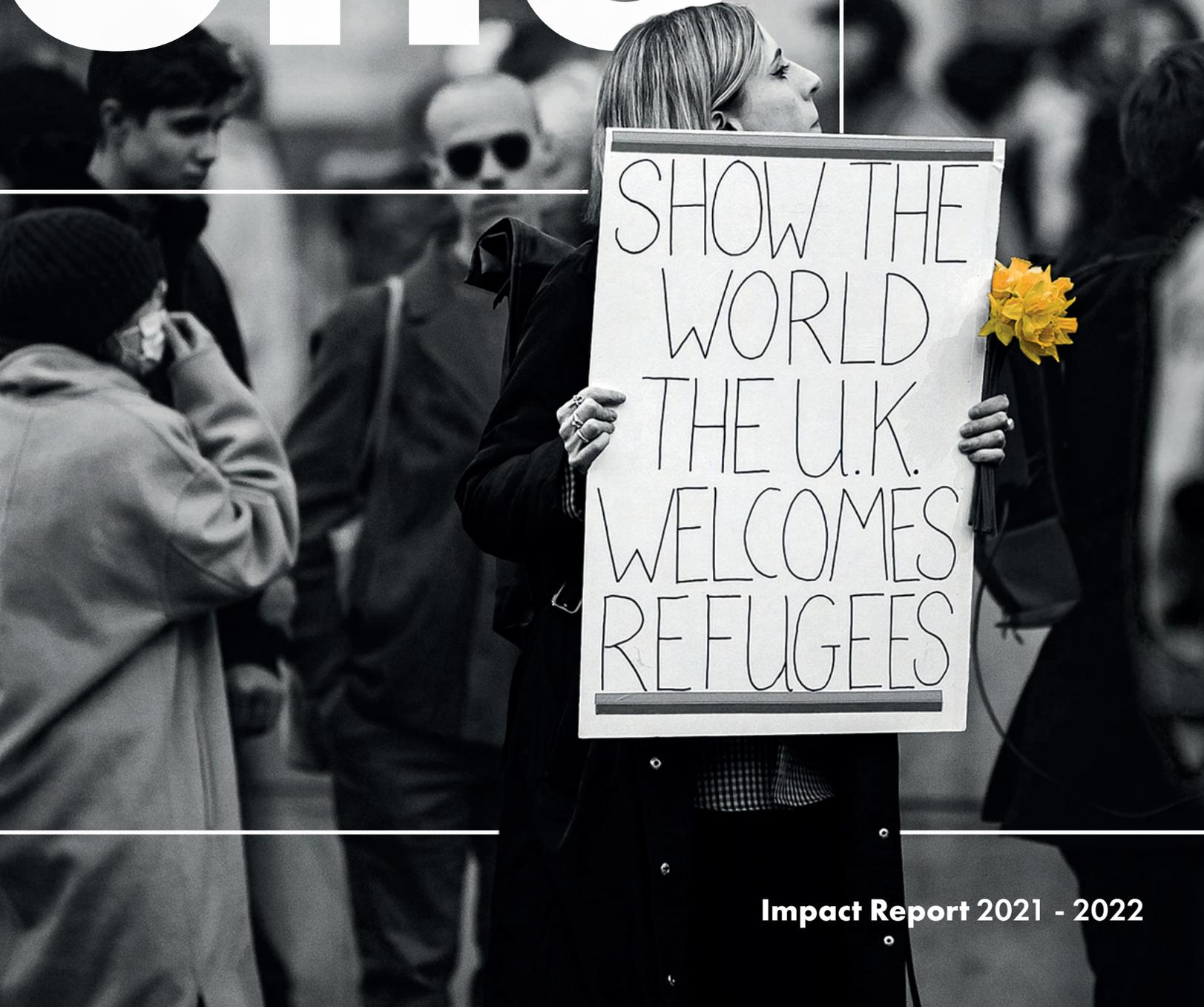


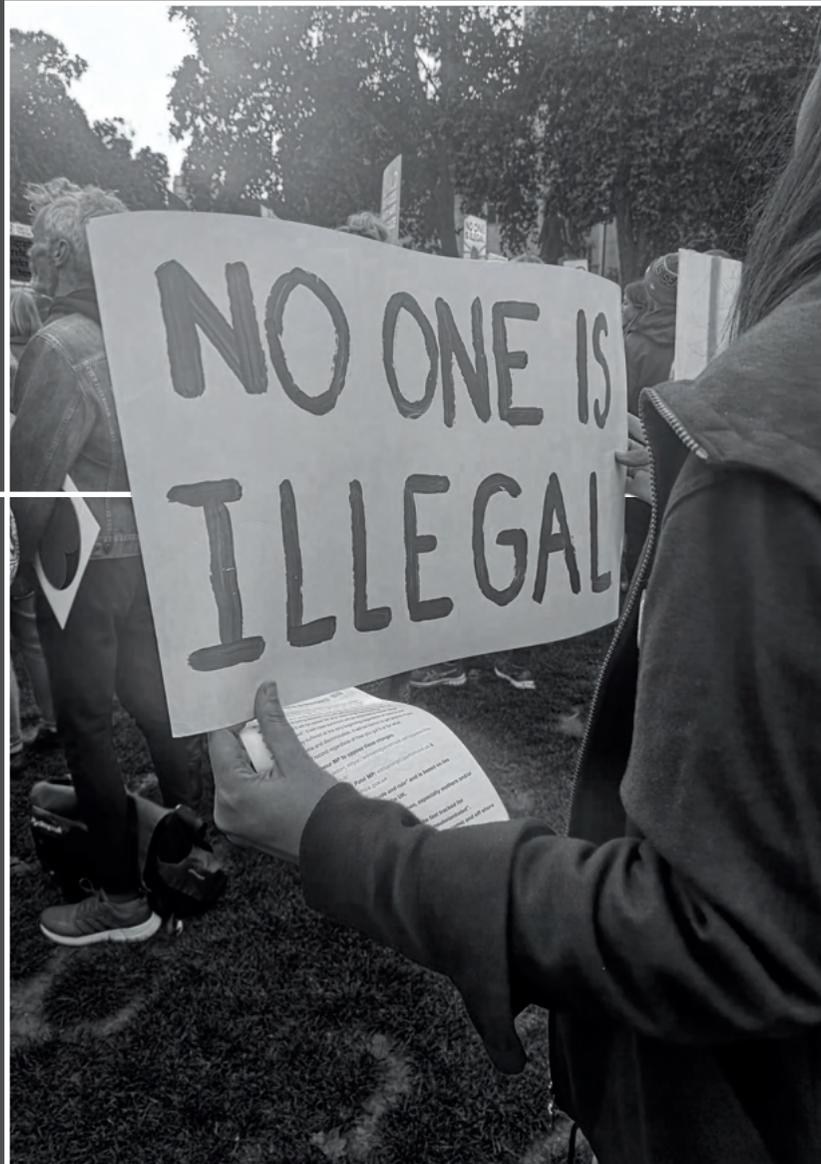
we are one

RefuAid
Hope. Resilience. Unity



SHOW THE
WORLD
THE U.K.
WELCOMES
REFUGEES

Impact Report 2021 - 2022



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www.refuaid.org
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Cover Image: **Alex Smutko**

RefuAid is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund (charity no 1099682)

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OUR STORY

In September 2015, RefuAid co-founders Tamsyn and Anna had never met.

