

# IMPACT REPORT 2019/20



“

Action Foundation gives hope to vulnerable people, guiding them to a better life, it is a life-changing charity offering a real sense of involvement.

Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Susan Winfield

”

# What We Do

Action Foundation provides support for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants to integrate successfully into the community and lead more independent and resilient lives through the following projects:



## interaction

Free citywide multi-agency drop-in building meaningful connections in the community.

[read more on page 5](#)



## action LANGUAGE

Providing volunteer led skills for life community English classes

[read more on page 7](#)



## action HOUSING

Supported accommodation to destitute asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds.

[read more on page 9](#)



## action LETTING

Supported accommodation to newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness.

[read more on page 11](#)



## action HOSTING

Matching volunteers offering a spare room with a destitute asylum seeker.

[read more on page 12](#)

*N.B. July 2020 - Action Hosting has been temporarily put on hold due to Covid*



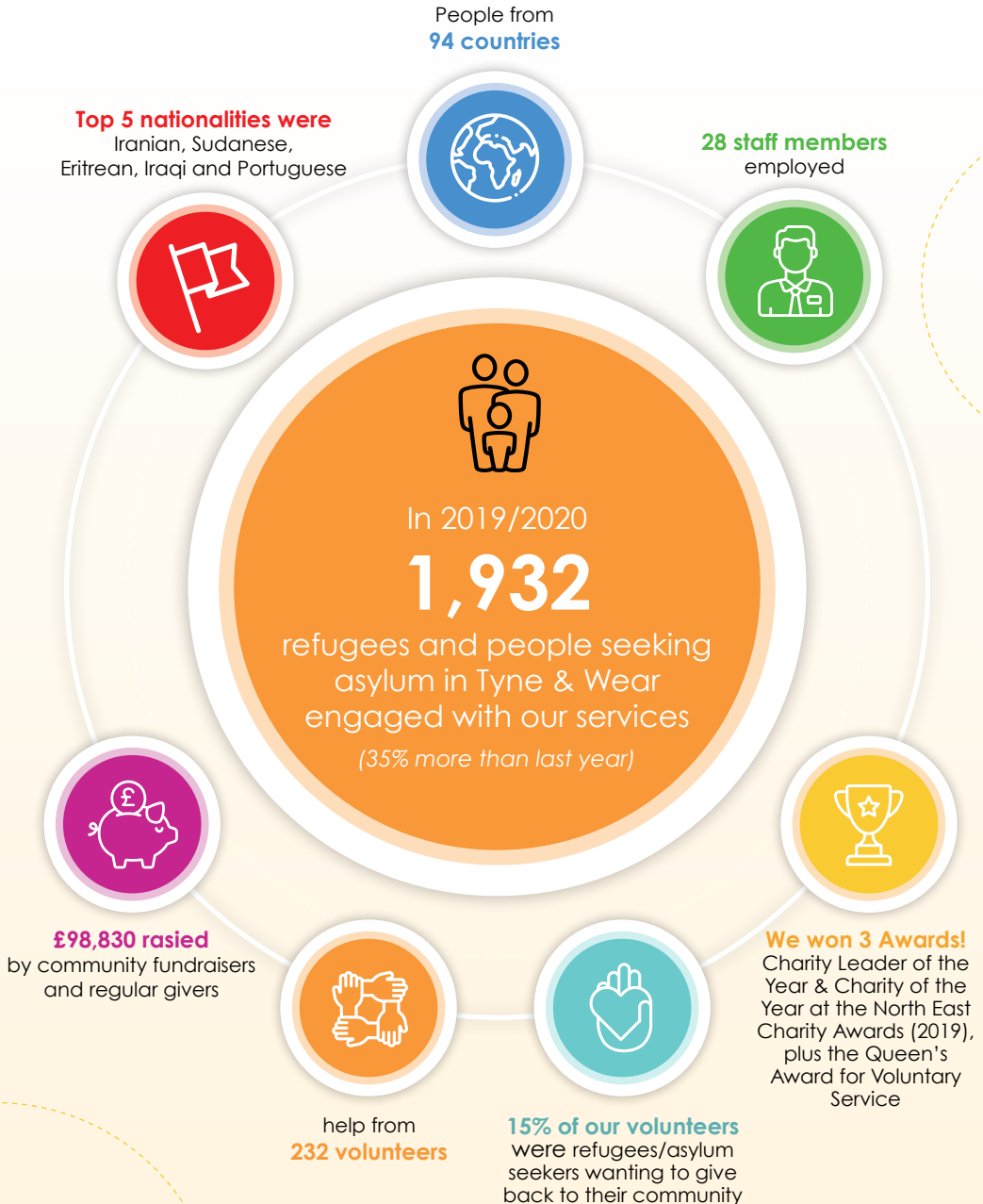
## action ACCESS

Two-year pilot providing an 'alternative to detention' for female asylum seekers.

