Scan the QR code to find out more.**

The "earned settlement" changes will impact millions of people in communities across the UK. Find out more by visiting boaztrust.org.uk/advocacy or by scanning the QR code below.



*Name changed and story shared with Brktiy's consent

Housing and support for people refused asylum

In 2025-26 we provided 6,415 nights of accommodation in Boaz shared houses for 29 people refused asylum.

Boaz has always worked with people who've been refused asylum - something that can happen for many reasons. People may lack sufficient evidence of persecution, face credibility challenges over issues like sexuality or religious conversion, or struggle to navigate a complex system without legal representation. Once refused and considered "Appeal Rights Exhausted" by the Home Office, people are typically evicted from asylum accommodation within 28 days and they have no right to work or access mainstream benefits. The result is destitution: people left without food, shelter, or safety, in a country where they have no legal status, and often, nowhere to turn.

This year, we've continued to offer people who've been refused asylum safe places to stay and holistic, 1:1 support. This support looks different for each person and can be both practical and emotional. For example, we've supported people to register with their local GP surgery, made referrals

for mental health support or other specialist services, and helped people gather evidence to progress their asylum cases.

In October 2025, we were delighted to welcome Alaa to the team to work specifically with women living in Boaz houses.



As ever, the broader asylum policy environment in which we work is constantly shifting and changing. This year has been no different. In March 2026, the Home Office announced that new 'validity requirements' must be met by people at the point at which they make

further submissions (also known as fresh claims).

Further submissions are a chance for people to submit new evidence to the Home Office and ask for a new decision on their right to stay in the UK.

We know from our work that many people who receive an initial asylum refusal go on to be granted leave to remain, either through appeal or by making further submissions.

The Government has now made it much harder for people to make further submissions, adding new rules that allow the Home Office to reject submissions without consideration and also to end the process entirely – known as being 'treated as withdrawn' – if a person does not stay in contact, leaves the UK before a decision is made, misses reporting events or interviews, or does not respond to requests for information.

LEGAL SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

1 in 5

people living in shared houses for people refused asylum made immigration applications to the Home Office.

3

people who've lived in Boaz houses got in touch to tell us they have been granted **leave to remain!**



LEGAL SUPPORT

This year, we continued working with GMIAU (Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit). This partnership means that people we support have access to free, good quality legal advice.

A senior immigration caseworker held regular legal clinics at our office for people living in Boaz houses (or those supported via the Restricted Eligibility Support Service). These meetings included specific advice on how people can progress their legal cases, the review of previous paperwork, feedback on new evidence collected, and making new immigration applications with people where possible.

WELLBEING

Wellbeing is an integral part of our approach to support work at Boaz. It is a key focus of individual support meetings and conversations - both with those living in Boaz houses, and people we support through our outreach work.

Throughout the year, we also had specific opportunities for people to engage in wellbeing activities as part of our Boaz Life programme. In 2025-26, our support workers organised 19 wellbeing workshops, trips and training sessions. These included:

- A Pilates session led by a local instructor
- Day trips to Liverpool, Chester, Buxton, Knutsford, Manchester and Lancaster, which provided opportunities to build trust, and learn more about people we work with outside of the usual support setting
- Two cooking sessions with a local chef, hosted by the Blossom Project
- A trip to RHS Bridgewater Gardens
- A craft workshop
- A crochet session
- Orientation trips visiting local, free spaces in Manchester (e.g. library, galleries)

SHARED HOUSES

In 2025-26, we've completed essential fire safety works, had a new bathroom suite fitted at one of the houses and are in the process of a kitchen renovation at another property.

This year also saw the 'van-tastic fundraiser' launch in June 2025 and thanks to your donations and some generous matched funding, we were able to buy a nearly-new Boaz van.

The van has made a significant difference to the day-to-day operations of the housing team. It enables our Property Manager to deliver housing supplies, move furniture, collect donations, transport tools and equipment safely, and help people we support to move their belongings.