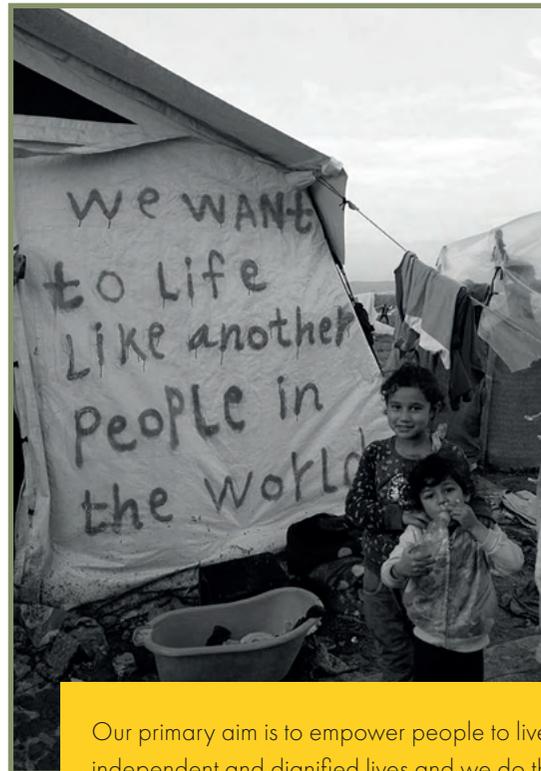
However, they had both been following the events unfolding in Calais and the Mediterranean over the summer of 2015 with horror and were desperate to help.

Within 2 weeks of connecting via a local Refugees Welcome group, they had arranged a voluntary team of medics - including doctors and nurses - and pallets of donated medication, to go out to the Greek island of Lesbos, where hundreds of people were living in makeshift camps and shelters.

What the team witnessed on the Greek islands was horrific; lack of basic sanitation and medical care was costing lives from very treatable illnesses; limited resources and engagement with local communities were resulting in forced dependency and a lack of long-term approaches meant people were stripped of their independence and agency. Every person that they met was looking to live somewhere peacefully and privately; find a school for their children and a way of providing for their families. Yet the response was to force dependency on people by putting them into refugee camps.

Once home, Anna and Tamsyn struggled to return to everyday life as they recognised that outdated attitudes and a hostile immigration policy were preventing people arriving in the UK from living independently.

As such, RefuAid was born out of a desire to challenge the negative rhetoric surrounding refugees and to prove that refugees and asylum seekers are an asset both economically and culturally when given the right support and opportunities.



Our primary aim is to empower people to live independent and dignified lives and we do this by providing support with:

- Finance and re-qualification
- Language tuition
- Specialist employment support.

“I received financial help from RefuAid when I needed to take my IELTS exam, which I could not afford. I was also supported with English classes in order to be prepared for the exam, which helped me a lot. Today, after taking the IELTS exam, I study Law at Northumbria University. When I first got an offer from this university it was a conditional offer. If I couldn’t take the exam I wouldn’t be studying today. Since then, I am enjoying the course a lot. It has changed my life completely. I am a first year law student aiming to become a barrister. My first semester was very successful, I received 2 firsts and a 2:1. I am waiting for my second semester results now.”

Lela, a student from Albania, studied with our partners at Perfectly Spoken before obtaining the IELTS score she needed to attend university.

THE CURRENT CLIMATE

Around the world over
100 million
people are now forcibly
displaced from their homes



Over the last year, world events have seen more people displaced than ever before; war, persecution, climate change and scarcity of resources, amongst other reasons, mean that people are unable to continue living safely in their home countries and are instead forced to find stability elsewhere. At the end of 2021, the number of people forced to flee stood at 89.3 million. Since then, the war in Ukraine has displaced millions within the country as well as to other countries, primarily in Europe.

At RefuAid, our main priority will always be to support anyone who has been forced to flee their homes, regardless of where they are from or how they arrived in the UK. Over the last 12 months demand for our programmes has increased drastically and we have

had to adapt to an ever-changing political environment and sector.

In addition to this, the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021 and the resultant mass evacuations saw thousands of people arriving in the UK in the hopes of safety and security. An anticipated 12,000 people are currently stuck in hotels across the country, in incredibly poor conditions and with very limited access to external services or support.

The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has seen over 14 million people displaced, with over 6.5 million people having fled to other countries. In response, the UK created the Homes for Ukraine scheme, whereby individuals and organisations can sponsor those fleeing Ukraine.

Despite the good intentions of thousands of British citizens who have applied to host, the scheme is not fit for purpose and we have seen first hand the deterioration of host family relationships, as well as the safeguarding risks associated with the scarcely resourced matching process.

Throughout all of this, the government have successfully pushed through their hostile new immigration policy that focuses on criminalising the pursuit of safety whilst offering no viable routes to claiming asylum in the UK. The most recent announcement of a deportation agreement with Rwanda is an inhumane addition to an already cruel piece of legislation.

