

Trustee Handbook

Aid Box Community

Support, Supplies, and Sanctuary for Refugees
and People Seeking Asylum in Bristol



Who we are

Aid Box Community is a registered charity committed to upholding the basic human rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in Bristol.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1



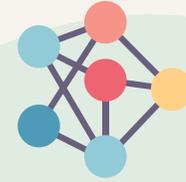
To relieve refugees and those seeking asylum (and their dependants) in Bristol and surrounding areas of poverty and financial hardship by providing free essential living items and other emergency support.

2



To provide opportunities for community engagement, recreation, preparation for employment and access to support services in order for them to become emotionally and financially independent.

3



To work with other organisations to enhance the positive impact of services supporting refugees and people seeking asylum.



VISION

We envision a world where the rights of refugees and those seeking asylum are respected so that they have the opportunity to achieve financial and emotional independence.



MISSION

We provide a warm welcome to people seeking asylum and offer the support they need to access living essentials, emotional support, recreation, shelter, community, legal advice, health care and employment.



VALUES

We treat everyone with respect, compassion and love and seek to offer hope, advocacy and a space to belong. We welcome all displaced people regardless of their faith, race, ethnicity, culture, age, disability, gender and sexuality.

How we achieve change.

The Problem

The basic needs of refugees and people seeking asylum are being neglected.

Activities

Supplies: → Free Shop
→ Essential Aid Fund
Essential living items

Support: → Signposting
→ Bus Fares
→ Crisis Fund
Emotional, financial, and physical

Sanctuary: → Welcome
→ Hub
→ Connections
→ Activity Program
Community and belonging

Outcomes

Refugees and people seeking asylum...

...access appropriate material support...

...live more active lives...

...feel socially connected...

...know where to access the support services they need...

...find volunteering and training opportunities.

Impacts

Basic needs of refugees and people seeking asylum have been met.

Refugees and people seeking asylum have a community they feel they belong to.

Refugees are prepared for employment and independent living.

Vision

(Long-term positive change)

The rights of refugees and those seeking asylum will be respected so that they have the opportunity to achieve financial and emotional independence.





Free Shop & Hub

Where we provide a warm welcome, a drop-in, and a choice of **free, quality living essentials**.



Crisis Fund

Emergency support for people who are in crisis.



Activity Groups

Our regular groups - from sports to English and cookery - offer safe, welcoming spaces to **build confidence, community, and belonging**.



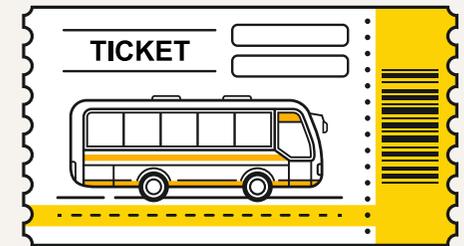
Connections

We connect **local people with refugees & asylum seekers for 1-to-1 friendship**.

Welfare & Signposting



We **guide people** to other services they might need.



Bus Fares

We **cover bus fares** for anyone who can't walk to our services.



Aid Box Community's Trustees

Aid Box has 9 trustees who oversee the work of the organisation.

We all live locally and 4 of us have been service users of Aid Box in the past. We come from a variety of backgrounds including social care, safeguarding, corporate management, communications, journalism, film and tv production, fundraising, charity management, law, financial planning and accounting.

What do charity trustees do?

Charities are legally required to have a board of trustees to oversee their work. They are also required to have a governing document that outlines their purpose and how they will achieve it.

Trustees must make sure that their charity always acts in line with this purpose and in the best interests of those it seeks to support. They must also check that money and other **resources are managed responsibly** and that the charity **abides by all the legal requirements** of the Charities Commission and any other relevant laws e.g. data protection laws.

What do Aid Box's trustees do?



As trustees we oversee different aspects of Aid Box's work through our membership of various committees.

