

IMPACT REPORT 2018

Action Foundation make people feel safe. They understand them and help them not to give up.

Action Housing resident



INCLUDING:

- Overview of the year
- The year in numbers
- Project updates
- Evaluation of services
- Beneficiaries' stories
- Financial review

Overview Of The Year

by Julian Prior, CEO

The need for and difference that our services make is summarised well by the following quote from one of our guests on our Hosting project.



Before I was hosted I was anxious about the future, I didn't sleep, I was feeling very depressed. I wasn't feeling happy and I didn't know what to do. I was unsure about who could help me. But since going to the host I sleep very well, straight from the first night.



Enabling our beneficiaries to have some very basic needs met, makes such a difference to their ability to overcome their challenges and take more control of their future. None of this would be possible without the support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, funders, landlords and other supporters for which we are all extremely grateful. I would also like to pay tribute to the many people we support. Their bravery and resilience is truly inspiring and many have had a profound impact on shaping the way our services are provided.

Please note, some of the images used in this report do not directly relate to the beneficiary stories or quotes.



As always there has been a huge amount of development, progress and challenges to report on this year. The enclosed is a very brief summary that will hopefully give you something of a flavour. However, if you would like monthly updates you can contact us to receive our email news and/or become a friend on facebook.

Over the last year we have helped more people across a wider geographic area with the support of more volunteers than ever before (see page 3).

In July we launched our pilot project LET (Learn English Together) that supports other organisations to deliver English classes to migrants. We found that many groups would like to offer language support but needed some help to get started. Through LET we equip small community organisations across the North East with training and resources to enable them to deliver their own English sessions to migrants within their communities based on our functional, communicative model of delivery. See page 15 for more information.

In August we moved our base in Sunderland from The Place to Fusebox at 90 Coronation Street which is also the home of several other charities. This building meets our needs better and with a third classroom has enabled us to increase our provision of free English classes.

In February we welcomed Sirak Hagos to our Board of Trustees. Sirak

is a refugee from Eritrea who came to Newcastle 20 years ago. He leads the Eritrean Community Organisation and is involved in numerous refugee community initiatives promoting integration and employment. He is a social entrepreneur and owns several houses in the west of Newcastle. Sirak is also a former Board member of The British Refugee Council.



We were thrilled to partner with Westgate Baptist Church in opening a new house for asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds. This will provide three more vulnerable people with some much needed stability with the added benefit of support from the church community.

We are also very pleased to have been chosen by The Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor David Down, to be one of the two charities he has chosen for the year (2018/19). We look forward to working together to raise awareness of the needs of so many migrants in our region and the opportunities to be part of the solution in helping them overcome their exclusion, poverty and destitution.



The Year In Numbers



1413 refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants

were supported in all projects as described below...
(303 or 27% more than the previous year)

1140

action
LANGUAGE
(all migrants – see below)

157

LET
(all migrants via other organisations)

89

action
LETTING
(refugees only)

17

action
HOUSING
(asylum seekers with NRPF*)

12

action
HOSTING
(asylum seekers with NRPF*)

*No Recourse to Public Funds



88 Different Nationalities

60% Male

40% Female



17 Staff Employed
(15 full time equivalent)



224 Volunteers
(estimated value of £98,757)

action LANGUAGE

Immigration status:

Asylum seekers	44%
Refugees	13%
EU citizens	24%
Married to a UK citizen	4%
Accompanying spouse	3%
Other	12%

Age profile:

Aged 18 – 35 years	70%
Aged 36-50 years	24%
Aged 51+ years	6%

action LETTING



15 properties in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland (2 new properties)



59 bed capacity (increase of 9 beds)

action HOUSING



5 properties managed (1 new property)



16 bed spaces (increase of 4 beds)

LET

July 2017 – June 2018



5 organisations trained



53 volunteers



79 sessions delivered

action HOSTING



42 placements made in 21 hosts homes



22 nights of accommodation provided in hosts' homes

Details of outcomes gained by each project are listed under each project's section.