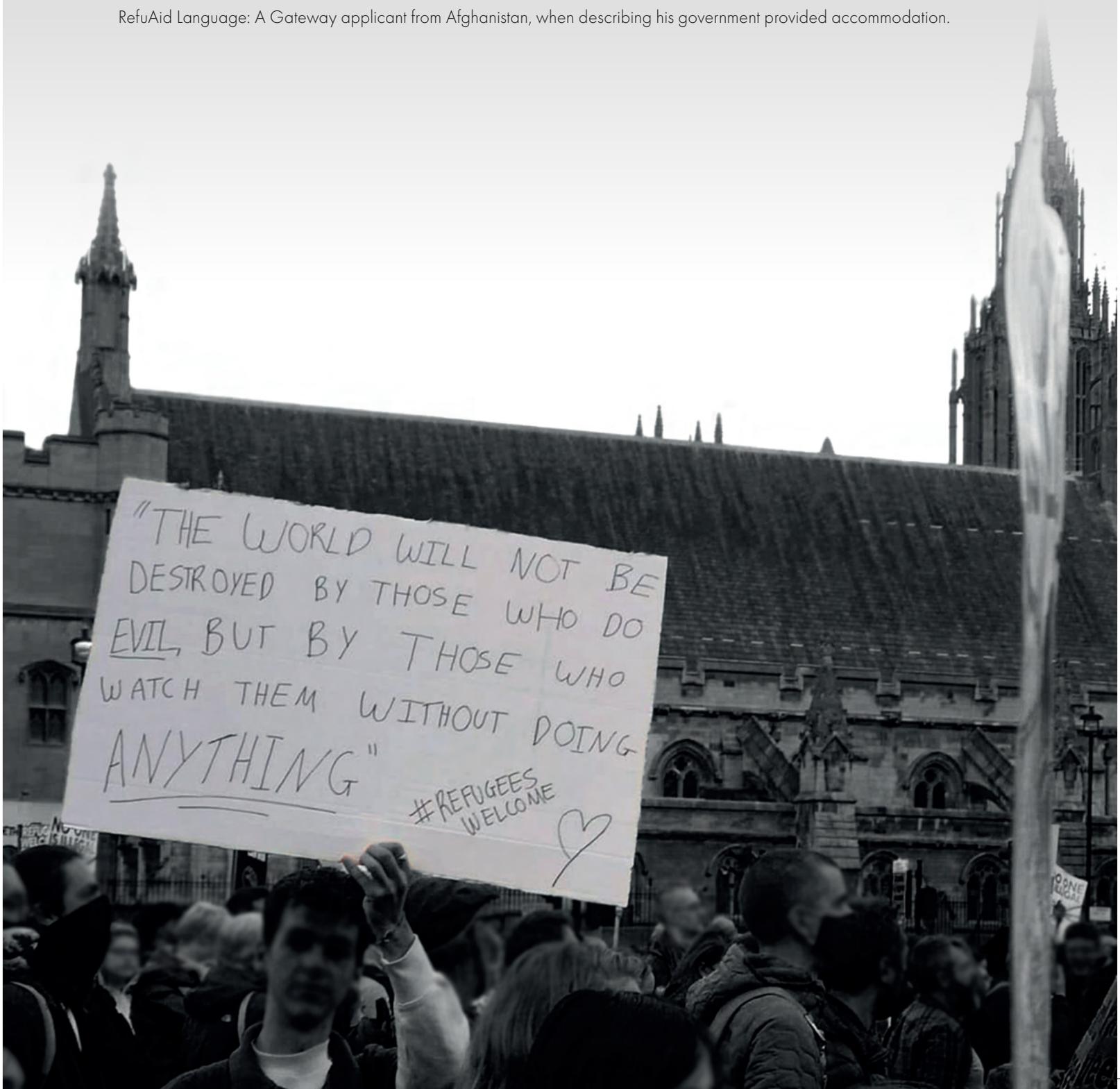
According to government statistics, there were:

 **48,540**
asylum applications

(relating to 56,495 people) in the UK in 2021, which is 63% more than the previous year and, reportedly, the highest number for almost two decades.

“It’s called room 104, small, dark, hard to breathe but there’s a tiny window at the back so I recognise when it’s day time again.”

RefuAid Language: A Gateway applicant from Afghanistan, when describing his government provided accommodation.



PROGRAMME OVERVIEWS

RefuAid’s Language: A Gateway Programme

Problem

Access to structured, high-level English language classes and qualifications are limited, difficult to access and prohibitively expensive for those who have claimed asylum in the UK. Specific qualifications, such as IELTS and OET, are a prerequisite for higher education and certain professional requalification pathways, but preparation courses can cost anywhere between £250 - £500 per week. The majority of refugees who arrive in the UK are unable to speak English.

Stats

Government-provided language classes, known as ESOL, are critically underfunded. In 2017/18 ESOL provision was cut significantly, equating to real-term cuts of around 60%. The courses that are available are also insufficient for preparing people for employment in the UK; in a 2019 study by Refugee Action, 59% of respondents felt that the provision they received was inadequate, and 66% said they did not feel their level was high enough to be employed in the UK.

Solution

In partnership with English UK and private language schools and universities across the UK, RefuAid offer up to 32 hours a week of structured, intensive English language support. Course duration is uncapped, so students can study as long as they need until they achieve their required level. Tuition is donated in-kind by the schools and RefuAid will cover the cost of exams, travel and course materials.



To date, over 700 people have graduated our language programme and gone on to higher education, professional requalification or accessed employment.

Do you feel that your current level of English makes you ready to work in the UK?



“RefuAid supported me through my whole journey and they always uplifted me even at the times I failed. I am lucky that our roads crossed.”

RefuAid's Equal Access Loan

Problem

Professional re-accreditation is prohibitively expensive for those who have no access to mainstream finance. Being unable to afford the requalification process means that many people end up unemployed or in "survival jobs" that do not correspond to their qualifications, experience or interests.

Stats

According to a 2010 Ipsos Mori study into London-based refugees, 20% of the respondents interviewed said they had taken any job in the UK, as opposed to returning to their prior profession or utilising their skills and experiences. 68% also reported having been given no employability support to find a suitable job.

Solution

RefuAid provide interest free, character based loans of up to £10,000, for internationally trained refugees to pay for the UK requalification and training, enabling them to return to their prior professional fields. Repayments are calculated on an individual basis to ensure they are manageable.

We have now lent over £1.5million and currently have a repayment rate of 98.8%.

RefuAid's Employment Programme

Problem

Navigating the UK job market and sectors can be challenging for those with limited UK work experience or professional networks.

Stats

A 2017 Deloitte study into Syrian refugees in Europe revealed that a third were employed in either skilled work or professional services in Syria, yet 82% were unemployed in Europe. When applying for jobs, two thirds of respondents said it was challenging to access the job market.

Solution

RefuAid work directly with employers to source paid positions and internships that are commensurate with the skills and experiences of RefuAid clients, as well as helping with CV writing, interview preparation and professional mentoring.

Since starting the programme, 60 people have been supported with employment opportunities commensurate with their experience. The majority of these are healthcare professionals now working in the NHS.