The **Finance Committee** reviews all financial reports to make sure that money is being spent in line with ABC's budget and that there is enough income to cover expenses. The **Safeguarding and Health and Safety committee** makes sure safeguarding incidents are correctly handled and that health and safety plans are followed and updated. The **Human Resources Committee** reviews staff salaries and conditions. Each committee will bring **key decisions** or reports to full board meetings for approval and we will also **review regular reports** from senior staff at those meetings.

Several trustees also sit on the **Lived Experience Working Group** which works to ensure that Aid Box involves service users in its decision making. Others, particularly the Chair, have worked for many months with senior staff to find and legally secure our new premises. We also approach our own networks to encourage wider support and speak about ABC to companies, churches and other organisations.

Why do people volunteer to be trustees for Aid Box?

When people hear Aid Box's story they are impressed with the commitment, drive and dedication of the founder, Imogen but also of the staff and volunteers. Some people volunteer in the free shop, some help with activities but those who are drawn to influencing the development of the organisation often become trustees. But it's not all meetings! We see all aspects of the work and meet many service users from countries all around the world. And it's a joyful place to be.

What sort of time commitment is expected?

There are 4 trustee meetings a year, each lasting 3 hours with some advance reading. Each committee meets up to 4 times a year too.

Interested in becoming a trustee?

If so, please contact Richard Annandale, Chair
(Richard@aidboxcommunity.co.uk)

2024-25 in numbers

4041

individuals and families have **benefited from our Free Shop.**



4490

bus tickets were provided for people to access our services.

They are very helpful. They are important. I live far away. Now I can get to college, attend football and ABC.



When asked if Aid Box Community had made a **positive impact on their and their family's life...**



89%
said
YES!

89%

said ABC helped improve **physical and/or mental health.**



86%

said they **met new people or made friends** through our programs.



72%

reported **engaging in more activities.**

89%

said ABC made them feel **more confident & independent in their life.**

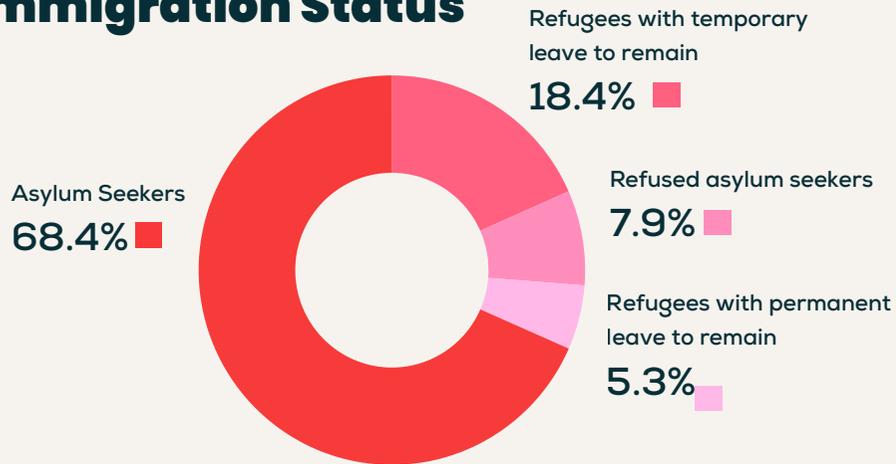


83%

reported to **have learnt a new skill**



Immigration Status



Our Volunteers

This year, over **23,426 hours** were generously given by our incredible volunteers. Their warmth, dedication, and loyalty continue to **inspire us** every day and are the reason we are able to deliver our services.

We introduced a number of **new volunteer roles and welcomed 64 volunteers with lived experience to the team.** We added First Aid and English communication sessions to our training. Regular supervision keeps volunteers supported, connected, and engaged for the long term.



“My experience with the charity was invaluable. Such a beautiful and enriching experience - meeting so many wonderful people with the context of such an unpleasant reality.”

351

volunteers gave their time.

64 of whom have lived experience of the asylum system.

“VOLUNTEERING HELPED ME TO FIND FRIENDS AND FEEL ACCEPTED IN THE SOCIETY.”