Action Letting provides supported accommodation to newly granted single adult refugees at risk of homelessness during their rapid transition to mainstream housing. We currently manage 15 properties in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland on behalf of private landlords. Residents receive weekly support to access local services including the bank and GP and to enrol on education or training courses. We help residents to integrate, increase their employability, improve their financial stability and increase their independence to enable them to move-on positively from our support.

In 2017/18 ...

- We have accommodated **89** new refugees in **15** properties in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland. Residents were aged between 19 and 49.
- **18** residents gained employment
- **88% of residents reported improved access to services** and improved confidence to access services independently
- **96% moved on positively** to live independently in private rented or local authority accommodation



Resident Support Trainer

In December 2017 we secured a grant from The Nationwide Building Society to increase our capacity to provide support and training to our residents. This grant enabled us to recruit a Resident Support Trainer to work in partnership with Open Door North East who provide a similar housing service in Teesside. This new role assists the support workers at both organisations to develop and implement a range of training programmes to enable clients to overcome practical, cultural and other barriers in understanding how to successfully manage their occupancy and to assist clients in becoming more independent as they move to their own accommodation. Subjects covered include; managing money, bills, health and safety in the home, security, shopping, cooking, and cleaning as well as external factors that better help the individual navigate and integrate into life in the UK.



Residents Forum meeting at The CastleGate ▲

Move-On Support

Over the past 6 months we have been able to provide additional move-on support to Action Letting residents through a grant from Help the Homeless. This grant enabled us to purchase essential move-on items including fridges, carpets and cookers for residents moving into unfurnished local authority properties.



“ Thank you for all of the help. Action Foundation have helped to make my house comfortable and I can live in it now and I am very happy. ”

Action Letting resident

Action Housing provides supported accommodation to destitute asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds. Due to their immigration status this extremely vulnerable group are unable to work or receive any government support and are therefore entirely reliant on the help of charities or friends to survive. We provide all residents with a private room in a shared house, travel passes to enable them to attend appointments and personalised practical and emotional support to help them access the services they need to be able to move on and resolve their immigration status.

In 2017/18...

- Provided supported accommodation to **17** destitute asylum seekers.
- Opened our **fifth** Action Housing property in Newcastle (March 2018) in partnership with Westgate Baptist Church increasing our total capacity to 16 bed spaces.
- Provided Bus Tickets to the value of **£9,849** enabling Housing residents to attend appointments, English classes and volunteering placements.



Residents discuss needs and ideas at the Residents Forum ▲

“ My situation before I moved to Action Foundation house was not good ... very, very hard. I was living in different houses every night, every week. I did not feel human. When I moved to the house I feel like I became a different person in the same day. You made a very, very big difference to my life. ”

Action Housing beneficiary

Legal Support

Accessing good quality legal support is vital for our residents in helping them resolve their immigration status. During the year we benefitted greatly from a Newcastle Law graduate volunteering with us to review the access our residents have to legal support locally. This has provided us with a clear analysis of the significant barriers our residents face and has informed our planning on how we can help them overcome these challenges by strengthening our internal capacity to provide accredited legal advice.



Being a member of the No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) has been so helpful, enabling us to exchange ideas and resources with other organisations doing similar work around the country. The network has grown significantly over the last year with 54 members collectively housing 3,471 asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants at risk of homelessness. In January NACCOM was one of the beneficiaries from the Guardian and Observer Winter appeal and was awarded £400k to redistribute to members as grants. Our CEO, Julian Prior has continued to Chair the Board of Trustees.

Residents on a trip to St James Park ▼



Action Hosting matches volunteers (hosts) offering a spare room in their home with a destitute asylum seeker (guests) to provide short-term accommodation. All hosts are fully trained and the thorough matching process means that placements are a positive experience for both hosts and guests. Our support workers support guests and our Hosting Co-ordinator provides on-going support to hosts.

In 2017/18...

