

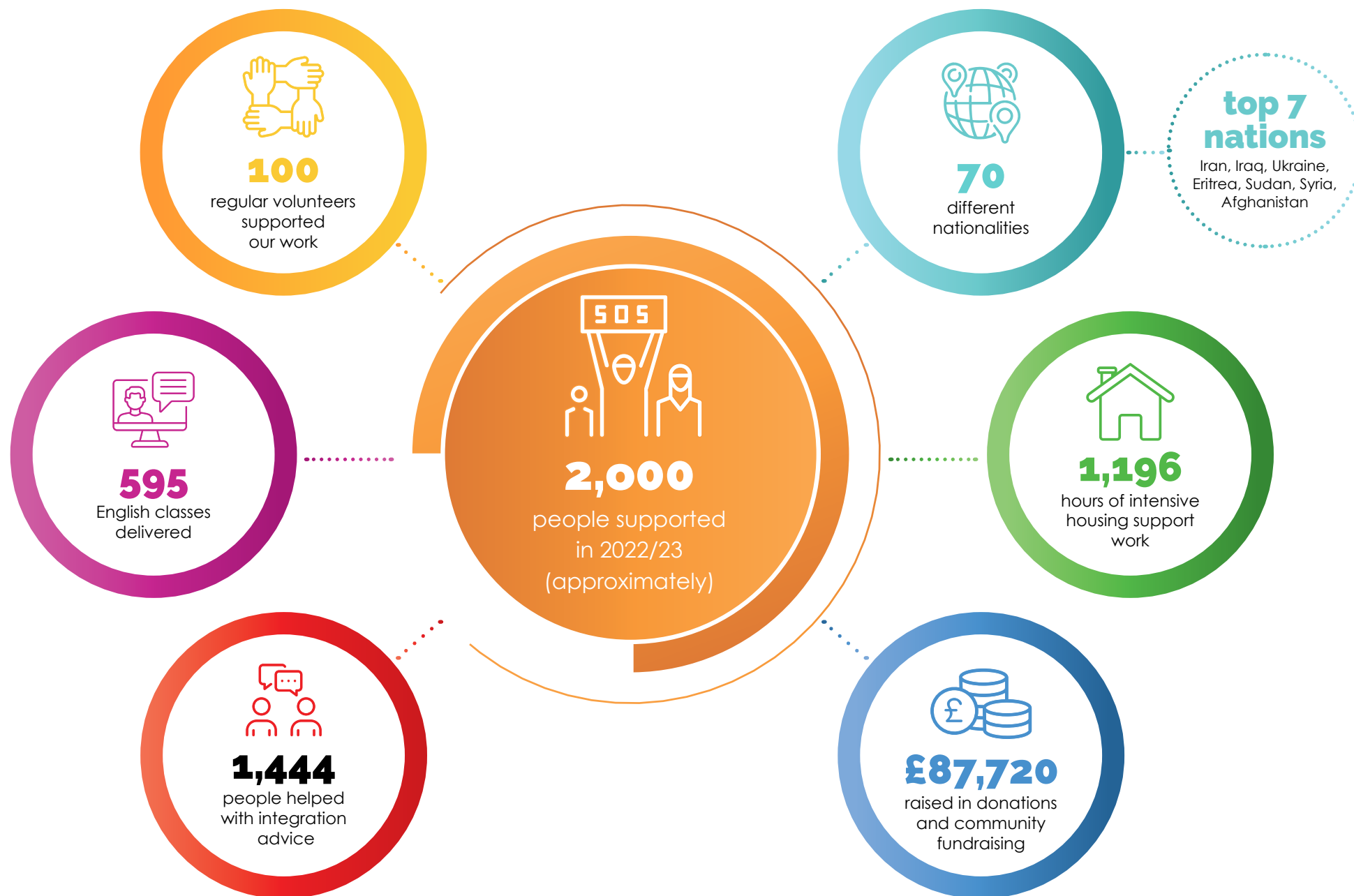
A photograph of two women wearing hijabs, one in grey and one in purple, working together on a craft project. They are holding several carnations, some yellow and some pink, and appear to be arranging them. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other people in a social setting. Overlaid on the image are three orange circular graphics containing text.

action
FOUNDATION

**IMPACT
REPORT**
2022/23

**Empowering
Refugees
To Overcome
Exclusion**

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



INTRODUCTION

by Duncan McAuley, CEO

It's been another busy and rewarding year, with our work supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the North East reaching almost 2,000 people and their families. We have gathered momentum on our new social prescribing project in South Tyneside, delivered training to local authorities, completed our Just the Ticket travel costs campaign and started delivery of our new Strategy 2022-25.