Across all RefuAid programmes, each client has a dedicated caseworker who will support them until they have reached their goals in the UK. We pride ourselves in the relationships we build and maintain and always put our clients at the heart of what we do.

LANGUAGE: A GATEWAY 21-22





We currently partner with

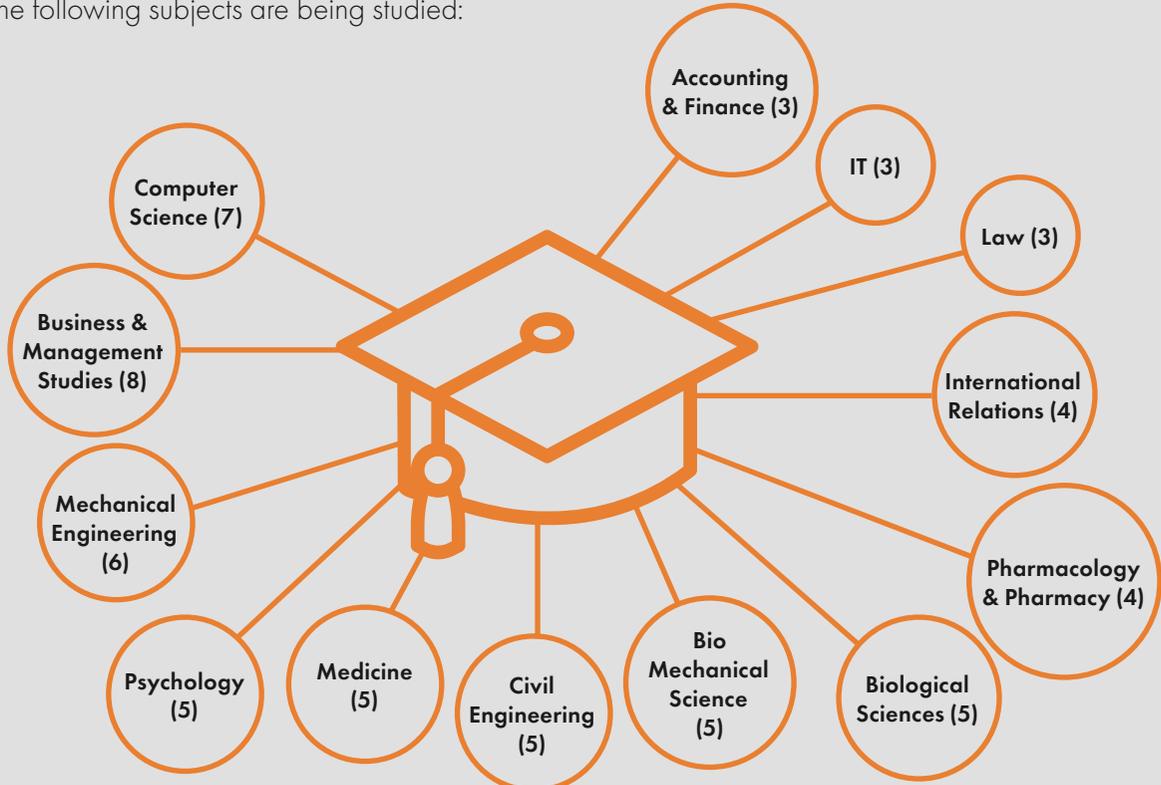
93 private English language schools

an increase of 18 new schools over the last year

Including:

Manchester	Oxford	Edinburgh
Liverpool	Canterbury	Exeter
Brighton	Colchester	Glasgow
Bournemouth	Sheffield	Leicester
London	York	Marlow
Cambridge	Birmingham	Milton Keynes
Cardiff	Bristol	Norwich
Leeds	Chester	Bury St Edmunds
Newcastle	Crickhowell	

Of those who went on to study at a UK university, the following subjects are being studied:



Computer Science (7)	Accounting & Finance (3)	IT (3)	Law (3)
Business & Management Studies (8)			International Relations (4)
Mechanical Engineering (6)			Pharmacology & Pharmacy (4)
Psychology (5)	Medicine (5)	Civil Engineering (5)	Bio Mechanical Science (5)
			Biological Sciences (5)

Number of students in (*)

“Today I would like to share with all of you my joy and happiness after I have received my GDC number. My name is Naima Al Gwil, also known as Emma, I am an overseas Dentist. I came to the UK in 2014 and RefuAid helped me a lot during my IELTS journey to study. Today I have finished my master degree in dental public health from Sheffield University and I was able to finish all my exams and today I was able to receive my GDC number. I can’t express my happiness to start working in my career field again. Thank you RefuAid for helping refugees. I am also grateful for the UK as well. During my graduation ceremony I held a sign that said ‘Thank you for helping refugees’.”

Naima, a qualified dentist from Libya, studied for her IELTS exam with our fantastic partners at Manchester Metropolitan University, before pursuing her qualification in Dental Public Health. She has recently started her first clinical role, working as a Dental Therapist and Hygienist.

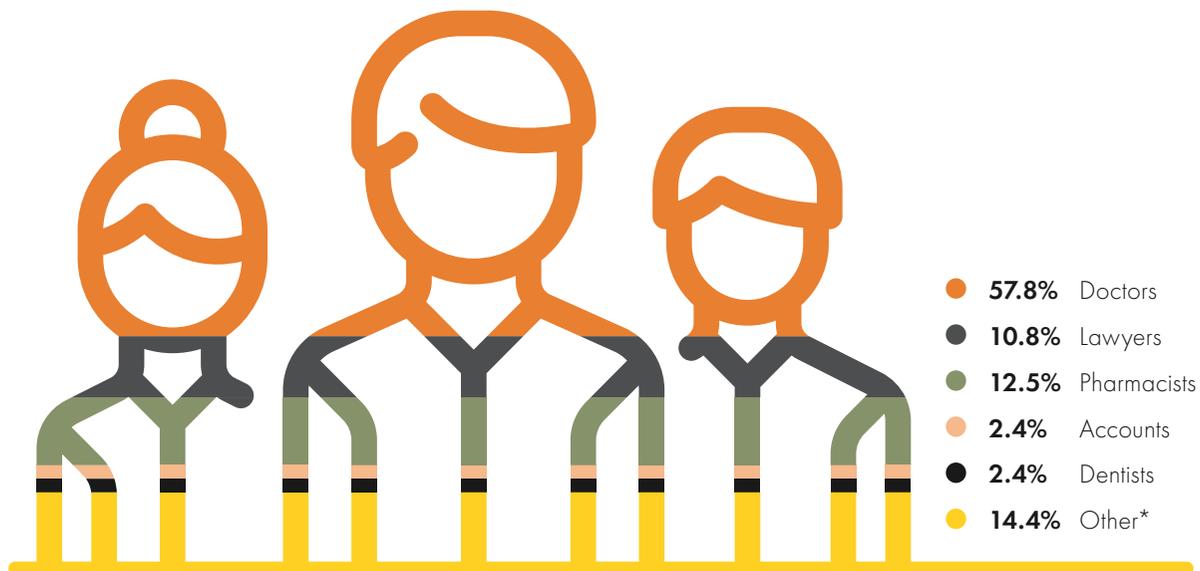


EQUAL ACCESS LOAN 21-22

By the end of May 2022,
we had made a total of

260 = £1.4M
loans

Professions of 21-22 Loan Recipients



*Other professions include Architect, Plumber, Graphic Designer and Vet, to name but a few.