[read more on page 10](#)

Our Resident Support Training Programme supports clients across all our projects – [read more on page 13](#)

# The Year in Numbers



# Introduction

*by Julian Prior, CEO*

It was a real honour to win the North East Charity of the Year and The Queens Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of our work and particularly the contribution made by our volunteers. The compassion and expertise that they contribute is phenomenal and it is especially pleasing to see how many people with personal experience of migration are getting involved (making up 43% of volunteers at our InterAction Drop-ins).

The impact of the Coronavirus has had such a major impact on our

beneficiaries and the way we support them. It has made an isolated group of people even more vulnerable to disorientation, deteriorating mental/physical health and extreme poverty.

However, it has also presented opportunities to rethink how we support our beneficiaries and work even more collaboratively with other organisations to not only provide practical support but also talk to local and national Government about a better way of supporting migrants going forward in a way that we have not been able to before the pandemic.

I couldn't be prouder of how our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers have responded to these challenges.

We have learnt a lot during the first half of 2020 that I am confident will equip us well as we look to further develop and strengthen our support for vulnerable migrants in the future.

I hope you enjoy reading about the impact of our work and feel as inspired as I do about what we can achieve when we all work together. Thank you so much for your interest and to all those who have contributed in what-ever way you have been able over the last year.



*Action Foundation celebrate a double win at the North East Charity of the Year Awards 2019.*

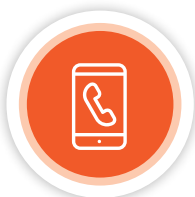
When the Covid Lockdown began in March 2020, Action Foundation swiftly mobilised to help isolated and vulnerable people around Tyne & Wear by connecting them with the help they needed.

# Covid-19 Crisis Response



## 55 Volunteers

joined staff to help deliver the Covid response



## Regular SMS messages

sent out to over 1,000 beneficiaries with up to date + accessible info about the pandemic and our services

“Thank you very much for all your attention and love in these very difficult days.

Beneficiary

## We helped **401 people** from **210 households** to provide:



**344** welfare calls made to 274 people



**128** one-off food parcels and **75** regular food parcels



**35** cleaning packs



**35** toiletry packs



**12** clothing bundles



**26** responses to requests for practical support e.g household goods



**133** SIM and internet top-ups



**28** items of technology given to individuals and families



**66** people helped with casework

*\*Figures from the start of lockdown to the end of July 2020.*

InterAction is a citywide multi-agency twice weekly drop-in project in Newcastle that provides a friendly and supportive environment to help new and other migrants experiencing loneliness, isolation and feelings of disorientation. The sessions also offer crucial connections with other agencies at a time when migrants might have issues they can't deal with alone.

# interaction

Since the launch in May 2019:



851 individuals  
have attended



160 people  
have registered  
as regular attendees



53 Volunteers  
gave their time to this  
project 43% of whom  
are Asylum Seeker or  
Refugees



33 Agencies  
have offered advice  
and support at the  
drop-ins

Having people available to interpret, other professionals available to refer to and being able to have a face to face session have all improved our service provision.

Kirsty Saunders  
Newcastle City Council,  
School Admissions



*Covid-19: InterAction Drop-ins were put on hold in March 2020 over lockdown, restarting in July with a socially distanced and carefully managed approach.*



# Walid's Story

Walid arrived in the UK with his family from Libya and has been a regular at our InterAction Drop-ins. He had to leave his home country because his political activity made things very difficult. He has three children, but his daughter is severely disabled, and wheelchair bound. The family were having problems getting her transported to her local school, so the InterAction team helped Walid fill in the required forms for the council.

"They are now sending out transportation to our home to take my daughter to school. We are so happy," said Walid.

He is now a volunteer at our Drop-ins and is able to support other migrants as he speaks three languages. He told us: "I like to help people and give them my experience if they need it. I want to give something back."