Our impact in 2025-26

805

people were supported by Boaz this year

17,180

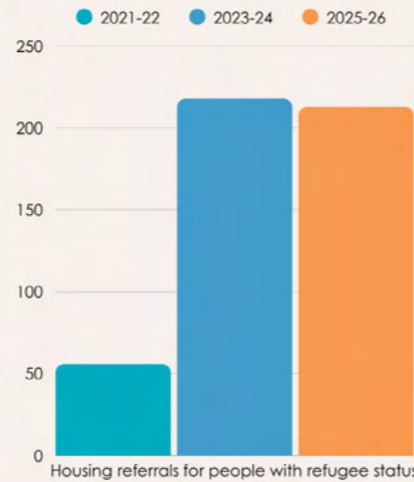
nights of accommodation provided for 61 people



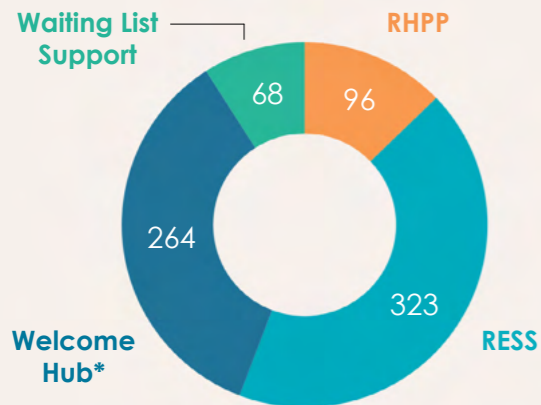
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

We worked with people from **64** different countries this year.

REFUGEE HOUSING REFERRALS

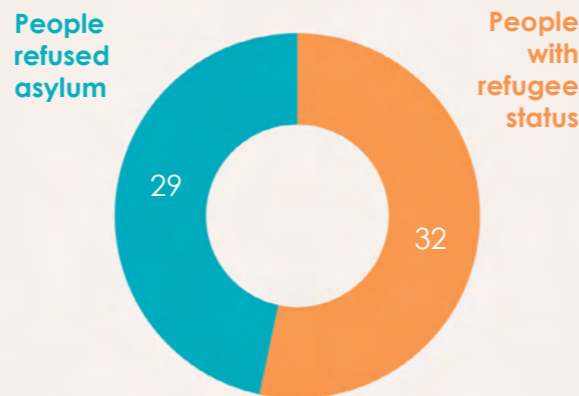


Housing referrals for people with refugee status



OUTREACH SUPPORT

751 people accessed advice or support through our outreach work



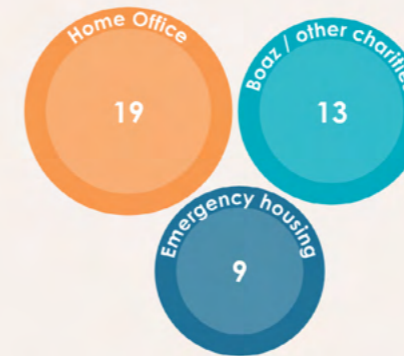
BOAZ HOUSES

61 people stayed in Boaz houses this year.

188

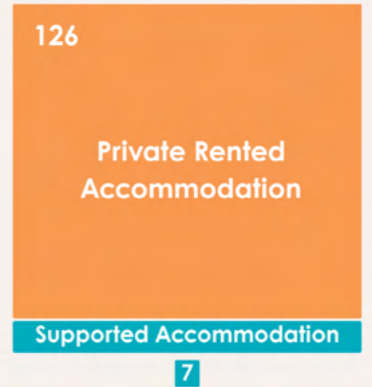
people, most of whom had no choice but to sleep outside, now have somewhere safe to stay after being directly supported by our team.

RESS HOUSING OUTCOMES



41 people now have a safe place to stay through RESS outreach support

REFUGEE HOMELESSNESS HOUSING OUTCOMES



133 people moved from homelessness into housing through our refugee homelessness outreach work.

