

Working together to support refugees and people seeking asylum to flourish in Stockton.

Refugee
Futures



We recognise skills, creativity and strength, supporting people to build futures where everyone can **thrive, together.**

The change we hope to make

Our work helps people feel more confident, more connected, and better able to build their lives here.

Individuals will:

- Feel more connected and able to access services
- Build confidence, wellbeing and English skills
- Be better prepared for work that reflects their skills and aspirations

Communities and organisations will:

- Become more inclusive and welcoming
- Better recognise the skills and contributions of refugees
- Create more opportunities to volunteer, work and participate

By 2029, we aim to reach 60% of people seeking asylum and refugees arriving in Stockton.

How to get involved

There are simple, practical ways you can support our work and help build a more welcoming Stockton:

Skills Match: offer meaningful work placements that recognise people's skills, experience and potential.

Volunteer: share your time or expertise and help create welcoming opportunities across Stockton.

Donate: support practical projects that help people build long-term futures here.

Contact us: info@refugeefutures.org

01642 686 996

Find out more: Visit www.refugeefutures.org





Walk alongside us

ROADMAP - 2026 - 2029

Refugee Futures was established in 2021 with the vision of Stockton being a welcoming and inclusive place where people seeking asylum and refugees can feel a sense of belonging and maximise their skills and abilities.

Since then, our team and projects have grown and developed, with 345 people engaging in our work in 2024-2025.

Why do we do our work?

We recognise the skills, strengths, creativity and new perspectives within refugee and asylum-seeking communities that help Stockton become a place where everyone can flourish.

At any one time, between 700 to 900 people seeking asylum are placed by the UK Home Office in Stockton, with some families also arriving via resettlement schemes.

People face many barriers in building their futures, including racism, difficulty navigating support services, unfamiliarity with UK systems and culture, and restricted access to paid employment.

This is made harder by a challenging political environment.

By building strong partnerships across Stockton and creating opportunities for people to use their skills, we can work alongside people to build meaningful futures here.

We are committed to this work, whatever the political climate.



www.RefugeeFutures.org

Registered charity number: 1159508

How will we do this?

Our work focuses on reducing barriers, building confidence, and creating opportunities for people to participate, contribute and belong. We focus on three interconnected areas:

1. Welcome and orientation:

Providing accessible information, local orientation, connections to services and networks, and practical support, including signposting to immigration advice and ESOL, to help people navigate life in the UK.

2. Skills, confidence and contribution:

Creating opportunities for volunteering, learning, physical and creative activity, Skillsmatch work placements, mentoring and employment support - helping improve wellbeing and employability

3. Understanding, inclusion and belonging:

Fostering connections between new and established communities, supporting cross-cultural learning, undertaking refugee-led research, and developing pathways for lived experience leadership and participation

To support this work, we will:

- Place lived experience at the heart of our organisation, how we make decisions and what we do;
- Collaborate with agencies and groups across Stockton and Teesside
- Focus on the wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
- Work in ways that build on people's strengths, recognise life experiences and support their capacity to determine their futures.



Refugee Futures

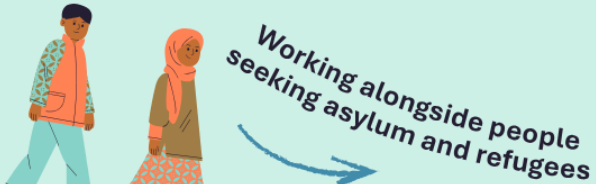
ROADMAP 2026-2029

Arriving in Stockton

Challenges

- navigating and accessing rights and support services
- racism and hostility
- limited English language and understanding of UK systems
- few opportunities to connect with people locally
- limited rights to work
- lack of social networks and confidence
- uncertainty and isolation

limited opportunities to use skills and build a future in Stockton



Working alongside people seeking asylum and refugees

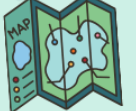
1

Welcoming and Connecting

to support arrival and orientation

Welcome Sessions
Signposting and supporting people to access their rights

Orientation Walks and Welcome Map
Helping people get to know the area and where services are



Living in the UK Workshops
information and discussion workshops designed and delivered by refugees

Scope and develop **community connectors** and work with **young people**

Service Fairs
supporting people to navigate services

Improved access to services

Improved local knowledge

Increased wellbeing



Skills and Opportunities

Create opportunities for people to find purpose and develop skills

2

Information and guidance to **access employment**

Skillsmatch placements with local organisations and businesses

Grow opportunities in private sector, including placements and mentoring

Scope delivery of **functional ESOL**

Action Asylum volunteering alongside local residents

Take part in and lead **physical and creative activities**

Communicate stories about the contributions made by refugees and people seeking asylum

Create opportunities and pathways for **lived experience leadership** in Refugee Futures

3

Increasing Understanding and Inclusion

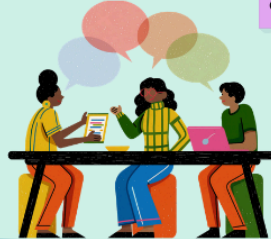
to support people's sense of belonging

Learn from and share findings from **refugee-led research programme**

Deliver **Working Across Cultures training** for public, private and voluntary sector colleagues

Create activities and opportunities that foster **connection between new and established communities**

Working in partnership



Increased opportunities

Meaningful employment

Increased connection between new and established communities

Wider recognition of skills, potential and contributions

Our vision

Stockton and the surrounding area is welcoming and inclusive to refugees and people seeking asylum so that:

- they belong
- are able to maximise their skills and abilities
- flourish within the community

Stockton is home



We will:

- Place lived experience at the heart of Refugee Futures
- Work in ways that understand and build on people's strengths