It's been a hugely challenging year financially, which resulted in us making some necessary changes to our staff team and our Action Language project. That difficult and quite honestly

painful process has put us in a really strong position to continue to grow and provide support over the coming years despite the cost of living crisis and the significant challenges the charity sector is facing.

As government policy continues to target migrants, we're committed to providing welcome and support to those seeking safety and making their home here from across the world.


Duncan



A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

By David Lyall

Welcome to Action Foundation's Impact Report! I would like to start by thanking our amazing staff, volunteers and partners for their tremendous teamwork this year in providing such a rich and warm welcome to new arrivals in the North East, as well as the ongoing support we have provided to hundreds of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

In this report you will find some stories of the incredible impact our work has had on the lives of remarkable people like Victoria, Destin and Feras. I enjoyed reading them and reflecting on the ongoing value of what we have all achieved together and hope you do too.

As a Board of Trustees, we are keenly aware of the opportunities and challenges before us as an organisation and so regularly seek to strengthen and further diversify our membership. We have gained greatly from the additions of Gaby Mandell and Rola Naeb to the Board. Both have brought a wealth of experience and wisdom to our work and we look forward to further additions to our numbers in the coming months.

A key challenge for us at present is ensuring the health and viability of our Accommodation, Action Language and InterAction projects, whilst also looking to diversify where we identify gaps in essential provision to our clients. Our preferred approach is always to do this in partnership with others. We are also determined to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the organisation in this time of global turmoil.


David



GIVING PEOPLE A HOME



action HOUSING



We provided supported accommodation to **24 destitute asylum seekers** from **10 different countries**.



75% of clients moved on positively to live independently.



92% of those who completed a legal review had a positive outcome*

action LETTING



We supported **84 newly recognised refugees**, helping **36 to move** into independent living.



We helped arrange **4 family reunions** for people whose relatives were in other countries.



Our support workers clocked up an amazing **1,196 hours**, helping people to engage with legal advice, register with GPs, arrange college appointments and much more



Action Foundation currently manages **11 properties** in Newcastle and **7 in Gateshead** with **63 bedspaces** in total

*Where people were either granted refugee status, re-engaged with the asylum system or chose to return to their home country.

COULD YOU BE A PHILANTHROPIC LANDLORD?

We couldn't deliver our supported housing programme without the commitment of our philanthropic landlords. We're currently supported by 12 generous landlords who make their properties available to us at either a nominal or reduced monthly rent and our recent Room for Refugees campaign attracted new interest. Fiona Hall is one of our landlords.

She says: "***I would say to anyone who is considering renting to Action Foundation: 'Do it!' It's easier than renting to tenants directly, and you are giving a home to people who through no fault of their own might otherwise end up sleeping on the streets.***"

For more information, contact:
helencowgill@actionfoundation.org.uk

VICTORIA'S STORY

We just love it when our clients move out!

If that sounds harsh, allow us to clarify. Of course, we miss the friends we've got to know, but every move-on means we've helped empower that person to live independently.

Victoria has just moved into her own [Your Homes Newcastle](#) flat after many years living in Action Foundation accommodation.

Victoria first sought asylum in the UK almost 23 years ago and though she was granted another two years to remain here last year, she will have to reapply again. When you're living in that kind of limbo, it's important to have a secure place to stay.

Action Foundation stepped in 13 years ago when Victoria found herself homeless. She had been dispersed to Newcastle from London by the Home Office and, although she was able to stay with friends for a while, she could not depend on them indefinitely.