The positive housing outcomes above are so significant because of the many **barriers** people we support face when trying to find safe accommodation, including:

- **Affordability and availability:** The wider housing crisis means that safe, affordable accommodation is increasingly out of reach across communities. For people granted refugee status, often starting from nothing, with no savings or credit history, soaring rents and lack of affordable supply make the challenge even more acute.
- **'No DSS':** Some landlords and letting agents continue to prejudice individuals who claim benefits, even though this discriminatory practice has been illegal since the Equality Act 2010.*
- **No right to work or rent:** People seeking asylum and those with unresolved immigration statuses are not legally permitted to rent privately or work, leaving

them with no income and no access to benefits to cover housing costs due to the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition.

- **No access to temporary or emergency accommodation:** This is usually not available to people with No Recourse to Public Funds, aside from specific ringfenced NRPF ABEN** bed spaces.
- **Home Office errors:** We've supported several people where Home Office errors have meant people left asylum accommodation when they were still entitled to it. In other cases, people were unaware they were eligible for it.

Each outcome above is the story of someone who now has a safe place to live, often after having slept outside or stayed in unsafe, inadequate accommodation. You can read more about the impact this has on people's lives on **page 18**.

*Since June 2025, we've delivered outreach support as part of **Mustard Tree's new Welcome Hub**, offering housing information and support.

*DSS refers to the Department of Social Security (now replaced by the Department for Work and Pensions).

**A Bed Every Night (A cross-sector service providing temporary accommodation for people sleeping outside in Greater Manchester)

Housing and support for people with refugee status

This year we provided 10,400 nights of accommodation for 32 people with refugee status in Boaz shared houses.

While people are living in Boaz housing, our support workers are able to walk alongside them in a holistic, trauma-informed way. They also seek to understand people's individual needs and goals.

This can include supporting people to find a job or volunteer role, apply for college, university or other training courses, register for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes or access health services.

This support can also involve helping people manage their tenancies with Boaz, navigate benefits systems or prepare to move on to longer-term accommodation. One of the ways our support workers do this is by organising regular

'Renting Ready' workshops for people we work with.

This year, we continued to offer outreach support for people on our waiting list for Boaz housing. We've listened to people and helped them to understand their housing options, depending on whether people were granted leave to remain in Manchester, another local authority in Greater Manchester, or in other parts of the UK. We've also offered support with health, education, employment and benefits, as well as connecting people with other local services.

In 2025-26, we've been grateful for our Refugee Support Volunteer, who has worked on creating welcome packs for people moving into Boaz houses. These contain useful information about Boaz, the local area, health services, volunteering opportunities, leisure activities and local emergency services.

"For me, the biggest change was having my space, you know, a space where you can sit, relax, think. And it gave me time to focus my energy on getting employment. I moved in in August and by November I had full time employment."

Halima*, who recently moved on from one of our houses for people with refugee status



This is not nearly long enough for anyone to find somewhere to live (particularly in the midst of a housing crisis), open a bank account and secure employment or set up a Universal Credit account.

"I wish people understood how hostile and mentally draining it can be."

Although the Government introduced an interim extension of the move-on period in December 2024 (to 56 days), they have since reduced it to 42 days.



"I felt relief, honestly, because I was homeless. That was the main thing. I felt a sense of 'now I can breathe.'"

The far-reaching impacts of a safe place to stay can never be underestimated. For Halima*, it meant peace of mind, stability and the opportunity to move forward with life in the UK.

Before she moved into a Boaz house for women with refugee status, Halima had been managing to navigate life in the UK well, but the uncertainty of her housing situation had left her in limbo.

"I consider myself one of the lucky people, you know? My English level is good. I knew how to navigate. I was volunteering and even though I was in limbo with the housing situation, I met a lot of amazing people that were kind and hosted me in their homes."

Despite being an incredibly capable and resilient person, Halima still faced the barriers that the UK asylum system imposes on all who seek safety here.

When she was granted refugee status, she had just 28 days to leave her Home Office accommodation.

"I wish people understood how hostile and mentally draining it can be."