- **1,921** nights of accommodation provided to **12** destitute asylum seekers
- **22** different households hosted our guests.
- **42** placements in homes.
- **8** guests successfully moved on.
- Bus Tickets provided to the value of **£4,941** enabling hosting guests to attend vital appointments, English classes and volunteering placements.

Since we started the project we have provided over 3,000 nights of accommodation through the generosity of our volunteer hosts.

The project was featured on BBC Look North and BBC Radio Newcastle in December 2017.



“Ahmed is cheerful and warm hearted. He is a delight to have around. He is clearly enormously patient and brave considering he can't be with his family. I can only hope that is resolved somehow.”

Host

Abdul's Story

Despite his difficult circumstances, Abdul* joined Action Language as a learner and then as a volunteer Teaching Assistant, before being hosted by Action Hosting in December 2017. With some housing stability, he was able to make a fresh claim for asylum with the Home Office and to move on to re-enter their support system. We were able to influence where his new accommodation placement was, as it was originally going to be outside of the North East where Abdul does not know anyone and away from a supportive network of friends and charities like Action Foundation. After speaking with the appointed housing provider about his considerable links to the area, they agreed to reallocate a place for him to stay in Gateshead. This has meant that Abdul has been able to both continue volunteering and to spend time with his many friends in a caring community.

**Name changed to protect identity. Image does not relate to Abdul's story.*



Action Language provides free community 'Skills for Life' English classes and employability courses to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants unable to access this through mainstream education. Each free class is delivered by a qualified volunteer teacher supported by several volunteer assistants. Classes focus on creating a social learning environment to equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and confidence to integrate, live independently and reach their potential.

In 2017/18 we have...

- Enrolled **1,140** learners (166 more than previous year)
- Increased the number of classes from **30 to 40** covering 6 ability levels from pre-entry to Level 1. Most growth has been in Sunderland.
- Taught **approximately 250** learners every week.
- Involved **208** volunteers providing support to students, maximising learning opportunities and ensuring classes are social and informative.

In Sunderland, demand for our classes has steadily increased since starting to deliver courses two years ago. Over the year we enrolled 227 learners and, with the support of 26 volunteers, were able to increase our delivery from 4 classes to 12 per week. Some of the sessions take place outside of the classroom to learn practical skills to assist living in Tyne and Wear.

To reach those most isolated we have continued to work with several partner organisations across Newcastle including the West End Women and Girls Centre and The Angelou Centre where we have provided mixed-level English courses.



“ I have been in the UK for three months. This is the first conversation I have had in any language. This is the best day! ”

Action Language student

“ Thank you for helping refugeey [refugee] people and a saellum [Asylum] people. You are very important for this country. Thank you for evry think [everything]. ”

Action Language student

Omar's Story

When he arrived Omar* could not read or write English at all, and spoke very little. He and his wife had two young children with a third on the way and he was keen to work to provide for his growing family. He started in the pre-Entry class; aimed at beginners. His spoken English improved, and he learned to read and write in English a little. After a year at Action Language, he found work in a warehouse. Unfortunately, his shifts clashed with his classes and he was no longer able to attend lessons. This was a shame as although his English had improved he was not a confident speaker and needed to use an interpreter for important conversations with his doctor. In addition, his children had started school and he was not able to speak much to the teachers about how they were getting on. As his children got older, he realised that if he was to help them at school he would need to improve his English and he has since enquired about returning to Action Language to pick up where he left off.

**Name changed to protect identity. Image does not relate to story.*



Monitoring Our Impact

Monitoring the impact of services for people who speak very little English can be challenging. Therefore, to better understand the difference our classes make and to inform how we can continually improve them we commissioned an external consultancy (with funding from Big Lottery) to interview a sample of our learners every six months for two and a half years. Below are some of their findings;

98%

feel their English has improved since starting classes at Action Language

60%

moved up a level after two years of attending classes (4 hours per week)

90%

increased their knowledge of local services they can access

77%

felt happier and more confident as a result of attending classes

“ It gave me a push to get used to being around people and it helped me make friends; they improved my language but the main thing was helping me connect with others. ”

“ We are very comfortable, can read everything new and it's a safe country and safe city. Sometimes I go to the library to study. ”



“ Overwhelmingly learners told us their experience of learning English at Action Language was positive. They liked the format and structure of classes and found the teachers to be patient, understanding and committed. The style of teaching increased learners' confidence and created a relaxed and comfortable environment in which to practice English, and learners could see improvements after each class. Most gained new friendships with fellow learners.