She was given a room in a shared house through our [Action Housing project](#) for destitute asylum seekers and was allocated a one-to-one support worker, Denise, who supported Victoria with her emotional wellbeing, particularly through her father's ill health and, when he died, her bereavement.

Denise also helped Victoria to access legal help and then with her Universal Credit claim and application for an independent tenancy.

After years of neglecting her hobbies – Victoria loves yoga and painting – she at last feels sufficiently settled to rediscover her passions and has begun teaching yoga as a volunteer.

In her new flat she has a big room filled with light which she's turned into a studio for her painting and yoga. Looking to the future, she would like to teach yoga professionally online.

She says: "***I don't know how I could have survived for so many years without having somewhere to live. Action Foundation has offered me a lot of help and I would like to say a big thank you.***"



GIVING PEOPLE A VOICE ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

action LANGUAGE



More than **700 people** attended our free English language classes from **68 different nationalities**.



Our staff and volunteers delivered **595 in-person classes in total** (442 in Newcastle and 153 in Sunderland).



1,412 classes were delivered online.



73 dedicated volunteers gave their time freely to support our Action Language project.



Black Impact's Class
of 2022 Awards



DESTIN'S STORY

Former Action Language learner Destin* from Congo (Brazzaville) was a destitute asylum seeker who is now studying for an MSc at Oxford University.

In 2022 he won the Academic Excellence category in the Black Impact Awards, which support leadership and career development with black students at 30 universities across the UK.

Finding our free Action Language classes was a game changer for Destin.

"I went to two different colleges but you couldn't access mainstream classes unless you had lived in England for over six months so I was hopeless until somebody told me about Action Foundation."

After improving his command of English with us, Destin volunteered as an English teaching assistant, helping other students.

In 2019, supported by his Action Language teachers, he qualified for a Sanctuary Scholarship at Northumbria University and graduated last year with first class honours in International Relations and Politics.

"That was down to the support of people at Action Foundation like Libby (Selman) and her colleagues, helping me improve my academic language, though I'm still learning – it's a process!"

Destin is now studying the theory and practice of democracy in Africa.

Asked what having access to free English classes means to newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, he added:

"It's crucial to their survival. Language connects people, takes away the barrier and makes you feel part of the community if you will. It was crucial for my survival."

His teacher Libby said:


"We knew Destin was someone special when he walked into the Advanced group's first class of the year. He has masses of friends and supporters and we're all very proud of his achievements."


*Destin is a pseudonym to respect our former student's anonymity





GIVING PEOPLE HOPE ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶


interaction


 **1,444 people** were supported through our casework by more than 30 volunteers.

 **81% of volunteers** were people with lived experience of migration and three out of four project staff were refugees or asylum seekers.

 **30% of case work** was around asylum issues.

 We recorded almost **4,000 attendances** at Drop-ins and saw over **1,200 new clients**.

 InterAction welcomed **70 different nationalities**.

 **Top five nations** represented: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea and Sudan.

 Our new project at South Tyneside's STARCH* Drop-in helped **109 people to better navigate health** and asylum pathways.

*South Tyneside Asylum Seekers & Refugees Church Help

FERAS'S STORY

Feras has a favourite baseball cap bearing the logo - 'Freedom'.

It's the word he uses to describe how he felt when he finally gained refugee status in May 2023.

"I feel powerful for the first time in my life," he says. "In Syria I was feeling powerless because stupid people can control the decision if I live or die...they can control your life."

Feras, who was around 14 when war broke out in his home country, has limited memories of a time before the conflict, though he does recall how day-to-day life changed.

"In Arab culture everyone just go and knock on door before the war."

"But in the war we stopped visiting each other unless we know a friend is coming at say, 3 o'clock. I don't think (the war) is traumatising me."

"But if someone knock on the door it gives me - not flashbacks - but bad feeling because usually the people knocking on the door were bad people."