A'S STORY – FINDING BELONGING IN BRISTOL



"My name is A; I'm 28 and I am Syrian. I left Syria nearly 5 years ago **looking for a safe place which respects human beings and values human life** – unfortunately, **all my family are back home** because it is such a long and dangerous journey for anyone who wants to cross the borders."

The early days in Bristol were incredibly difficult for A. **"I felt lonely and secluded** from the surroundings, and I was so **depressed** many times because I wanted to go out and be connected with people, but **I didn't know how.**"

A is deeply grateful for the support he's received. "This country gave me a lot," he says, referring to the accommodation and meals provided. But he also reflects on the deeper needs of asylum seekers: **"Most of all, we need people that really care and see us as human beings, I believe that ABC does that, and they're always ready to help in any matter or circumstance."**



A first connected with ABC through the **cookery group** and later **helped raise £6,000 in a charity fundraiser**. He's visited the **Free Shop**, joined our **befriending programme**—remaining close friends with his match—and has taken part in our **men's activity groups**. He's also shared his lived experience to **help train new volunteers** in cultural awareness.

Through ABC, A found not just support, but connection and purpose. **"ABC helped me to face difficulties which any asylum seeker might have, by being close to us and paying attention, giving pieces of advice and creating activities to connect us more with the community, and give us the chance to make friends around."**

These experiences have been transformative. **"All of that made me find myself better than before by doing activities and projects I like with amazing people."**

He now has refugee status, is working, and continues to pursue his passion for food while settling into life in the UK.

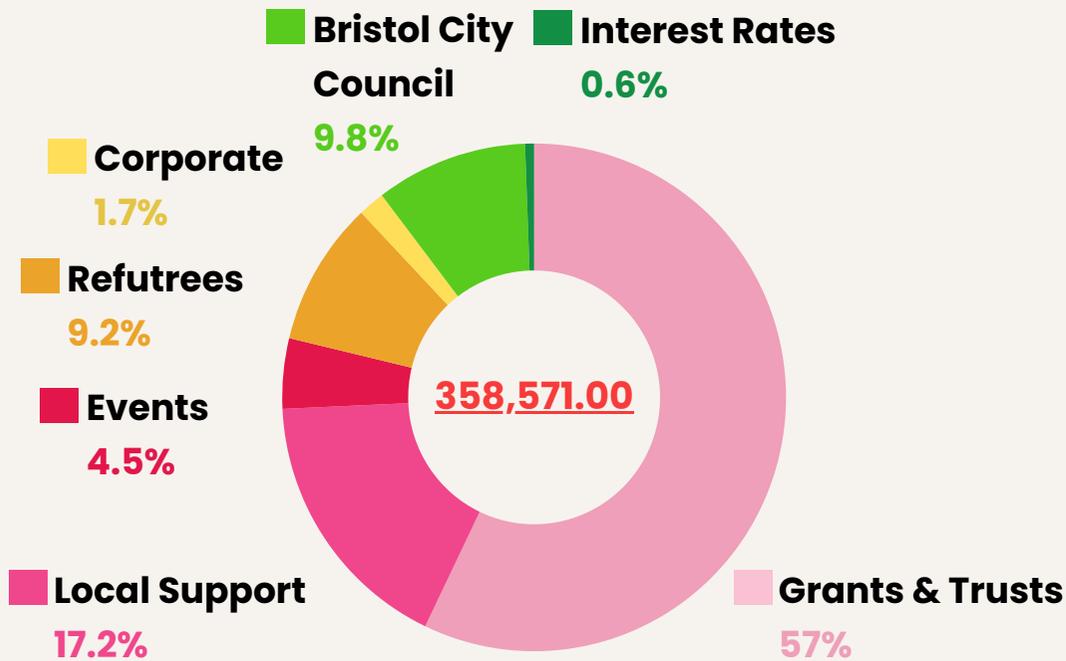
"I can say now I'm happy."



