

Bath Welcomes Refugees

Refugee Week 2026 Impact Report

Courage Belongs To Us All

Reporting period: Refugee Week, 14-20th June 2026

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Impact at a Glance

Refugee Week 2026



9

Events

Community events
across Bath



150+

Volunteer hours

Generously contributed
by our amazing
volunteers



10

Partnerships

Working together with
local organisations
and supporters



700+

People attended

Bringing together refugees,
asylum seekers and
the wider community



£1,600+

Value leveraged

Through volunteer time
and in-kind support



Together, we're building a more welcoming, connected and compassionate Bath.

Executive Summary

During Refugee Week 2026, Bath Welcomes Refugees delivered a week-long programme of community events celebrating welcome, inclusion and cultural exchange across Bath.

Over the course of the week we:

- Delivered **9 events**
- Engaged approximately **700 participants**
- Worked alongside **10 partner organisations**
- Supported refugee and asylum-seeking community members through opportunities to connect, share experiences and celebrate culture

The programme demonstrated the power of bringing established residents and newly arrived communities together through arts, food, conversation and shared experiences. Feedback from participants showed increased feelings of belonging, stronger connections between communities, a greater understanding of the global events and conflicts that drive forced displacement and strengthened local partnerships.

This report summarises the programme, its impact and our lessons learned.

Refugee Week 2026 Programme

Theme

The theme for this year's international Refugee Week movement was **Courage** and throughout Refugee Week, Bath Welcomes Refugees explored the theme through a programme that celebrated resilience, creativity, leadership and human connection.

Rather than viewing courage as a single act, the programme invited participants to consider the many forms it takes—from speaking publicly about lived experience, to preserving cultural traditions, to navigating complex asylum systems and building new lives in unfamiliar communities:

- **Mir Miri**, a member of Bath Welcomes Refugees' Advisory Group, shared a powerful poem co-created with more than 50 members of the Afghan diaspora, reflecting on the many meanings of courage.
 - A screening of *Dreamers* (2025), as part of Counterpoints Arts' Refugee Week programme, explored the courage required to endure the UK's immigration detention system.
 - The **Beyond Bath** talk, *The Many Shapes of Courage*, encouraged audiences to reflect on courage in everyday life, from acts of resistance and survival to welcoming newcomers into the community.
 - A short, recorded interview with Lord Alf Dubs on the courage it took of him and his family to place him on the Kindertransport to the UK from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia at only seven years of age.
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Programme Overview

Event	Date	Venue	Attendance	Lead Partner
Mayor's Guide Walk	14/06	City of Bath	12	The Mayor of Bath's Honorary Guides.
The Refugee's Gift Photography Exhibition	15/06	Bath Abbey	303	Bath Abbey
Messages of Courage Climate Hub	15/06	Climate Hub	35	Climate Hub
Dreamers (2025) Film Screening	16/06	Oasis Church	24	Oasis Church
Refugee Textiles Art Project Display Victoria Art Gallery	16/06	Victoria Art Gallery	Ongoing	B&NES Council
Beyond Bath The Many Shapes of Courage	17/06	Oasis Church	20	Oasis Church
Community Meal Bath Community Kitchen	18/06	The Lighthouse Centre, Twerton	42	Bath Community Kitchen
Storytelling & Clay	18/06	Bath Artists'	10	Bath Artists' Studios



Event	Date	Venue	Attendance	Lead Partner
Workshop Bath Artists' Studios		Studios		
Bath Refugee Festival	20/06	Fairfield House	280	Sudafest

Programme in Pictures



Photo 1 - BWR's *Beyond Bath 'The Many Shapes of Courage'*
Community Conversation