Of our cohort of 90 students; 19 maintained and 12 gained paid employment, 44 volunteered and 14 moved on to further education.

Each of the three groups (differentiated by immigration status), felt their independence had increased over the course of the study, particularly asylum seekers and refugees.

We found that learners' reliance upon interpreters reduced and that they felt much more confident in accessing basic services.

Action Language Evaluation Report – August 2018 – Trapeze Consulting ”

“ I couldn't even say a word when I just came to England. After one year's study at Action Language I am more confident. It helps me a lot in my everyday life. The teachers are all patient, friendly and helpful. I have made several friends with my classmates. Thank you very much. ”

“ I got the chance to improve a lot my English language and to meet new people and friends. Thanks to Action Language and ESOL for Work course, I got my job in the UK, I really feel much more confident. ”

LET: Learn English Together

In July we launched our pilot project LET (Learn English Together). This project equips small organisations with the skills, resources and confidence to deliver English sessions to their local community, often reaching those in more isolated parts of the North East where there is limited formal ESOL provision.

To date (July 2018) we have trained **53** volunteers across **5** organisations (from Ashington to Redcar) who have delivered classes to **157** learners at **79** sessions. We also have another 4 groups in the process of being registered and trained as part of this project.

“ **Action Foundation has been pivotal in the North East Migration Partnerships plans to support ESOL provision in the region. They have been proactive in reaching out to its informal and formal partners to drive up standards, work with volunteers to train others and provide greater accessibility to language support.** ”

Janine Hartley - North East Migration Partnership Manager



▲ Working together for North East ESOL. Conference organised by Action Language in partnership with NEMP.

▲ LET resource box.

Other Activities

We secured contracts with Newcastle, Gateshead and Redcar Local Authorities to support their delivery of English classes to Syrian refugees (who arrived through the Government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme) who were struggling to engage in mainstream English provision.

We have taught Healthcare professionals English for a number of years to enable them to pass their IELTS (International English Language Testing System). However, this year we have also worked with Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust to support their recruitment of Psychiatrists from abroad by assessing their English communication skills.

action
LANGUAGE PRO

Accredited by the
BRITISH COUNCIL
for the teaching
of English in the UK

Action Language PRO delivers high level, intensive, English language courses (IELTS exam preparation) to students who want to study at a UK university, work for professional organisations or gain a qualification to evidence English language ability. We are accredited by The British Council to deliver these courses in Newcastle.

Income generated from the above activities contributes to some of the overhead costs of running Action Language.



Financial Review

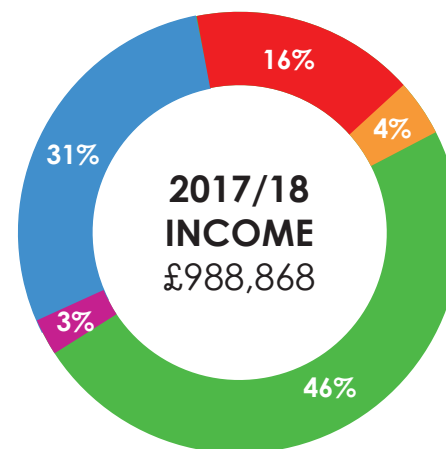
Our income increased on the previous year by 16% to £988,868. This has been mainly due to some significant new grant awards from trusts and foundations (see back page) and an increase in the income from Housing Benefit from Action Letting residents largely due to gaining Exempt Accommodation Status in Sunderland. Overall income takes into account gifts in kind (£162,362) which covers volunteers' time, houses donated or those that we manage at below a market rent as well as office and classroom space which has continued to be provided at a subsidised rate by City Church who own The CastleGate.