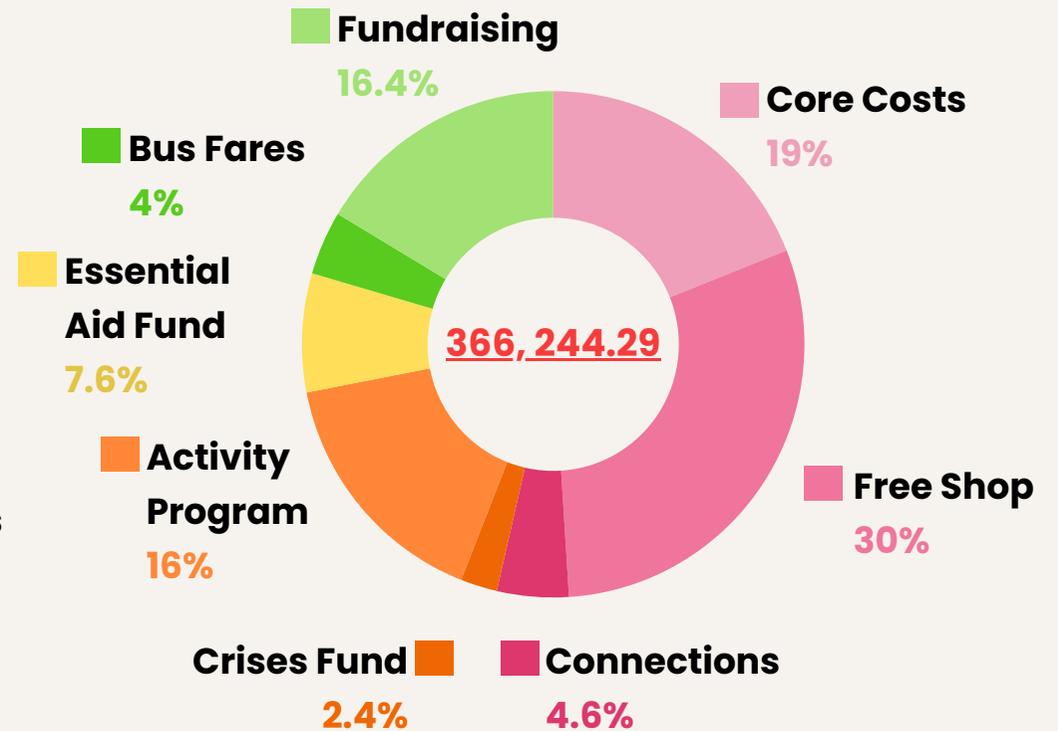
Financial Review

In the year 2024/25 our total income was **£358,571.00** and our total expenditure was **£366,244.29**.

Income



Expenditure



Looking Ahead



01 Our New Home



- Move into our new Welcome Hub – Church Hall, Sommerville Rd, St Andrews – and bring more services under one roof (Activities & Drop-In Space, Free Shop, Offices).
- Hold a public meeting to meet our neighbours.
- Host a 10 year celebration of ABC and the launch of the new space!

02 Expand Holistic Support Services



- Bring our external groups in-house, continuing our collaborations with partner organisations and individuals.
- Expand our in-house activities, making full use of the new space.
- Invite partner organisations to host drop-in sessions at ABC to support their outreach.

03 Strengthen Community & Partnerships



- Develop the impact and sustainability of BRASP (Bristol Refugee & Asylum Seeker Partnership).
- Host community sessions and cultural exchange events to foster connection and inclusion.



04 Empowering Lived Experience Leadership



- Strengthen our Lived Experience Working Group by offering more training opportunities.
- Create a structured pathway for service users to transition into volunteer, ambassador, or staff roles.
- Campaign with BRASP for improved access to bus travel, the right to work, and legal aid.

05 Fundraising



- Launch the Ambassador Programme to build relationships with businesses and corporate partners.
- Launch a community fundraising campaign and explore social enterprise opportunities.
- Tackle today's fundraising challenges with creativity and diverse income streams.



Meet Aid Box Community!



Our Community





 **AidBoxCommunity**

www.aidboxcommunity.co.uk
Charity Registration Number: 1172697