Feras fled Syria after receiving conscription papers. *"The recruiting officer gave me paper and said I only had between 10 and 16 days and I would have to serve in the military."*

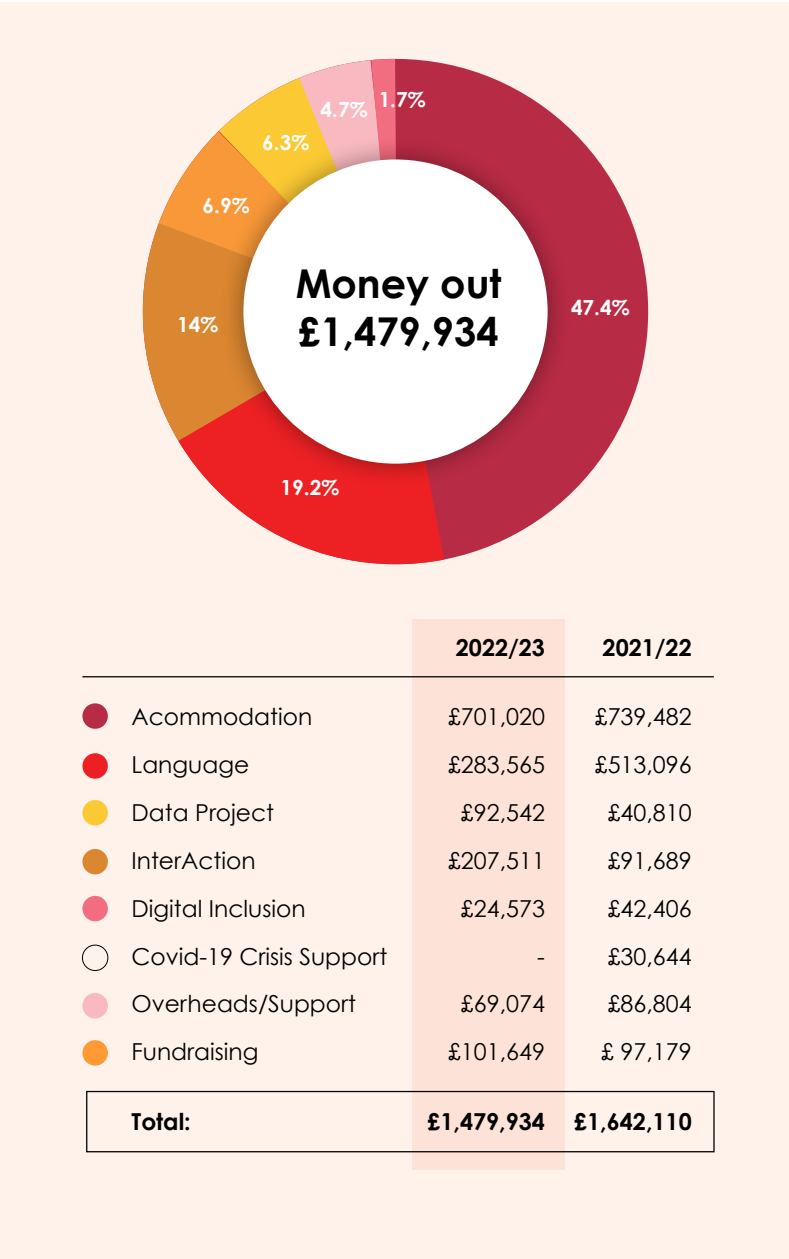
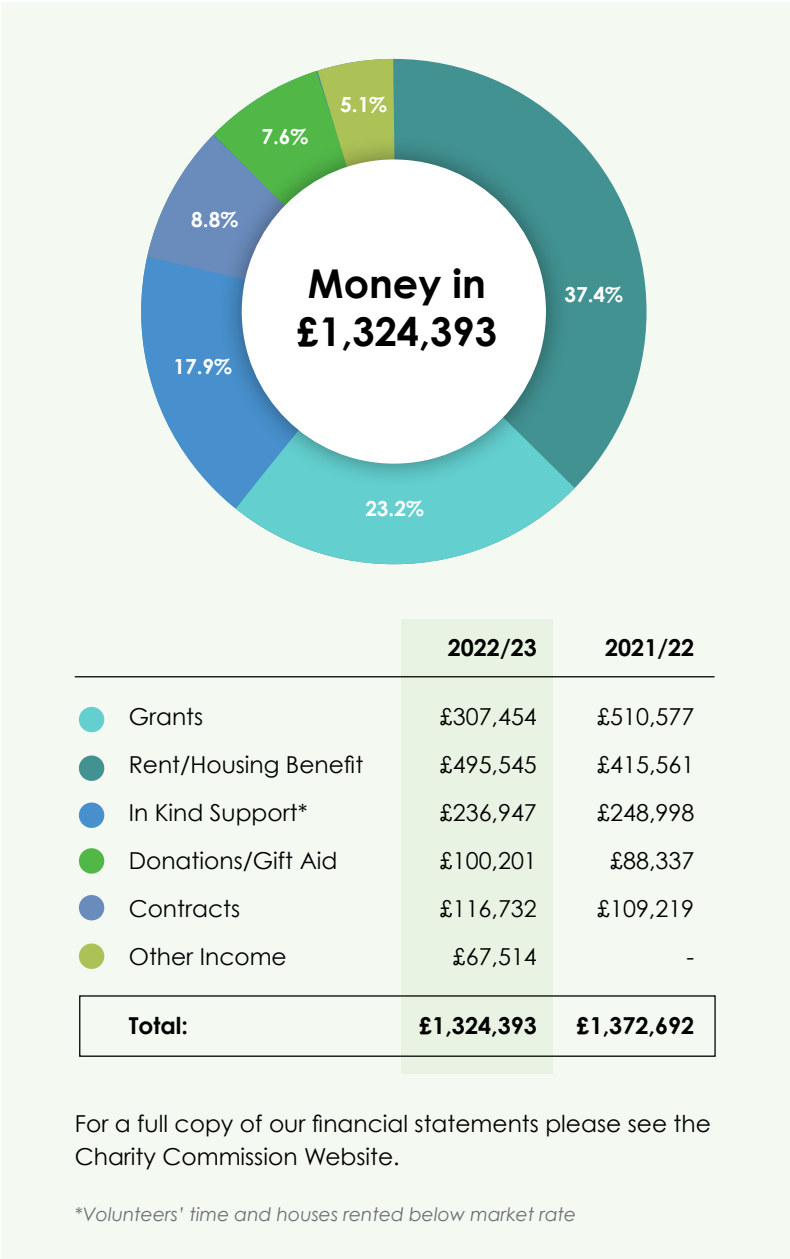
