

**THE  
HARBOUR  
PROJECT**

We aid refugees and asylum seekers across Swindon.  
We give friendship, advice, practical help and hope.  
We are The Harbour Project.

# **Strategic Plan**

2019-2022

## Who we are

### Mission:

Our mission is to be a family for every individual who seeks asylum or is granted refugee status in Swindon, and to help them to rebuild their lives. We provide advice, support, practical help and friendship, so that our visitors have the best possible chance of a fair hearing, a fair outcome from their asylum claim, and a fair future in the UK.

### Who we help:

We help asylum seekers and refugees.

### Our Charitable Objects

1. To provide relief for asylum seekers and refugees and their dependants who are in conditions of hardship or distress
2. To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of asylum seekers and refugees
3. To provide facilities for asylum seekers and refugees for education, recreation and other leisure time occupations with the object of improving their condition of life and assisting their inclusion into the wider community.

We call the asylum seekers and refugees whom we serve 'our visitors'.

We uphold our three charitable objects as interrelated and equally important, recognising that their relative importance to visitors will vary according to their personal circumstances and position within the asylum process.

### Our underpinning values are:

#### Visitor-focussed

We prioritise the interests of our visitors in the decisions that we make, and recognise the importance of their involvement in decisions that may affect them.

#### Inclusive and egalitarian

We are non-judgemental and accepting. We seek to provide equality of opportunity to allow visitor's to access to the help and advice that they need, specific to their circumstances. We do not probe or ask detailed questions about the events leading up to someone making a claim for asylum unless the visitor chooses to share this with us.

We value our diverse Board of Trustees and staff team, and welcome volunteers from throughout the community, making use of their myriad skills. We work in partnership with other organisations wherever possible.

We actively engage with stakeholders in our management and planning to ensure that our provision remains relevant, valuable and appropriate.

## **Warm and welcoming**

We are proud of our warm, family-like atmosphere. We are informal and friendly, and aim to provide a safe, comforting environment for our visitors to enable visitors to integrate into Swindon life in ways that are beneficial for them and other residents in the town.

Underpinning the informality and friendship, we also pride ourselves on the professionalism, integrity, depth and breadth of the services and advice that we offer.

## **Looking back – how far we have come**

The Harbour Project was started in response to the Kosovo refugee crisis of 2000, and formally registered as a charity in 2003.

The Harbour Project serves asylum seekers who have been dispersed by the Home Office to Home Office accommodation in Swindon while their claims for asylum are considered, and other asylum seekers who are in Swindon via other routes. We also support refugees who have been granted Leave to Remain in the UK and are living in Swindon.

In 2018/19, The Harbour Project assisted welcomed 208 new visitors, and provided 4076 advise sessions to 349 asylum seekers and refugees.

The Harbour Project currently employs a total of six members of staff (some full and some part-time). It is supported by around 80 volunteers who commit to work regularly in the weekday drop-in centre or in related activities, and a large number of supporters, donors and fundraisers.

## **Who we are**

Our Trustees are:

David Rowlands, Chair  
Juliana Ali  
Chris Carlton  
Kirsty Johnson  
Hadiza Mahuta  
Monica Potter  
Heather Redington  
Ian Robertson  
Basel Esleem

Our Board is supported by voluntary Board Secretary: Mari Williams

Our Staff team:

Claire Garrett - CEO  
Nan Bains - Project Manager  
Yazmin Taylor – Business Manager  
Giles Matthews – Drop In Manager  
Mindy Sandhu – Deputy Drop In Manager

We are also enormously grateful to our donors – large and small – who make the work we do possible.

## Strengths we will build upon

- 🕒 We have a unique role providing practical support and engaging with our visitors in Swindon
- 🕒 We have good brand recognition in the local area.
- 🕒 We have dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees with a wide range of experience and skills.
- 🕒 Swindon benefits from a supportive Local Authority and civic community.
- 🕒 We are proud of the trust that our visitors place in us.

## External drivers

In delivering our operational work, we will remain flexible and aware of the following:

- 🕒 Changes in immigration law as well as other laws affecting the Harbour as an organisation
- 🕒 Changes in the benefit framework, rights and entitlements
- 🕒 The impact of the UK leaving the EU
- 🕒 World events - war and civil unrest
- 🕒 Increases in inflation and potential additional budget cuts – and the impact this has on The Harbour and other agencies with whom we work
- 🕒 A changing mix and volumes of asylum seekers in Swindon – remembering that the Harbour does not own the relationship with central government for Swindon being a designated dispersal town.
- 🕒 A need for a sharp focus upon protecting the personal data of our visitors, volunteers and staff, recognising that much of the information that we hold is highly sensitive in nature.
- 🕒 Changes in public attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees, and
- 🕒 The importance of strong and trusting relationships with other agencies.

## Looking forward – the future is bright

The Harbour Project is facing an exciting new period of change, having grown from a small sized charity to an effectively-functioning charity with a skilled staff team and a significant visitor group. With success in securing grant funding, the charity has been able to expand and diversify the work that it does, both in breadth and depth of delivery. Specifically, the Harbour Project has, to-date, benefitted from strong support of the Swindon Borough Council, Lloyds Foundation and the Big Lottery Fund (BLF), as well as a number of other funders.