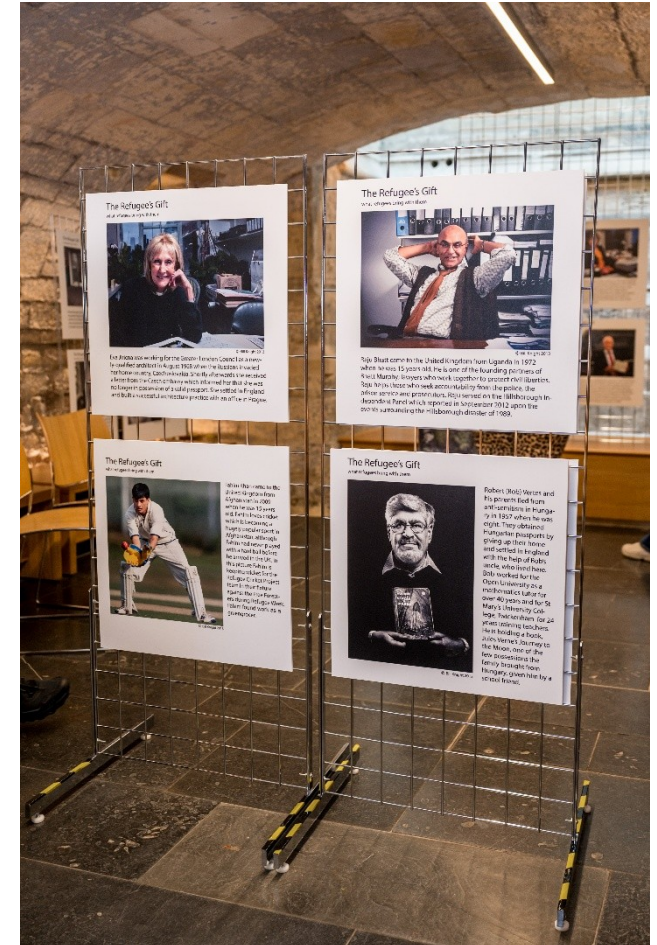


Photo 2 - Prints from Bill Kight's *'The Refugee's Gift'*
Photo Collection, displayed at Bath Abbey



Photo 3 – *Community meal prepared by three Afghan chefs in partnership with Bath Community Kitchen*

Photo 4 – *Participants in BWR's Storytelling and Clay workshop, delivered by two of BWR's volunteers, Sasha and Andrea*



Our Impact

Headline Statistics

Measure		Result
Events delivered -	9	A diverse programme of arts, culture, food and discussion, co-designed with people with lived experience to explore this year's Refugee Week theme of Courage.
Total attendance -	700+	Enabled local residents to hear directly from people with lived experience of forced migration, fostering greater understanding, empathy and community connection.
Refugees & asylum seekers participating	34+	Over 34 people with lived experience of forced migration participated, helping to create spaces where their cultures, stories and contributions were recognised and celebrated.
Volunteers involved	30+	30+ volunteers gave their time and ideas, creating a warm, welcoming environment and making the Refugee Week 2026 programme possible.
Volunteer hours contributed	150+	Ensured the successful delivery of the programme through planning, logistics, event support and participant welcome.
Partner organisations	10	Strengthened collaboration across Bath and increased capacity, enabling the festival's reach and impact to grow from last year's event.
Artists/speakers	41	A diverse programme meant there were events for all: talks; films, workshops, community meals and exhibitions.
New supporter/ volunteers sign-ups	7	More capacity built within BWR to deliver more events and programmes like this in the future, furthering our stated aims and objectives.
Press coverage	2	Press coverage amplified awareness of BWR's Refugee Week activities among audiences

Measure

Result

beyond existing members and supporters, with the potential to attract new supporters and partners.

Who We Reached

Refugee Week engaged a diverse audience, bringing together members of the public, BWR beneficiaries, supporters and friends of BWR. Refugees played a central role throughout the programme as speakers, workshop participants, audience members and chefs for the community meal, ensuring that lived experience was at the heart of the week's activities. All events were open to local residents, helping to foster greater understanding and connection across the wider community, and many events were designed to be family-friendly, encouraging people of all ages to take part. The programme created welcoming spaces for learning, conversation and shared experiences, strengthening relationships between refugee and non-refugee communities.