I have big problems in the UK, I feel I can share them here. I can talk and people are good.

Drop-in attendee



Providing free  
English lessons to  
refugees, asylum  
seekers and other  
migrants.

Over the academic  
year, we enrolled:



**912 Students**

(752 in Newcastle + 160 in  
Sunderland)



**80 Nationalities**



Help from **172 volunteer**  
teachers and classroom  
assistants whose time was  
worth £178,685

Covid-19: Action Language classes  
were put on hold in March 2020,  
restarting in June with a  
combination of delivering  
lessons via Zoom, over the  
phone and through the post.

# action LANGUAGE

If you would like to find out more about  
volunteering with **Action Language** please  
contact [info@actionlanguage.org.uk](mailto:info@actionlanguage.org.uk)

Thanks to Action  
Language I had  
the opportunity to  
improve the English  
language, meeting  
people (potential  
friends) and feeling more  
safe and settled.

Learner



There is so much negativity towards  
people from different countries and  
religions that a weekly dose of meeting  
likeminded people and sharing my  
skills to help others improve their life  
opportunities is immensely rewarding  
and empowering.

Volunteer





# Sylvie's Story

Sylvie originally came from the Ivory Coast, she lived in Italy for 16 years because her father lived there and then decided to make the move to the UK with her three children to give them a better education, one of whom has learning difficulties.

"It was a challenge for me, I like the English language, but couldn't speak it and didn't know how. I studied English at school but nothing like enough. Coming here was a big challenge in my life!"

"I lived with my brother, his wife and children for six months when we first got here. I couldn't speak or understand English, so I took Action Language classes for a year. They were so supportive to me, and one of the volunteers, who speaks a bit of French, helped me a lot."

"Now I feel very good with English and am studying my Level 1 at Newcastle College to improve even more."

"I'm so happy and my children are so happy! My husband is studying at Action Language now. I want to say thank you to the staff for the help they give."



Providing supported accommodation for people who have been refused asylum and have **No Recourse to Public Funds.**

# action HOUSING



Over the last year we provided supported accommodation to **23 destitute asylum seekers**



We have supported **11 residents** to engage with legal representation

There was a noticeable lift in his attitude and well-being - he was able to start recovering some of the confidence that had been squashed out of him over the 20 years.

Action Foundation  
Support Worker



Homeless for 18 months, Soran\* had been refused asylum, had no legal representation and had a serious medical condition which meant he was in and out of hospital. Sleeping rough had left the young Kurdish man extremely vulnerable without food, phone credit, access to English classes and his health was at risk.

## How did Action Foundation help Soran?

- ✓ A warm and clean room in a shared house
- ✓ Registered with a GP
- ✓ Arranged deliveries of food + toiletries with local foodbank
- ✓ Provided internet access + TV for improving English, keeping in touch and informed
- ✓ Arranged appointment at Newcastle College for ESOL assessment
- ✓ Linked him up with local social groups for people in the asylum system
- ✓ Well-being checks
- ✓ Arranged for legal representation to help him resolve his immigration status

A two-year pilot project run with the Home Office and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) providing housing and support to women who are seeking asylum and would otherwise be held in a detention centre.



To date, this innovative project has **supported 18 women**. We have increased the amount of women we can accommodate up to 21 on this project at any one time.

I have a regular house to live in that I can be proud of, I'm learning English and I've been able to see a doctor and a dentist for the first time in 10 years!

Client



# action

## ACCESS



The difference we see in the women from when they arrive and after a few months in is incredible. They gain confidence in themselves, whether that be by using public transport for the first time, getting on top of their health needs, engaging in ESOL classes, or volunteering out in the community and meeting new friends in the city. It is wonderful to see their growth and the way they engage with their support worker to make their time on the pilot as positive as can be.

Support worker

This pilot represents a unique partnership between the state and civil society.

NatCen Inception Report

Providing short-term supported accommodation for newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness.

# action LETTING



In the last year we provided supported accommodation to **112 refugees**



Action Foundation currently manage **15 Letting properties** in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland



**62 people** moved on positively to social housing or moved in with friends/family to live more independently



Volunteer hosts are trained to house destitute people seeking asylum who would otherwise be homeless in a spare room of their home for a short period of time.