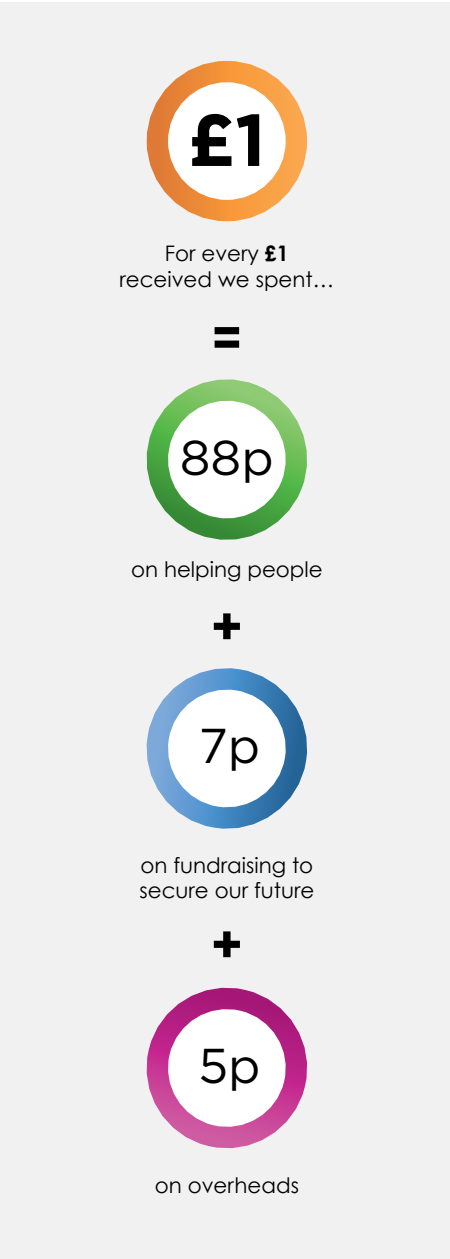
Luckily he has good English after studying English Literature at university in Syria before coming to the UK on a student visa and he has found friends here by volunteering with the InterAction team as a case worker.