Participant Voices

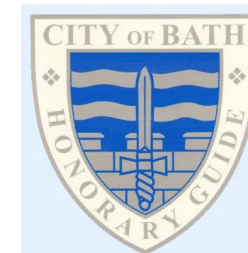
"Volunteering is always a pleasure, for the people you meet and the new perspectives you hear, but Refugee Week was even more so. The range of activities was so impressive and varied, a view shared by everyone I have spoken to. From films to exhibitions and thoughtful practical sessions, it was really enjoyable and immensely worthwhile. In the present climate discussion is crucial and the week provided an excellent forum for this. Keep up the great work" Kathryn, BWR volunteer.

"Bath Abbey has supported BWR's language classes for refugees by hosting a session every Friday since 2022. This year gave us an important opportunity to join BWR in marking Refugee Week by offering an art display space. The powerful portraits by Bill Knight stimulated rich and varied conversations with the public throughout the week, helping to raise understanding of the contribution that refugees have made and continue to make to the UK. Bath Abbey was proud to partner with BWR and we look forward to expanding our work together in the future." Polly Andrews, Leaning Manager, Bath Abbey

"Last night meant a lot. Those dinners bring together people who may feel lonely or have very little, and having a warm table and respectful space can change the whole feeling of a week. I also [got involved] because, I feel a deep responsibility toward people like them here in the UK, whether they're British or migrants... I can't explain in words how much this environment gave me: real freedom, true belonging, and respect." Farida, BWR volunteer.

Working in Partnership

Partner	Contribution
Sudafest	Delivered Bath Refugee Festival (BRF)
Bath Community Kitchen	Hosted a Refugee Week Afghan Community Meal
Mayor of Bath's Honorary Guides	Delivered a special walking tour looking at Bath's history of welcoming refugees
Victoria Art Gallery	Displayed BWR's and B&NES Resettlement Team's Refugee Textiles Project
Share & Repair	Provided event equipment for BRF
Oasis Bath	Provided venue spaces for film screenings and Beyond Bath talks
Bath Abbey	Provided exhibition space for The Refugee's Gift photography exhibition
Bath Artists' Studios	Provided venue space for art workshops
Climate Hub	Delivered 'Messages of Courage' space



What We Learned

Successes

- **Strong early planning and community co-production**

One of the key factors contributing to the festival's success was the extended planning period. Preparations began in January in partnership with Sudafest, providing sufficient time to develop the programme, build relationships, secure contributors, and promote events effectively. Equally important were the open-access planning meetings, which invited members of the local community to shape the festival from the outset. This collaborative approach fostered a strong sense of ownership, encouraged new volunteers and contributors to get involved, and ensured that the programme reflected the interests and experiences of the communities it sought to engage.

- **Building new partnerships**

The festival created valuable opportunities to establish relationships that will extend beyond the event itself. BWR is particularly keen to continue developing its relationship with the **Frank Conversations Collective** as part of the ongoing development of our **Coffee Conversations** programme, where we hope to create spaces where people holding a wide range of perspectives on irregular migration can engage in respectful, facilitated dialogue. These conversations aim to challenge misinformation, encourage thoughtful discussion, and build empathy and understanding towards people who have experienced forced migration.

- **Maintaining accessibility**

Ensuring that people from forced migrant backgrounds could participate fully in this year's programme remained a core priority throughout the festival. All events were either free to attend or offered free access for those on lower or modest incomes, helping to remove financial barriers to participation. This commitment reflects BWR's wider ethos of

creating inclusive cultural and community spaces where everyone can take part regardless of their financial circumstances, and it remains a principle we are committed to maintaining in future programmes.

- **Encouraging voluntary donations**

The introduction of an optional £3 donation when booking tickets proved to be a positive addition. By inviting those who were able to contribute towards the costs of delivering the festival, BWR was able to generate additional income without compromising accessibility. We were encouraged by this model and believe it has considerable potential. As we plan future festivals, BWR will explore how we can better promote and utilise voluntary donations to increase income generation while maintaining our commitment to keeping events accessible for everyone.