# action HOSTING

If you would like to find out more about becoming a host, please contact: [hosting@actionfoundation.org.uk](mailto:hosting@actionfoundation.org.uk)



**16 clients were hosted** in total, 9 women and 7 men



**They were originally from** Somalia, Iran, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Chad, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, DRC and Gambia.



**18 Volunteer Hosts** stepped up to be part of this amazing project and between them gave a total of **1,596 nights' accommodation.**

Hosting is a humbling experience; it makes me very grateful for what I have and teaches me not to take it for granted.

Volunteer host



It's given me a different life and made me strong and I look after myself now. Maybe I would have died if I had not been helped by Action Hosting.

Guest

*N.B. July 2020 - Action Hosting has been temporarily put on hold due to Covid*



Our RSTP forms part of the support package provided for our residents that focusses on their immediate needs as they adjust to their new surroundings.

# Resident Support Training Programme (RSTP)

**In 2019/2020 the team delivered...**



**53** training sessions



to **178** participants



covering **13** topics

**Giving people tailored training and support in important life skills including:**

- ✓ Budgeting
- ✓ Communal Living
- ✓ Accessing Healthcare
- ✓ Managing You Own Tenancy
- ✓ Finding Work
- ✓ Legal & Cultural Framework

**Feedback from people attending the courses:**

The session was really useful and beneficial for me. I used your advice for my job interview which was today, it was much better than that I expected!

Very useful, I will start budgeting after this.

I wish I'd known this information before. I asked for advice and the advice I got was very good. I'm happy to understand the law better for my own protection, things are different from home.

*\*The RSTP was also open to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants who were not Action Foundation residents.*



# Trustees Update

After 15 years at the helm, Adrian Smith is handing over the Chair of Trustees role to David Lyall. Plus we're delighted to be welcoming Gil Okai as the latest trustee to the Board.



## **Adrian Smith**

I've been involved with Action Foundation pretty much from the very beginning. Initially we were only focused on housing and providing support for asylum seekers. Julian was the only "staff" member paid by City Church. We have grown from what might be described as a "cottage industry" to a significant regional charity with 28 staff members, helping hundreds of clients by providing a wide range of services, and a budget over £1.5m. We are well networked with local authorities, and other charities and our achievements have been recognised in regional and national awards. My advice would be for David to draw fully on his skills in listening to and enabling others, plus always keeping an open mind towards what may open up in the future.

## **David Lyall**

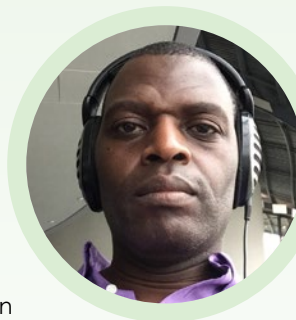
I have huge respect for our retiring chair and thrilled that he will remain on the board to steer me through the initial period. This is such an exciting time for



us, with our growing impact in housing, language, community building and through the many partnerships we have. It feels like a key time to review where we are going in the light of Covid-19 and the many opportunities and challenges before us. I'm looking forward to working with Julian and the management team and the trustees to ensure that we continue to attract the right people onto the board and into the organisation and that we only grow where that is sustainable and in line with our vision and values

## **Gil Okai**

I was born and bred in Newcastle, I've escaped a couple of times, but an invisible piece of elastic keeps bringing me back! I started working in the world of finance in the 1990s and am now a financial adviser, non-executive Director for two pension schemes, business adviser and mentor. Back in 2008 whilst visiting Ghana I worked with the Salvation Army International and UK offices to rescue a destitute woman from a homeless life on the streets. When I returned, I was appalled at profound difficulties faced by people seeking rehabilitation from rough sleeping here in Newcastle. I now volunteer for two Newcastle churches working at the frontline to rescue the homeless. That led me to meet Julian in May 2019. The rest as they say is history....



Thanks to our amazing supporters and community fundraisers for not only making our campaigns a success but also for their own endeavours including being part of the Great North Run, hosting Curry Lunches, Bake Sales and taking on Sponsored Swims...

# Fundraising

## Our main fundraising campaigns raised:



**£19,564**  
for Gift of Words  
campaign  
to support Action  
Language



**£18,001**  
for Christmas Home  
or Alone campaign  
to support Action  
Hosting

**Total £37,565**



In 2019/20 -  
38 community fundraisers  
**raised £11,405**



And with the **£49,860** contributed by  
our one-off and regular donors, this adds  
up to a mighty total of

**£98,830**

(up from £57,764 2018/19)

Contact

**[fundraising@actionfoundation.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@actionfoundation.org.uk)**  
to find out more.