At Boaz, we see what can happen when people have the headspace and security that comes from stable accommodation. Halima described what changed for

her when she moved into a Boaz house:

"For me, the biggest change was having my space, you know, a space where you can sit, relax, think. And it gave me time to focus my energy on getting employment. I moved in in August and by November, I had full time employment."

Halima now works as a Nursing Assistant at a hospital. It's clear this is a job she enjoys - and one she's good at.

We asked Halima what needs to change in the UK's asylum and immigration system:

"I hope that the UK can allow people to utilise their skills while they're waiting for their asylum because at the end of the day, I'm not into politics, but it just pushes people to work illegally."

"I feel like there are a lot of people who have different skills and maybe just to utilise them, whether it is through voluntary programmes or something structured, rather than just leaving people sitting doing nothing."

*Name changed and story shared with Halima's consent



Restricted Eligibility Support Service (RESS)

RESS delivers outreach support and immigration advice for people who are facing homelessness and have restricted eligibility for public funds.

RESS is funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and is delivered as a partnership between Boaz, the Booth Centre and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU).

RESS operates in every borough in Greater Manchester and this year we continued to receive referrals for outreach support from all 10 boroughs. We started new drop ins in Rochdale and Oldham this year and partnership work has also strengthened in existing drop in locations.

While the 4 drop ins happen on a monthly basis, often our support workers visit partner organisations in between to have follow up appointments with people in a space they know and can get to easily. This also provides the opportunity for people to get support from other services while they are there (e.g. mental health support, clothing donations, food or being able to stay warm and dry inside).

IMPACT

In 2025-26, we worked with 323 people:

- 148 people who had been refused asylum
- 30 people who were in the asylum system
- 145 people with different immigration statuses / histories (including people with non EU visas and with No Recourse to Public Funds, where leave had expired or been revoked, and people with unclear or unknown immigration statuses).

41 people found a safe place to stay through RESS support:

- 19 people moved to Home Office accommodation
- 13 people moved into other accommodation, including Boaz and other charity provision
- 9 people accessed emergency accommodation (including ABEN*)

*A Bed Every Night (A cross-sector service providing a bed every night for people sleeping outside in Greater Manchester)

HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Alongside the housing-focused support that we offer, the RESS team also work with people in a holistic way to understand their specific needs and goals. This might be supporting people with progressing their legal situation, getting the healthcare they need or applying for a cash grant from the Migrant Destitution Fund.

Thanks to the RESS Personalisation Fund, we were also able to offer financial support tailored to the individual. For example, this year we provided supermarket gift cards, smart phones to help people connect with legal and other services, clothing vouchers, bus tickets and money to cover prescription costs.



SAMUEL'S STORY

"I've been here for quite a while, and it's not the same as it was 20 years ago. [...] You used to feel welcome."

Before Samuel* was referred to the Restricted Eligibility Support Service (RESS), life in the UK had become a struggle. He had experienced forms of hidden homelessness like sofa surfing and staying in precarious accommodation, while also trying to resolve his immigration status.

"It had become very difficult. Confusing. And I thought I'd run out of avenues, you know, for support."

Because of the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' condition attached to Samuel's immigration status, he was prevented from claiming benefits or accessing housing assistance. He also had no right to work.

Despite the frustrations and injustices of being trapped in limbo in the UK immigration system, and the declining atmosphere of welcome, Samuel still said his favourite thing about Manchester was the people.

In his interactions with Boaz, the person-centred approach was what stood out to him most. Having one named support worker by his side gave Samuel the continuity he needed to make progress with his housing situation and his immigration case.

"So when I first met Vron, it was supposed to be only about housing and she did help me get housing - within the week, actually, which was amazing. She sorted my housing out. And then she said, 'I think we are better off at helping you with your case as well, if you want to.'"

Samuel's support worker from Boaz submitted Subject Access Requests and helped him gather all the documents he needed for his long residency application. With legal advice from Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU) and support from Boaz, Samuel applied for leave to remain using the 20 year long residence rule.