Challenges

- **Raising awareness and promoting the programme**

BWR promoted the Refugee Week programme through our social media channels, volunteer newsletters, partner networks, and by listing all events within the Bath Refugee Festival's online programme. Despite this, many events still had unsold tickets or available spaces. This suggests that while our existing communications reached our established audiences, there is an opportunity to increase awareness of Refugee Week among the wider public. Developing stronger partnerships with local media outlets, community organisations and other promotional partners would help extend the programme's reach, increase public engagement and improve attendance at future events.

- **Venue Capacity and Accessibility**

While some events experienced lower-than-anticipated bookings, others reached the physical capacity of their venues, limiting the number of people who could attend. This highlighted the challenge of balancing affordability, accessibility and capacity when selecting venues. Looking ahead, identifying larger, fully accessible venues where demand is expected to be high would enable us to welcome more participants while maintaining an inclusive and comfortable experience for all attendees.

- **Securing Sustainable Funding**

Delivering a diverse, high-quality Refugee Week programme requires sufficient funding to cover venue hire, materials, accessibility costs and fair remuneration for contributors. This year, BWR was unsuccessful in its grant application to help part-fund the programme, placing pressure on organisational resources. Securing dedicated funding will be essential to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the programme.

As funding allows, BWR aims to pay all guest speakers at least the Living Wage for their time and expertise (alongside travel expenses) – honouring our commitment to fair and equitable participation by recognising the value of lived experience and professional contributions alike.

Improvements for Next Year

- **Working with local businesses**

Strengthening partnerships with local businesses could increase sponsorship opportunities, in-kind support and community engagement, while helping to raise the profile of Refugee Week across Bath.

- **Gather more feedback (attendees and volunteers alike)**

Expanding the use of our new QR code feedback forms and evaluation methods will enable us to capture more meaningful insights from attendees, volunteers and partners, helping to shape and strengthen future programmes.

- **Further refugee leadership in the design of the programme**

We will continue to create more opportunities for people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary to shape the programme from the outset, ensuring events are informed by, and responsive to, the voices and priorities of refugee communities.

- **Opportunity for a BWR volunteer social during Refugee Week**

Incorporating a dedicated volunteer social event into the Refugee Week programme would provide an opportunity to celebrate volunteers' contributions, strengthen connections across the volunteer community and recognise the vital role they play in delivering the programme.

- **Increased/more consistent opening hours in spaces**

Where resources allow, extending and standardising opening hours across programme venues would improve accessibility and create more opportunities for people to engage with Refugee Week activities at times that suit them.



Looking Ahead

Embedding learning into year-round activities:

The feedback gathered during Refugee Week has reinforced our commitment to ensuring that the values of welcome, inclusion and community participation remain central to our work throughout the year. Building on the success of this year's programme, we are keen to host more community meals in partnership with a diverse range of local organisations, recognising the unique role that sharing food plays in bringing people together, fostering conversation and strengthening relationships across communities.

We also plan to develop this year's photography exhibition by incorporating profiles and personal stories of local people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary. We hope this will provide an even deeper insight into the experiences, resilience and contributions of refugees in our community, whilst other BWR events also create further opportunities for storytelling and connection.

Learning from Refugee Week also informs the ongoing development of our *Beyond Bath* talks programme. We actively seek feedback from audience members after each event to better understand the topics our supporters and local community want to explore. This continuous dialogue helps us shape future talks around issues that are most relevant and engaging, ensuring that our programme remains responsive and grounded in the interests of our community.



Thank You

BWR would like to say a huge **Thank You** to the following people, for making Refugee Week 2026 the success that it was:

- Volunteers
 - Staff
 - Trustees
 - Photographers Betty, Felix, Lucy and Isabella
 - BSU student, Lucy Glover, for creating a short film of an interview with Lord Alf Dubs on what courage means to him
 - Refugee community members
 - Our partner organisations
 - BWR supporters
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