The average loan amount was

£4,732

Loan Amounts 21-22





Between May 21 and May 22 we received

£195,643

in repayments

Of the 260 loans ever made, **138 recipients (53%) are now in work commensurate with their skills and experiences.** The remainder are still undertaking their requalification exams.

The average annual salary prior to taking out an Equal Access Loan is £3,192, but this increases to **£33,196** for RefuAid loan recipients who have completed their re-accreditation and returned to work.

We have a repayment rate of

98.8%

And, to date

17

loans have been completely repaid.

Tax Contributions

Tax contributions of Equal Access Loan recipients once in work show the financial impact and savings to the UK government as a direct result of the Equal Access loan.

Currently, the 138 Equal Access Loan recipients who are in work commensurate with their skills and experiences, are contributing a total of £942,200.46 to the UK economy each year, through tax and national insurance.

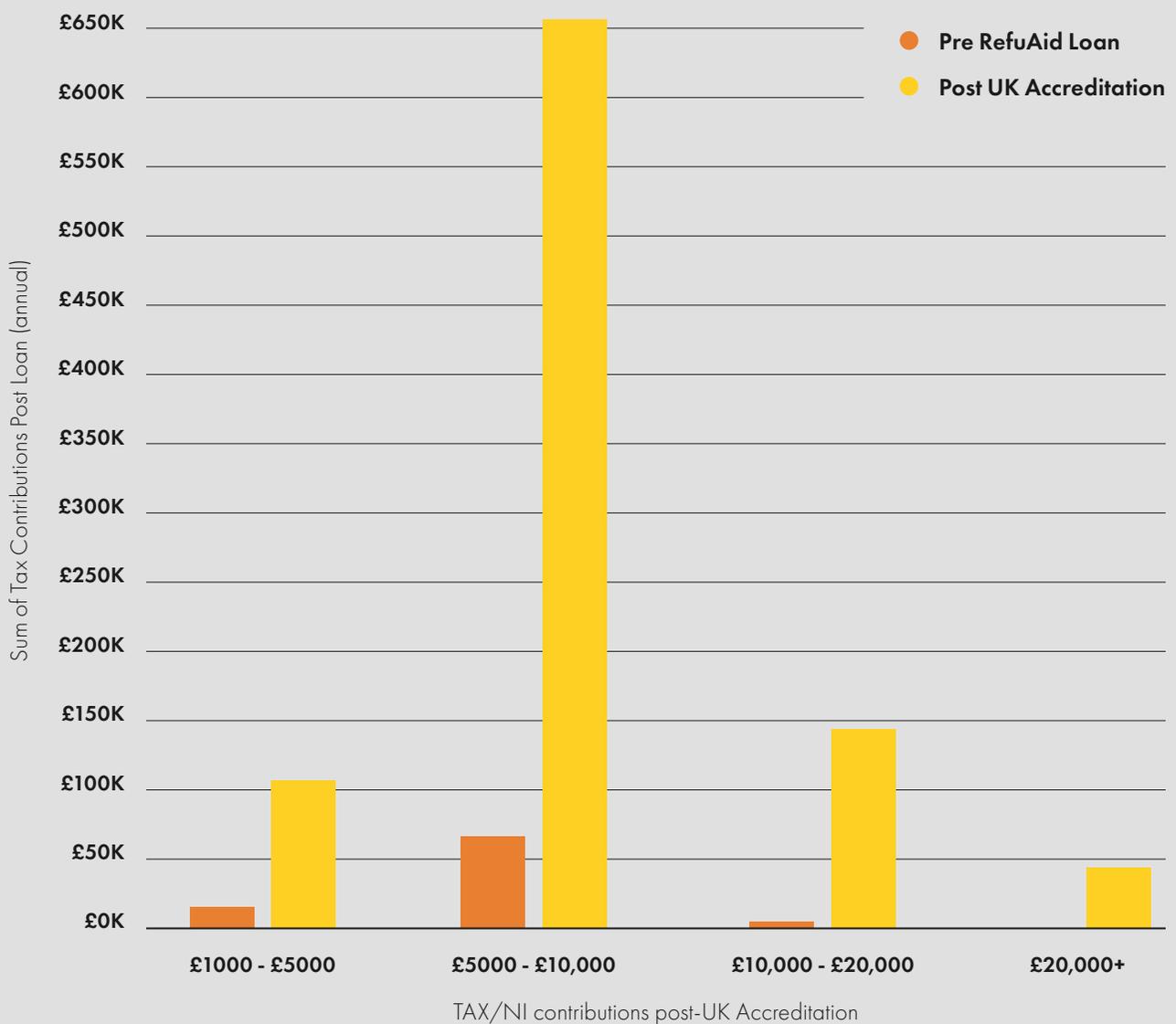
For those who were in work prior to taking out a RefuAid loan, the average total tax contribution was £83,700 per year. An Equal Access Loan is therefore increasing tax contributions by over 1000%.

In addition, 72% of loan recipients were claiming state benefits prior to taking out a RefuAid loan. On average, this was costing the taxpayer around £1,200,000 per year.

Considering this alongside the savings from the state benefits, requalified RefuAid loan recipients are therefore making an overall gain to the UK economy of approximately £2,142,200.

This demonstrates the tangible financial benefits to supporting refugees in the UK in achieving their professional aspirations and returning to work.

Tax Contributions Pre Loan & Post - UK Accreditation



“Back home in Uganda I was a practicing advocate equivalent to a Barrister in the UK, but here in the UK I had lost that hope as I did not know where I would get about £10,000 to fund this required Bar Transfer Test. But a friend shared with me their website, I applied and got the funds. I’m waiting to start my training and do the test finally. I am excited and thankful to RefuAid for giving me an opportunity to advance my career, I hope to live and do what I love and went to school for.”