The flexibility of doing my own challenge really appealed, especially as the pool is only a 10 minute walk from where I live.

Fundraising Volunteer who set her own challenge of swimming the same distance as the English Channel



# Finances



=



+



+



For every **£1**  
received we spent...

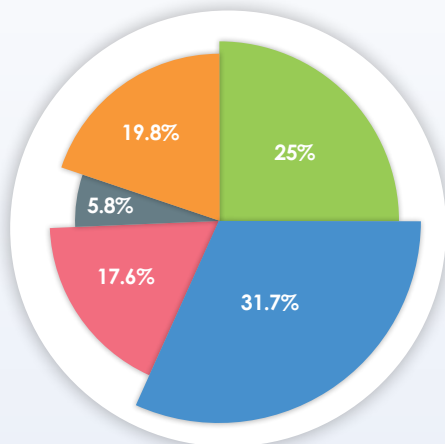
**88p** on helping  
people

**8p** on fundraising to  
secure our future

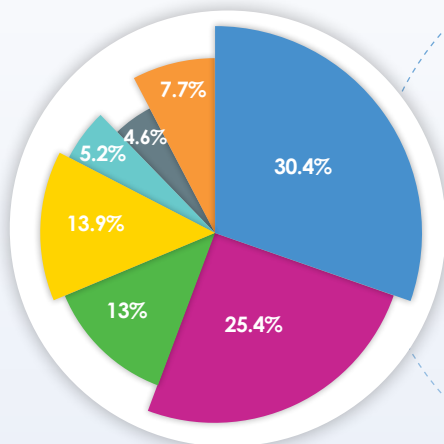
**4p** on other  
overheads

The above is calculated on a 'full cost recovery' basis of accounting.

## Money in



## Money out



	2019/20	2018/19
Grants	<b>£423,662</b>	£354,195
Rent/Housing Benefit	<b>£536,617</b>	£482,619
In Kind Support*	<b>£297,617</b>	£282,104
Donations Gift Aid	<b>£98,830</b>	£57,764
Contracts	<b>£335,491</b>	£135,865
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,692,217</b>	£1,312,547

	2019/20	2018/19
Letting	<b>£422,568</b>	£347,823
Language	<b>£353,045</b>	£378,383
Housing/Hosting	<b>£180,782</b>	£155,696
Access	<b>£193,429</b>	£63,875
InterAction	<b>£71,960</b>	£28,077
Overheads/Support	<b>£63,553</b>	£63,596
Fundraising	<b>£106,819</b>	£60,522
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,392,156</b>	£1,097,972

For a full copy of our financial statements please see the Charity Commission Website.

*\*Volunteers' time and houses rented below market rate*

# Thank You

A very big thank you goes out to all the individual donors, churches, volunteers, landlords, supporters and the following trusts, foundations and other organisations that have funded our work in the year ending 31 March 2020.

- AB Charitable Trust
- The Rayne Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity \*
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Joyce Trust
- Grigor McClelland Fund \*
- Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales
- Controlling Migration Fund (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government)
- Refugee Action (National Lottery Community Fund)
- Newcastle University
- Changing Lives (from Newcastle City Council)
- The Sir James Knott Trust
- Pea Green Boat Community First Fund \*
- Newcastle Fund
- Shadow Fund
- Buildings Connections Fund (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport & National Lottery Community Fund)

*\*Grants administered through the Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland.*



***Language changes lives. You need the right words to speak to a doctor, apply for a job, forge a friendship or navigate the housing market. Action Foundation provides absolutely vital help for so many people in need.***

Julie Elliott, MP Sunderland Central



***It's not just the things we've been given, it's how supported we have been as a family. I'm focussing on my hopes for the future... I want to finish my studies and find a job helping people.***

Fouad, Refugee





**action**  
FOUNDATION

Charity No. 1132051  
Company No. 6946097

**Newcastle:**

0191 231 3113

CastleGate at CityChurch, Melbourne Street  
Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 2JQ

**Sunderland:**

0191 567 0222

Fusebox, 90 Coronation Street  
Sunderland, SR1 2HE

✉ [info@actionfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@actionfoundation.org.uk)

➡ [www.actionfoundation.org.uk](http://www.actionfoundation.org.uk)



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