"So she started the ball rolling, helped me collect all the evidence I would need to prove that I've been in the country for 20 years or more. [...] Within a few months, she had it all sorted out - the housing and my immigration case. She said to me, 'I'll email and I'll email until they respond.' Tenacious, that's the term - really tenacious."

Applying for leave to remain using the 20 year long residence rule places an individual on the 10-year route to settlement. A successful application means you will initially be granted leave to remain for 2.5 years and will then need to reapply three times every 2.5 years before being able to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Around a year after Samuel was first referred to RESS

and facing eviction from his accommodation, and more than 20 years after arriving in the UK, he was granted leave to remain for 2.5 years.

"It was a great great relief, can we put it that way. Joyous. Gave me my independence back."

For Samuel there will likely still be challenges ahead with the associated costs of being on the 10-year route to settlement. You can read more about the financial strain and sense of insecurity that long routes to settlement can create on page 16.

Asked about what he thought needed to change in the current asylum and immigration system, Samuel said:

"The thing is, that's what's wrong with the system: it makes the locals start turning against the immigrants. It's a very negative thing. Like you can see now with the protests at the hotels and I can understand, you know, where they're coming from but the effect of it is not good on the immigrants in the end. So I wish they would treat everyone fairly - local or immigrant. Treat them equally."

When we asked what he thought was the most important thing Boaz does, Samuel told us:

"I would say in a simple sentence: it brings back hope in humanity, you know, when you've lost hope in people."

Refugee Homelessness Prevention Work

The combination of the wider housing and cost of living crises and the injustices baked into the asylum system means that people reaching the milestone of refugee status too often find themselves without a safe place to call home.

Following a one-year pilot project (June 2024 – May 2025) by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Boaz was able to continue housing-focused outreach in one borough and expand our reach through a new partnership with Mustard Tree at their Welcome Hub. We also continued working with people on the Boaz housing waiting list, helping them understand their options and take steps towards safe, stable accommodation.

SPOTLIGHT ON RHPP

Through our Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project (RHPP), we work with people who find themselves facing or experiencing homelessness after having recently been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection. We help people understand their options around housing pathways and support people to find, secure and move into accommodation, primarily through the private rented sector. Referrals for RHPP come directly from local authority teams.

Most of our referrals are for single adults over 18 who have been assessed as having “no priority need” for housing following a homelessness assessment. This means that the local authority has no legal duty to provide them with housing. In two local authorities, we also work with families who are living in asylum hotels or temporary accommodation and need additional support to find onward accommodation.

We support people through one-to-one appointments, helping with property searches, landlord liaison, and supporting

with tenancy readiness. As people move into their own accommodation, we are there to offer ongoing support when needed, and signpost people to assistance like deposit schemes and furniture offers.

With demand for this work continuing into 2026-27, new funding has been secured which means we can build on the foundations of the pilot, expand into new areas of Greater Manchester and grow our team with a training and development officer and two additional support workers.

IMPACT OF OUR REFUGEE OUTREACH WORK

Since April 2025, we have worked with a total of **428** people and supported **133** people to move into accommodation. These 133 people, many of whom were sleeping outside, now have somewhere safe to live.

While the support we offer is mainly housing focused, it is also holistic and person centred. Impact goes beyond housing - this year our outreach team have also:

- Supported people to apply for welfare benefits
- Helped people to engage with health services
- Supported people to manage their finances
- Signposted people to access ESOL or employment support



TRAINING & RESOURCES

Over many years of working alongside people recently granted refugee status, we have seen how the moment of transition, when someone leaves asylum accommodation and tries to find a home of their own, can significantly impact their opportunity to build a stable life in the UK. Too often, people face this period with little support, or relying on friends, volunteers and organisations who want to help but aren't always sure how - especially in such a rapidly changing environment.

This is why, as part of our homelessness prevention work, we are offering resources and training workshops for voluntary sector, faith and community-based organisations across Greater Manchester.

These workshops aim to raise awareness of statutory homelessness systems and equip groups to support people to find private rented housing. We hope that, as a result, staff and volunteers will feel confident to support people with the right information at the right time.