A, A qualified lawyer from Uganda with over 8 years judiciary experience.

A borrowed £10,000 for her legal requalification and is in the process of sitting her training exams.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME 21-22

Between May 21 and May 22, 50 people were hired into roles commensurate with their skills and experience through RefuAid’s Employment Programme.



3
Engineers



17
Medical support
workers



4
Trust-grade
doctors



1
Midwife



25
Nurses

We now partner with 25 employers who continue to share their open vacancies for RefuAid candidates.



Update on Liverpool Nursing Programme

Following the success of our pilot programme in 2020, we have now run three separate cohorts of our nursing requalification programme in collaboration with NHSEI and Liverpool John Moores University. The third cohort have recently finished their OET language course and are due to begin the clinical aspect of their training in June 2022.

To date, this programme has supported 54 nurses with the language, clinical skills and job opportunities needed to requalify and return to work. 28 are currently working in the NHS whilst preparing for their nursing requalification exams, whilst the remaining 26 are either preparing for their clinical assessments or interviewing at Trusts.

MSW programme in the North West

In collaboration with NHSEI NW, we have been supporting refugee doctors into Medical Support Worker roles across trusts in the North West of England. MSW roles are open to overseas qualified doctors who have passed their English language qualification and are part-way through their medical re-accreditation exams. MSWs are able to work under clinical supervision, providing vital skills and support to nurses and doctors across hospital departments at a time when it is desperately needed.

To date, this programme has supported 14 medical professionals, with an additional cohort starting in 2022.

“I have had the pleasure of working collaboratively with RefuAid to enable the placement and support of Medical Support Workers (MSWs) across the Northwest. The charity is making fantastic progress empowering and assisting refugee, asylum and displaced doctors across the North west. They get to know the doctors which means the placements can be matched to the individual’s skills set, personal situation and career aspirations.”

Rachel Saunders, North West Regional Clinical Fellow, NHSEI (NW) & ST6 Intensive Care Trainee, MSW Programme Lead.



Mentoring Programme

In 2021 we partnered with Arup Group to provide professional mentoring to a cohort of 5 RefuAid clients who were seeking support with employment. All 5 candidates are Civil Engineers.

We are now looking to develop our own internal mentor network, whereby professionals from an array of different sectors will provide valuable insights into their sector within the UK, as well as helping RefuAid clients to prepare for job applications and interviews.

RefuAid alumni who have previously been through our programmes, will also have the opportunity to mentor other RefuAid clients who are undertaking the same requalification process, to provide first-hand experience and guidance.

AHP Programme

We have been working with Health Education England on a pilot requalification programme for Allied Healthcare Professionals, an area that covers 14 different healthcare professions including Paramedics, Physiotherapists and Radiographers.

Our pilot involved 5 individuals, including a Dietician, Radiographer, Physiotherapist, Medical Physicist and an Operating Department Practitioner. 3 of these individuals have job offers and are due to join the NHS in the coming months, whilst the remaining 2 are still in the interview process.

“Thank you so much for all that you've done – I only hope I can return the favour sometime in the future. Thanks for being a good mentor and for guiding me on the right path. I will always be thankful to you. Not only have you been a fantastic mentor to me, but you have taught me how to mentor other people as well.”

Mentee on the Arup Mentoring Programme, 2021

“I am grateful to know RefuAid, as they are supporting me since I started to apply for universities to help me improve my English. They offered me a teacher to help me improve my English and they also linked me to another organisation to get additional support which was amazing, as I was able to achieve the results I needed in IELTS and enrol in university.

During my second year at university I was planning to do a placement/internship to get some work experience and RefuAid was the first organisation come to my mind as they always help refugees and support them and I am so delighted for reaching them, they have helped me to find an internship this summer and their support did not stop here. They offered me a nice place with lovely people to live in during my internship for free.

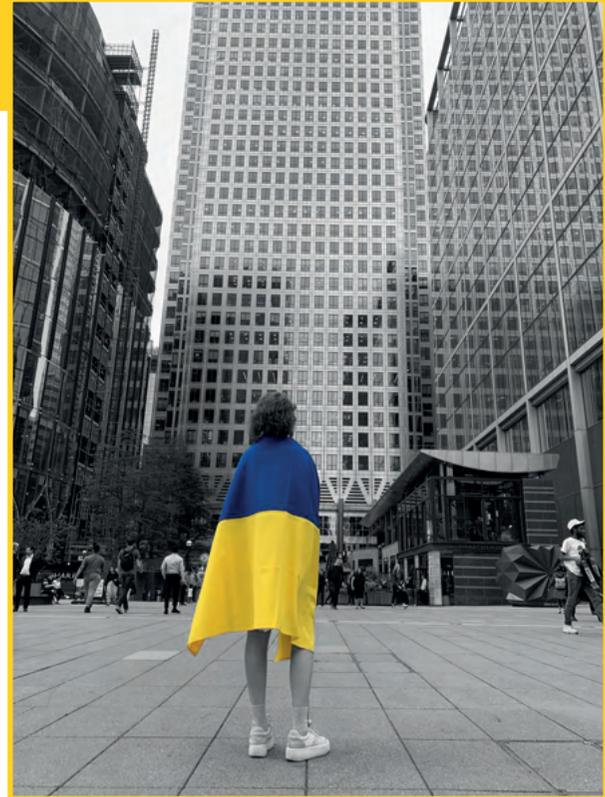
It’s an amazing organisation, they are very keen to help and support refugees to rebuild their future and that’s exactly what they have done to me, RefuAid were basically my second family.”

RefuAid supported N, a student from Syria, with her IELTS in order to go to university. She passed her IELTS first time and went on to study an undergraduate degree in Finance and Accountancy at Cardiff University, before being supported with a 3 month internship at one of RefuAid’s employment partners.

UKRAINE

"I lived in Kyiv two weeks ago. My city was beautiful and safe for me a month ago. Near my house always was many people and children who play on the playground. I love my city, because it is the same place when I grew up, educated and lived for a long time. So every corner and every street is a memory. When began the war I left my country, because I was scared to be there. Now I live in Liverpool. It is also a very beautiful city. Liverpool is smaller than Kyiv, but so cosy. I need an English qualification in order to adapt to society, gain basic communication skills and return to normal life. I have been working as an architect for more than 3 years in Ukraine, and have a strong background in development of residential complexes, as well as private houses and offices. The obtained language qualification via this programme will help me to find a suitable position."