Donations have fallen on the previous year due to receiving fewer large one off gifts this year. However, our overhead/support costs reduced substantially this year as the previous year incurred significant one off capital expenditure related to opening the office in Sunderland and changes to our Newcastle office.

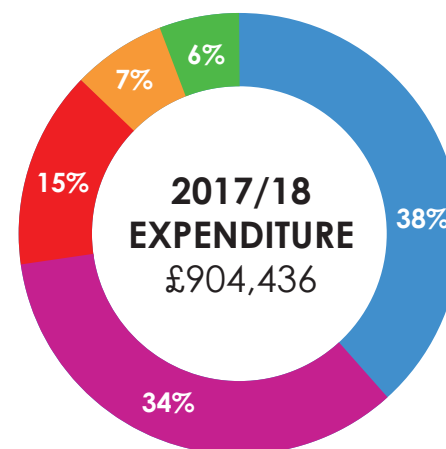
In order for the charity to become more sustainable in the future we took on a Head of Trust Fundraising to release our CEO to be able to develop new projects and sustainable income for the charity so that we become less grant dependant in the future. We have been working hard to diversify our income as we think our main sources of funds (Housing Benefit and grants) have limited growth potential in the future. We are very grateful to Lloyds Bank Foundation who have supported us in exploring how to go about this. Whilst there is much more to do we have made some good progress as we have won several contracts with local authorities to deliver English sessions to Syrian refugees who are part of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. We are exploring a significant opportunity for new business development that will generate a new source of income as well as supporting our core client group. We have also focussed on increasing our community fundraising and in September 2017, for the first time, we had runners who took part in the Great North Run.



Income and Expenditure 2017/18



	2016/17	2017/18
Total Income	£848,306	£988,868
Grants	£299,920	£454,011
Rent/Housing Benefit	£282,934	£308,378
In Kind*	£177,066	£162,362
Donations/Gift Aid	£66,542	£38,477
Contracts/Trading	£21,844	£25,640



	2016/17	2017/18
Total Expenditure	£871,361	£904,436
Letting	£316,385	£348,576
Language	£285,698	£306,373
Housing/Hosting	£117,557	£134,575
Overheads/Support	£108,854**	£59,978
Fundraising	£42,867	£54,934

Funds carried forward on 1st April 2018 was £225,457 of which £89,356 was unrestricted reserves. For a full copy of our Annual Report of Accounts see our website or the Charity Commission website.

*Volunteers' time and houses rented below market rate.

** Including significant one-off capital costs for office renovation and IT support.

We are very grateful for the support of all our individual donors, churches, volunteers, landlords, supporters and the following trusts and foundations:

Trusts & Foundations 2017-18

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

AB Charitable Trust

Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund

Changing Lives (from Newcastle City Council - Supporting People)

Chowdene Church Gateshead

City Church Newcastle

Clothworkers' Foundation

Commonweal Housing

Community Foundation Serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

County Durham Community Foundation

Erasmus+ (in partnership with Newcastle University)

Evan Cornish Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

Help the Homeless

Henry Smith Charity

Hospital of God at Greatham

Jill Franklin Trust

Leslie Aldridge Trust

Lloyds Bank Foundation

Nationwide Building Society

North East Migration Partnership

Pattinson Estate Agents Fund

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Persula Foundation

Pea Green Boat Community First Fund

Porters Trust

Redevco Foundation

“ I am a big supporter of Action Foundation. They have been groundbreaking in breaking the cycle of destitution that faces so many people in the asylum system. ”

Maurice Wren, Chief Executive, Refugee Council (Patron – Action Foundation)

action
FOUNDATION

Charity No. 1132051
Company No. 6946097

Newcastle:

0191 231 3113

The CastleGate, Melbourne Street
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2JQ

Sunderland:

0191 567 0222

Fusebox , 90 Coronation Street
Sunderland, SR1 2HE

✉ info@actionfoundation.org.uk

👉 www.actionfoundation.org.uk

