

NORTHERN IRELAND REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICE- EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

We form part of a strong support network of partners to assist Syrian refugee families to find suitable housing, employment and gain access to health care and other vital resources. Without this support, many refugees are at significant risk of homeless and destitution.

How you can
support us
with your
Zakat this
Ramadan



Drawing done by a young person at the service

Barnardo's Refugee Support Service

Young people fleeing war torn countries, either with their families or alone, are suffering unimaginable trauma, often arriving in the UK unable to articulate the horrors they have faced. These children are increasingly showing signs of deep psychological trauma as a result of the suffering they have experienced during and after their journeys.

Our specialist staff in Northern Ireland work with these children and their families to establish new homes where they can feel safe. We form part of a strong support network of partners who assist families to find suitable housing, employment and gain access to health care and other vital resources. Without this support, **many refugees are at significant risk of homelessness and/or destitution.**

The problem

Refugee families face a number of challenges when arriving in the UK including the inability to find work and therefore lacking the financial ability to build a better life for themselves. Considering the trauma they would have previously experienced, the barriers to work can be damaging to vulnerable families and overcoming these challenges is a critical part of their desire to integrate in to the community.

85% of families are living below the poverty line and regularly face financial difficulty and hardship.

What we do

Barnardo's frontline staff have worked with over 1,600 Syrian refugees and asylum-seeking children since 2015 and are experts in helping these vulnerable families to rebuild their lives.

Caseworkers provide intensive support for refugees. Upon arrival, refugees spend a week at the Welcome Centre so that their caseworkers can thoroughly establish and support their needs. This will lead on to a 6/7+ month support period to support the refugees with housing, NHS, Universal Credit, schooling, referrals and more. Following this, the service provides ongoing floating support.

The service is currently supporting 800 children, young people and parents.

The Welcome Centre provides the following:

- Health support
- Benefits staff come and carry out registration
- Legal advice
- Welcome to Northern Ireland talk
- Housing
- Education placements
- English language taster

One of the locations for the Welcome Centre is a Barnardo's residential building that also hosts 6 families. The building is specifically for those who have more complex needs, including health needs, severe trauma or other identified issues. Many of the refugees who come to the building later refer to it as "*their first home*" in Northern Ireland.



Employment Support

The Need

One of the most important issues for the refugees we work with is their desire to integrate into the community. Integration for them takes a number of forms and can be measured in different ways. One of the accepted indicators of integration is for people to find meaningful employment.

Reports show that refugees are 3 times more likely than the UK-born population to be unemployed. Unemployment for UK-born citizens was at 3.7% in 2019¹ compared to 18% for refugees.²

What We Need

We would like to have a dedicated employment support worker within the Barnardo's Northern Ireland Refugee Support Service (NIRSS) to support families with sourcing and applying for employment opportunities. This role will prove to be an essential resource in ensuring the families we work with have the confidence and knowledge to know where to begin in regards to securing a job to take care of their families.

Jamal's Story

Jamal was excited to secure part time work on a local construction site, and gladly informed the local benefits advisor of his success, taking along the necessary documents they had asked his employer to verify. However, these documents were misplaced by the office and he was required to request these again from his employer, who was a little perturbed about the inconvenience.

The documents were lost inside the benefit office for a second time and when Jamal went to his employer again, his employer was understandably irritated and treated Jamal quite harshly.

He was given the ultimatum; to start work full time and forget about benefits, or, get off the site and don't come back.

Jamal, was left feeling isolated and vulnerable as he was unable to work full time due to his caring responsibilities for his disabled son. Unfortunately, Jamal had no choice but to leave his job. However, as a

consequence of him taking up part time work, his housing benefit had stopped temporarily and Jamal required advocacy from the service to have this rectified and reinstated.

The thought of losing his accommodation was extremely stressful and impacted Jamal's self-esteem and confidence. The situation was heightened further when it transpired that due to the benefits mix-up and new housing benefit claim, he would have to make a fresh claim for all his benefits through Universal Credit - and this would mean a 5 week delay in any benefits support whatsoever. Our staff stepped in to ensure his family were able to access an advanced payment and other support.

Understandably Jamal felt dejected and needed considerable support to build his confidence back up. Jamal has now resumed his job search, is hopeful for the future, and receives support from a member of staff when he needs to go to the job centre.

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/dt2w/lms>
² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/02/refugees-are-missing-out-on-jobs-in-uk-charities-warn>

Your Support

We need a dedicated employment support worker to focus on helping families to secure meaningful employment.

This role would be the connection between the refugees and the job market, responsible for raising the employment rate of the refugees by upskilling and matching them to suitable opportunities, this will include:

- Carrying out an audit of skills and experience
- Providing support for CV's and interviews
- Sourcing employment and training opportunities and supporting candidates with preparation.

We will be looking to hire an experienced individual with a background of helping people overcome the barriers to employment.

The service has recently developed an Employment and Skills sub-group tasked with improving access to training and development opportunities. Whilst this provides some pathways to employment, there is limited 1-1 support for which is critical to maximise access to appropriate and rewarding job opportunities.

Outcomes

We will carry out a comparable analysis with Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Schemes in other parts of the UK, looking at their rates of employment; this will help us to define measurable outcomes.

We are working towards an increase in the number of people deemed ready for employment and an increase in the number of Syrian refugees accessing employment opportunities through a measurable increase in the amount of interviews and placements obtained. Recommendations will be made on creating pathways to employment with statutory partners for refugees arriving in Northern Ireland to get into employment.

How your Zakat can support Syrian refugees into meaningful and long-term employment

This Ramadhan we are looking to raise £100,000 which would allow the service to implement this programme for two years to ensure refugee families do not fall into a cycle of poverty, leaving them destitute after fleeing war and persecution for a better life.

Your support will cover the cost of:

£38,000 per annum - 2 year role of Employment Worker

£5,000 per annum - employment events (job fairs, interview practice, CV drafting – room hire, food, materials and expenses)

£5,000 per annum - interpreting Costs

£2,000 per annum – refugee travel to events

£50,000 per annum x 2 years = £100,000

Your Zakat will be distributed according to Islamic principles of Zakat. Barnardo's have worked with Islamic Scholar, Mufti Bilal Omarjee to audit the Zakat compliancy of this service, policies and procedures. Zakat will be restricted to this service and spent within the duration of the delivery of the service. For further details please speak with a member of staff.

How to donate

MY10NIGHTS

We have partnered with MyTenNights, so that you can now automate your donations to Barnardo's on every potential night of Laylatul Qadr.

Visit

*mytennights.com/barnardos-uk
and select our Zakat cause*

 **LaunchGood**

*Donate on our LaunchGood page at
launchgood.com/refugeeemployment*



Transfer funds direct to our non-interest Zakat account:

Barnardo's Zakat Account

Sort code 20-57-30

Account No 90015415



Thank you for your support.

**Believe in
children**



Barnardo's

In order to protect the privacy of the children we help, names have been changed and models have been used in this document.

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