To find out more about this training offer, do get in touch at info@boaztrust.org.uk, using the subject line 'RHPP Training Request.' You can also find our existing housing resource and RHPP report (see right) at boaztrust.org.uk/our-resources

SHARING OUR LEARNING AND EXPERIENCES

In July 2025, we launched our report, *From surviving to thriving: Preventing homelessness in Greater Manchester among people recently granted refugee status*.

The report was based on focus group discussions with individuals who were at risk of homelessness before accessing support through RHPP. Direct quotes from people we worked with are woven throughout the report, and the recommendations it features are shaped by the experiences and challenges of those who participated in the research. It also includes the wider learnings and reflections of the RHPP project team.

By carrying out this research, we found that local and regional responses can help to meet the very specific housing challenges that councils are facing. With the right kind of investment, in projects like RHPP, homelessness among people with newly granted refugee status can be alleviated and meaningful housing solutions can be found.



Advocacy

During the last twelve months our advocacy work has grown significantly. As a local charity, we have increasingly recognised the importance and value of local and regional advocacy and influencing efforts.

While we still consider ourselves as having a part to play in advocating for change at a central government level, our support work in recent years - for example that of our GMCA-funded Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project and our Restricted Eligibility Support Service - has taught us that our specialism and expertise can help us to effect change regionally, both in terms of service delivery and policy change.



As such, we have continued to work collectively with colleagues from GMIAU, Right to Remain, Asylum Matters and others, to meet

with MPs across Greater Manchester to share more about the work we do and the challenges we face. Between us we've engaged with the vast majority of the 27 Greater Manchester MPs and their staff. While these meetings have led to some important, robust conversations about how the asylum sector can be reformed for the better, they have - in some instances - also led to other helpful practical forms of action.

Our meetings have re-emphasised the importance for us of establishing and developing dialogue with people in positions of power to effect change both locally and nationally. As a result of these conversations, we have been able to better equip MPs and their caseworkers as they support constituents, as well as help MPs to more fully understand the impact and harm that proposals and policies have on people's lives.

In a first for Boaz, we travelled to Parliament in the autumn of 2025 to meet with MPs about the findings and recommendations in our *From Surviving to Thriving* report. The event was hosted by Afzal Khan (the MP for Manchester Rusholme) and was attended by 11 MPs in total, including several from Greater Manchester (Afzal

Khan, Jeff Smith, Yasmin Qureshi, James Frith, Mike Kane, Kirith Entwistle and Lisa Smart). We were also joined by Abtisam Mohamed and Laura Kyrke-Smith, members of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) for refugees and migration, whose role is to strengthen the voices of people with refugee status by fostering debate and raising awareness of related issues in Parliament.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett, a member of the House of Lords who is known for her work championing a permanent 56-day move-on period, was also in attendance, and raised findings from our report in a subsequent House of Lords debate on the refugee move-on period.

We have continued to use the relationships that we have built with MPs to raise concerns about policy proposals and the increasingly hostile rhetoric that is being used - and normalised - to talk about people seeking asylum. Throughout the last year, local MPs have written to relevant Government Ministers and the Home Secretary, on our behalf, to share evidence of the



James Frith MP talking with people from Boaz at the parliamentary event.

harmful impact that policy proposals and language are having on the people we support.

In March 2026 this year we were back in Parliament for a mass lobby of MPs to oppose the planned changes to settlement (otherwise known as indefinite leave to remain or ILR), which will make it significantly harder for many people to be granted ILR. The Government plans to extend the standard route to settlement from 5 to 10 years, and for some groups of people their proposed routes to settlement could increase to 15, 20 or 30 years.

A group of 12 people from Boaz (made up of members of staff, people we currently work with, and people we've supported previously) travelled to London on a coach carrying 50 people from organisations and lived experience groups across Greater Manchester. These



included: Status Now 4 All, These Walls Must Fall, RAS Voice and GMIAU. Collectively we met with 10 of the 27 Greater Manchester MPs, while more than 80 MPs overall were engaged through the efforts of 500 campaigners.