Earlier this year Feras was one of three volunteers chosen to attend Refugee Action's Emerging Leaders Programme in London aimed at increasing the knowledge, skills and confidence of experts by experience.

Of his InterAction experience he says: *"Having been an asylum seeker myself I know what people can face. Volunteering gives me the feeling that I'm achieving something that benefits others."*



FINANCES



WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

A huge thank you to our incredible supporters and community fundraisers for making our campaigns such a success in 2022/23. Also, to those who took on their own personal challenges or staged fundraising events – thank

you - you really know how to put the fun into fundraising! From our Great North Runners to creative cooks and sponsored swimmers – you're all AMAZING!



£87,720

Total raised from regular donors, one-off donations and our community of fundraisers



20 people ran the Great North Run for us raising a total of £8,000.



Lots of people donated or held fundraising events for our Warm Hearts Christmas Crowdfunder which was match funded by Aviva insurance company, **raising £13,600.**



Our former Head of Fundraising, Dave Bowditch, retired last year but not before **completing a triple fundraising challenge** for us! He cycled the Way of the Roses, ran the Great North Run and walked the Yorkshire 3 Peaks!



Our CEO, Duncan, along with three friends, **swam the equivalent distance of the English Channel** to raise money and awareness for Action Foundation. They got fantastic media coverage and raised thousands of pounds.



We staged our first **Step Up for Refugees event** in August 2022 where supporters took on a step challenge.

FUNDRAISING

Thank you to the following for their fundraising and in-kind support in 2022/23:

- Muckle LLP
- Clifford Chance
- Art for Refugees
- City Church
- Gardiner Richardson
- Aviva Community Fund
- Cool Blue
- Bellwoods, Whitley Bay
- Millfield Songsters
- Women's Institute, Jesmond

To download our fundraising pack, click the link below:

<https://actionfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Fundraising-Pack-Final.pdf>



ACTION FOUNDATION TRAINING

In 2022/23 we were commissioned by three local authorities: Stockton Borough Council; Durham County Council and Sunderland City Council.

We used our expertise in the refugee sector to deliver training on the UK Immigration System; Cultural Awareness and Trauma Informed Support. We hope to build on this work in the coming year. If your organisation is interested, please contact us.

“ Very useful training. It was well presented, and the coach was very knowledgeable, concise and clear in his presentation.

Durham County Council participant ”

“ I have a better understanding of the human aspect of migration.

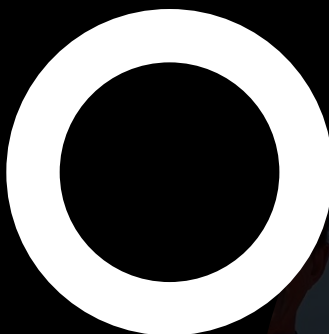
Sunderland County Council participant ”

“ There was no pressure as there often is with training courses. It was incredibly informative yet relaxed. Highly enjoyable.

Stockton Borough Council participant ”

IT IS ALL POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF YOU, THANK YOU!

- AB Charitable Trust
- Aurum Charitable Trust
- Changing Lives (from Newcastle City Council)
- Clifford Chance
- Community Foundation Tyne and Wear
- County Durham Community Foundation
- Garfield Weston
- Gateshead Council
- Hospital of God at Greatham
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Justice Together
- Newby Trust
- Winter Wellbeing Fund from Newcastle City Council
- Newcastle Fund from Newcastle City Council
- North of Tyne Combined Authority
- Pattinson's Fund (Community Foundation Tyne and Wear)
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Pea Green Boat (Community Foundation Tyne and Wear)
- Porticus
- Refugee Action
- Rothley Trust
- Sir James Knott Trust
- South Tyneside Primary Care Network
- The National Lottery
- Tuixen Foundation
- Virgin Money Foundation



action
FOUNDATION

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The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service