Language: A Gateway Programme applicant from Ukraine, March 2022



On the 24th February 2022, Russian forces invaded Ukraine.

Since then it's estimated that over 14 million people have been displaced, with over 6.5 million people seeking safety in other countries - 3.7 million of whom are reported to have arrived in Poland.

In March 2022 RefuAid's CEO, Anna, and COO, Kate, travelled to Warsaw with the aim of working with local organisations supporting those who had fled Ukraine. In particular, we wanted to understand what was being done to help those who were wishing to come to the UK. Unfortunately it quickly became apparent that there was very little information or awareness of any UK-based resettlement schemes, so very few people realised that this could be a viable option. We visited Warsaw Central Station, where hundreds of people were arriving every hour, and despite the incredible commitment of volunteers, there was absolutely no UK or large NGO presence.

Whilst we were in Warsaw, the UK government launched its Homes for Ukraine visa scheme. This essentially allows individuals, families and organisations in the UK to sponsor those fleeing Ukraine by offering a spare room or home. This announcement left us feeling conflicted; whilst it's incredible to see how quickly a response was put together to offer sanctuary to those fleeing, we are equally disheartened by its numerous limitations - notwithstanding the simple fact that anyone fleeing a warzone should not be required to apply for a visa in order to be granted safety.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme comes with huge concerns around safeguarding and protecting families who are in incredibly vulnerable situations, the vast majority of whom are women and children. Whilst the government announced that those offering to host would be subject to safeguarding checks, many of these checks are being done after visas have been issued and people have arrived, exposing people to huge risks. We have previously seen first-hand the detrimental impact of exploitative and unstable accommodation on the people we have worked with, and are already starting to see this manifest in the Homes for Ukraine scheme. In addition, the government have not taken responsibility for the matching process and have instead recommended that individuals rely on social media and charities to find sponsors. Finding a suitable sponsor via social media is incredibly risky and we've already seen a number of safeguarding issues arise. As a sector, we also received minimal guidance or consultation



Whilst the Homes for Ukraine scheme has multiple flaws, we are hoping that the current situation may represent a pivotal moment in the conversation about the UK's role in supporting displaced people, which is needed now more than ever. Compassion cannot be selective; if we are truly going to "lead the way" in supporting those who have been displaced by conflict, this needs to apply to everyone.

on the proposed plans - despite being told that we are likely to be responsible for the majority of the work. Understandably this has left most organisations feeling dispirited and at risk of being completely overwhelmed. Despite this, the resolution and dedication of the individuals we work with across the sector is inspiring and we remain determined to continue helping as many people as possible.



How we are helping:

Visa Applications

Alongside our fantastic partners at Refugees at Home, we have been working to connect hosts who are willing to act as visa sponsors to those who are fleeing Ukraine.

RefuAid are receiving applications from both independent applicants and referrals from partner organisations. Applicants wishing to proceed with the visa application will be referred to Refugees at Home, who will source a sponsor and conduct necessary safeguarding checks. RefuAid will support with visa applications, logistics

(e.g. travel), and where necessary, language tuition and employment.

We have hired three new members of staff to manage this process; Ela is based in Warsaw and coordinates referrals from local organisations in Poland, whilst Nadiya and Vlasta are managing applications and referrals from the UK.

To date, we have received over 300 applications for this scheme and this is increasing daily. 25 visas have been issued.

How we are helping:

Business Consortium

In addition to the above, we are delighted to be working with a number of employers across the UK as part of a business consortium, in partnership with Emma Sinclair. Employers include AerFin, Kier, PWC and Gleeds, to name but a few. Each business has generously offered to sponsor up to 50 RefuAid clients to access our language, loan and employment

programmes, with a view to also offering employment opportunities once people are work ready. This programme has huge potential as each employer has committed to supporting anyone fleeing war and persecution, not just those from Ukraine. We will be announcing another large cohort in Autumn 2022.

Scaling up our existing programmes

Due to the increase in demand for our programmes, our waiting lists are continuing to grow. We're currently averaging between 15 and 25 new applications per day.

Language: Given that English language skills vary from beginner to proficient, we are looking to expand our partnerships with English language schools across the country and online. We are working closely with English UK, who are supporting us to partner with as many of their language schools as possible.

English UK and RefuAid have a long and growing association. Some of our member language centres began working with RefuAid in 2015, offering scholarship places to clients to support them back onto their professional or academic ladder. RefuAid was also one of the first recipients of our Eddie Byers Fund to transform lives through language learning.

"In the autumn of 2021, English UK and RefuAid agreed a formal partnership. Since then, we have worked to raise awareness of the work of RefuAid among our 350+ language school members, helping them to see the benefits of offering free places in their physical and virtual classrooms.

Language centres offering help include some of those which have struggled most through

the pandemic, and many members moved by the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine have contacted us asking how they can help.

During the past months we have shared inspirational stories from our members and RefuAid's students of their experiences and have been blown away by the response, with around 20 new centres signing up this year. One story got some of the highest engagement ever on our website and social media, and led directly to two new members signing up. We are proud to be associated with RefuAid and proud of our members' response to the needs of people from all over the world."