In a year that has seen increased hostility towards people seeking asylum and immigrants more broadly, we are proud of the work we have done to try to effect positive change both locally and nationally. Looking ahead, while we will continue to build and strengthen relationships with people who hold power politically to advocate for positive change, we will also be developing our engagement work with you - our supporters - to build solidarity and power in our local communities, to achieve social justice and change. Make sure you're signed up to our news email to find out more about this.

Sign up to our monthly news email by visiting boaztrust.org.uk/stayintouch

EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION WORK

Centring the voices and lived experience of people we work with is fundamental to how Boaz operates. Our Empowerment and Inclusion Coordinator leads this work, aiming to create safe spaces for people to share their experiences, developing new ways of gathering feedback, and ensuring that what we hear shapes and improves our services. This work connects with our wider commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation.

Another aspect of this work is influencing unjust systems. In 2025-26, 42 people currently or previously supported by Boaz engaged with opportunities to speak out or be involved in advocacy work. This included:

- Sharing stories as case studies with policymakers & funders
- Speaking at events, including report launches and our Boaz Family Night
- Taking part in the Women's Rough Sleeping Census
- Contributing to a focus group on racial inequality and homelessness

The significance of housing

We recently spoke with one of our RESS Support Workers, Hassan, about the significance of positive housing outcomes. He told us about the far-reaching effects that safe accommodation has on the people he works with.

"People's situations have changed massively once they access accommodation: their wellbeing, their mental health, it all changes now that they are safe. They can start engaging with other people, contact their family, and get connected with their community. They can engage with friends and others around them.

There is shame and stigma about being homeless, and maybe people have been embarrassed and

not wanted to see friends or their community. With accommodation, people become more confident. People have started volunteering, at local day centres or with their church or mosque. People can also engage with RESS, GMIAU, mental health support, and a variety of services and start to rebuild their life. Even if their immigration status isn't resolved they can make progress with this when they have accommodation. There's less struggle with every day routine and tasks we take for granted.

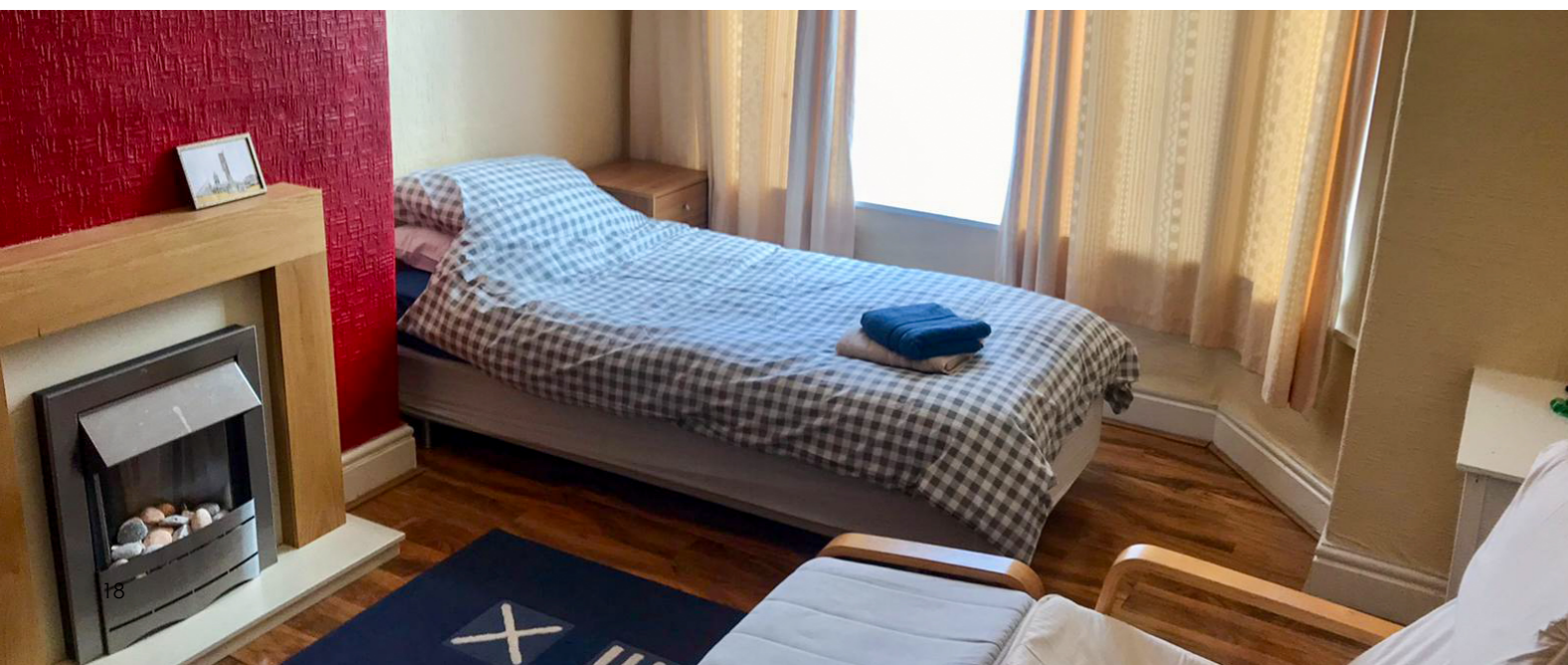
Without accommodation, there is so much insecurity and not knowing where you will sleep that night. People feel very vulnerable and are not safe if they are outside.