In 2017, the Harbour Project secured an additional five years of funding from the BLF and SBC thus giving a period of stability through to 2022. In April 2019, Lloyds Banking Foundation also confirmed a grant to contribute towards core costs, also ending in March 2022. The Board of Trustees have set in place a series of plans to build capability for the future so that we can continue to be a strong, robust and effective charity.

Its priorities our 2019-2022 are therefore:

1. Continuing to meet the ongoing and changing **needs of visitors** as international and national events and changes impact on their experience.
2. Diversifying and building our **funding base** to ensure our ongoing stability and success well into the future.
3. Ensuring that our **structure, staffing and operational processes** are fit for purpose for a growing organisation
4. Continuing to attract, retain and value **volunteers**, ensuring that the experience that have with us is fulfilling and makes best use of their skills and experience.
5. Meeting **charitable governance** best practice as we grow and develop.
6. Ensuring our **premises** meet the needs and wellbeing of our visitors and staff.
7. **Deepening the capabilities and professionalism** of our organisation to better equip people for working life in the UK.
8. Working actively and with other agencies and influencers to **promote the value of our work** and how this benefits our visitors, the town and the broader community.

## Our approach

We use a combination of core activities, which are essential to our visitors and our charitable objects, and discretionary activities, which may vary over time. This approach ensures that we endeavour to meet the needs of our visitors while being able to respond flexibly and quickly to emerging or sudden needs. It also gives us the opportunity to trial innovative approaches which may later become part of our core.

To ensure that our support adapts to changing requirements and that we identify gaps and new needs, we learn from informal engagement in the Drop-In alongside periodic one-to-one conversations and focus groups. In early 2019 we established a forum of visitors called 'Visitors in the Lead' where we are talk in more detail about the work that we do, how we could grow or develop our support, and the forum also gives us an opportunity to explain how the organisation is funded and governed.

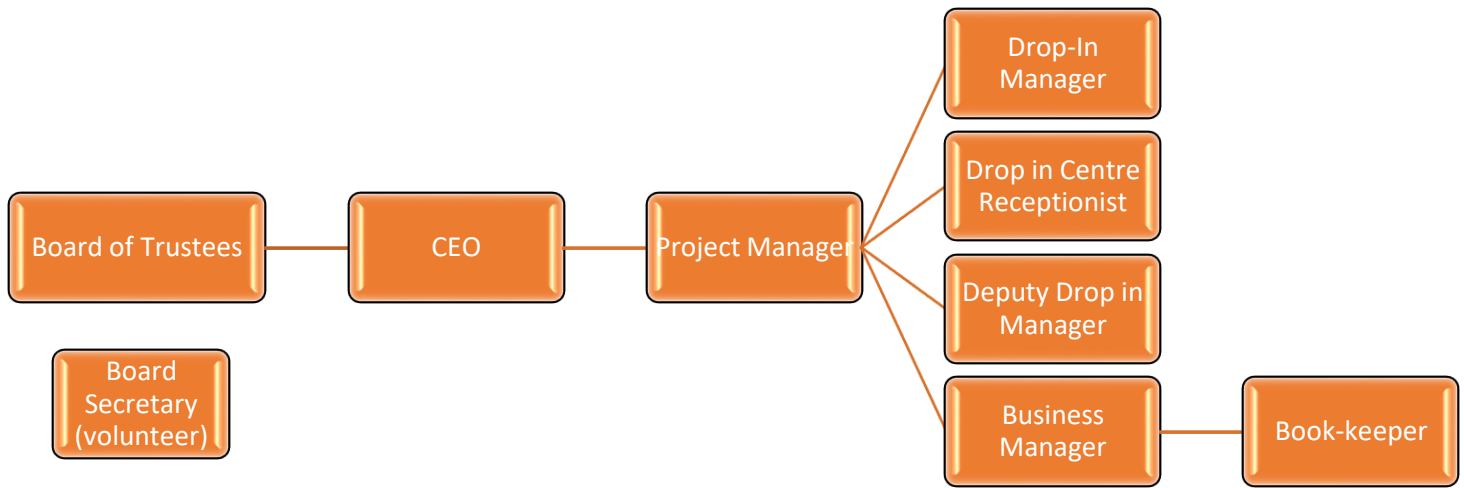
We work in a structured way with other agencies to keep up to date with immigration law, and processes that support asylum seekers and refugees. We also have a growing network of contacts in like-minded organisations, which allows us to share best-practice and learn from each other. Increasingly, we are engaging with prospective employers so that we can help to develop work-ready individuals with a strong grasp of English, an understanding of British work culture, who are able to make use of their skills and experience.

## Delivering our priorities

In order to deliver our priorities, our resources are defined under an annual budget, which is connected to the activities in this strategic plan. Responsibility for implementing this plan and the budget is delegated to the operational staff. Progress against this strategic plan and the annual budget is measured by the Board at its bimonthly meetings.

## Structure

Our structure for this strategic plan period is set out below.



### Risk management

The Board of Trustees has established a risk register to ensure that the charity is fully aware of and prepared for any and all risks that face its ongoing success. This is reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees.

### Contact details

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