Jodie Gray, Chief Executive of English UK

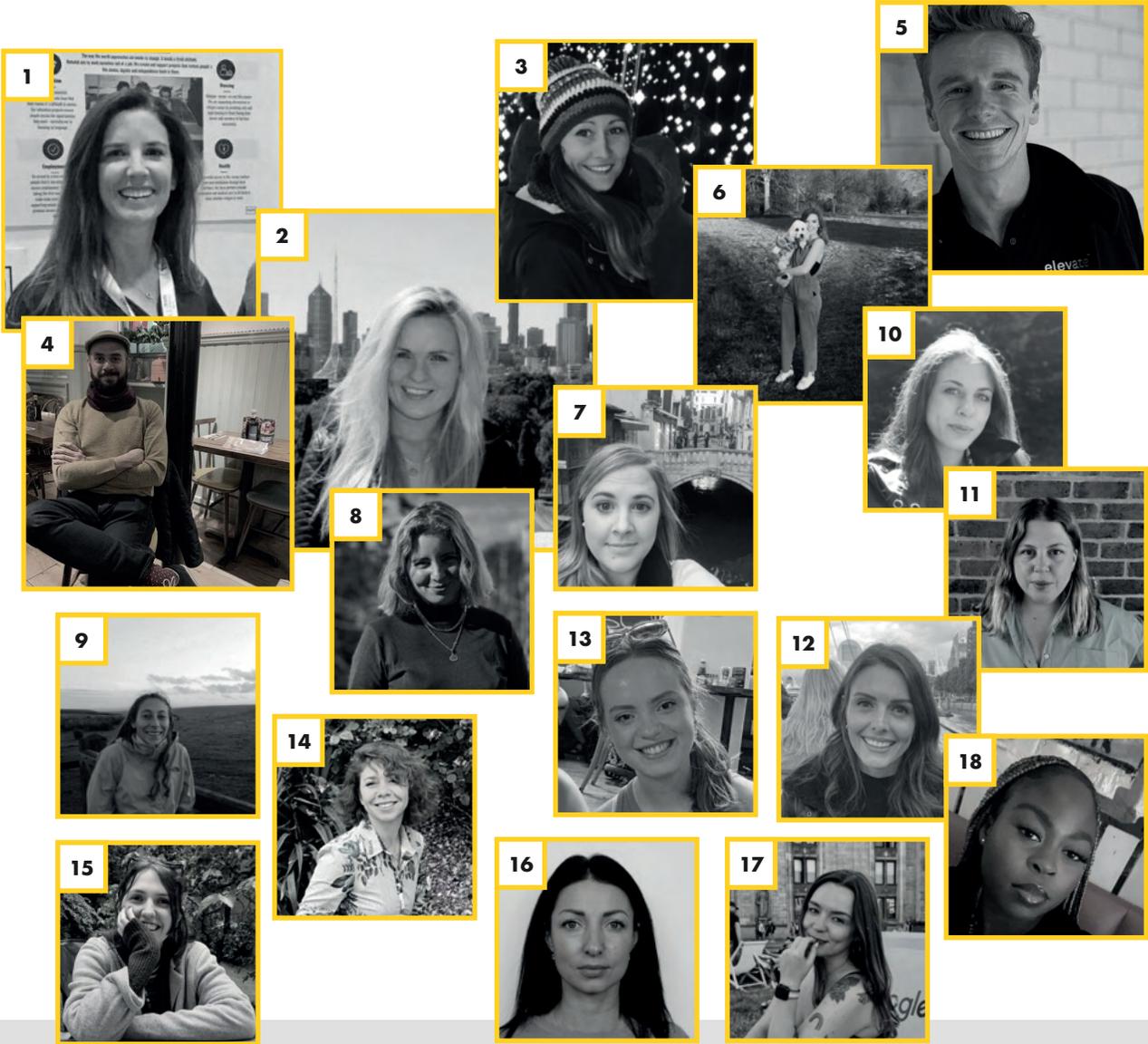
Loan: Our loan team is growing and more caseworkers will be joining the programme in 2022. We are already seeing an increase in professionals from both the healthcare and legal sector, who will likely require financial support to cover their re-accreditation exams.

Employment: Our recruitment team are increasing their capacity to ensure we can support as many people as possible, thanks to the Business Consortium. Based on the most recent referrals we have been receiving, there is an extremely high level of qualifications and employability.

“For the first weeks of war me and my family were hiding in a village between Vasylkiv and Bila Tserkva. It was still cold Ukrainian winter and we had no hot water in our house. The sounds of frequent ballistic missile strikes and low flying fighter jets didn’t let us sleep at night. And so we had to quickly think of escape routes and our initial choice was Poland, however when we reached safety and initial threat of military violence was no longer pressing on me, I found it difficult to start a new life in Poland. The language barrier did not allow to find any meaningful employment and there was already very heavy competition for jobs, as there were millions of Ukrainians in Poland in the same conditions. I started looking into other countries that accept Ukrainians, and naturally, I was looking for opportunity to come to the UK. However, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme looked very complicated to me, I soon realised I didn’t know how to find a Sponsor and was worried about looking for hosts in Facebook or WhatsApp groups, as they didn’t seem safe or reliable. It didn’t even cross my mind at first that there might be charities that help arrange that.”

RefuAid supported K to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. She has now arrived in the UK and working closely with our Employment Team to find work.

TEAM



- 1. **Tamsyn Brewster**, Co-Founder
- 2. **Anna Jones**, CEO & Co-Founder
- 3. **Kate Higgins**, Chief Operating Officer
- 4. **Mohib Ullah**, Head of UK Language Programme
- 5. **Steve Duffy**, Head of Client Recruitment & Placement Programme
- 6. **Maisie Dolman**, Head of Loan Programme - Equal Access Loan - UK
- 7. **Sarah Llewellyn**, Head of People, Training & Development

- 8. **Millie Shoebridge**, Language UK Caseworker
- 9. **Alessandra Anzante**, Employability Lead
- 10. **Ilaria Tarulli**, Language UK Caseworker
- 11. **Madiha Sultan**, Language UK Caseworker
- 12. **Bex Nield**, Equal Access Loan Caseworker
- 13. **Bea Walker**, Equal Access Loan Caseworker
- 14. **Vlasta Tarasova**, Homes for Ukraine Coordinator

- 15. **Ophelia Flanagan**, Programme Admissions Officer
- 16. **Nadiya Mackowiak**, Homes for Ukraine Coordinator
- 17. **Ela Krawczykowska-Sobocińska**, Homes for Ukraine Coordinator
- 18. **Zainab Adeshina**, Language UK Caseworker

OUR AWARDS



WINNER
Global Good Awards Community Partnership of the Year 2022

North West Refugee Nurses Programme with RefuAid, Liverpool John Moores University, NHS England and NHS Improvement.



WINNER

Nesta New Radicals 2018



WINNER
Third Sector Awards Charity Partnership of the Year 2018

RefuAid & Street UK



FORBES
30 Under 30 2019

Anna Jones



WINNER
Covid Response Awards Best Covid-19 Response in Charities or NFPs

Supporting Refugee Healthcare Professionals into Work with RefuAid

SHORTLISTED
HSJ AWARDS 2022 HSJ Awards Workforce Initiative of the Year 2022: nominated twice for:

NHS England, RefuAid, Talent Beyond Boundaries, Liverpool John Moores University and Partners, Refugee Nursing Support Programme

Connecting Futures Collaborative, A Regional Refugee Doctor Programme



**“Thank you for the help,
that you give to all
asylum seekers.”**

Lela, a student from Albania, studied with our partners at Perfectly Spoken before obtaining the IELTS score she needed to attend university.

RefuAid
Hope.Resilience.Unity



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