For people with NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds), they can't even access

basic benefits as a way to survive. They can't work, so what do people do all day?

They can't access all services because they're not entitled to access all support. There are lots of places people can go, but there is a fear of not knowing if someone will help you (some staff / services are not aware they can help people with NRPF. People don't know what NRPF means, and are worried they would be helping someone who is 'illegal').

One lady was sleeping outside and felt very ashamed, and really struggled. Through RESS, we supported her to access asylum support. The most important thing was that she was now safe, and knew where she was sleeping that night. She was then able to focus on her immigration case and gather evidence."



A million acts of hope

Watching the news or looking at our social media feeds, it's easy to believe that the UK is more divided than ever. The voices of those who seek to spread hate and division are loud. But the reality is millions of people across the UK show up for each other and their communities every day.

These everyday stories too often go untold. So, in the week following the 2026 local elections, individuals, organisations, community and faith groups came together to celebrate and inspire 'A Million Acts of Hope' across the UK.

We asked our supporters what gives them hope and invited them to share with us an act of hope they'd witnessed or been part of in their local community, place of worship or workplace. Below are a few examples shared anonymously.

"We decided to buy some £5 gift cards from Subway to keep with us when we go out so we have something to offer a person who presents as having a need. I hope we will meet someone this week and have a conversation!"

"A group of us in our neighbourhood have started an alleyway greening

project as a way of making our environment a safer, nicer and greener place and space to be.

As well as learning how to grow food and flowers, it has also been a lovely way to bring neighbours together and get to know each other. We've held clean up days and litter picks, and this summer we are planning a community lunch (hopefully with produce we have collectively grown!). It brings us all so much joy and sparks hope."



"My church has recently started a new coffee morning called 'Second Home.' The aim is to be a place where people from the local community can come together to chat, share coffee and cake, work, and be alongside each other in a shared space.

It's been encouraging to see the different people who've



been coming along. So far, we've seen retired people, young mums with their little ones and people with laptops using the coworking space."

As we head towards Refugee Week 2026, we want to carry this momentum forward. This year's theme is Courage.

Courage isn't always loud or bold. It can be found in simple acts like opening your door to a neighbour, trying new food, reading a book, or watching a film that changes your view of the world.

At a time when some seek to divide and blame, Refugee Week calls us to come together and share the courage to welcome, to stand for what we believe in, and to celebrate culture and community.

Visit boaztrust.org.uk/getinvolved to take an action to make hope visible.



Stay in touch

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