

# Brushstrokes Community Project

*Strengthening and supporting refugees and migrants across Sandwell, West Birmingham and beyond*

*Annual Report*

*2019/20*

*“We must be in the hand of God like a brush in the hand of the painter” Nicholas Barré*

## Management Committee

2019-20

Joanne Watters – Chairperson  
Fr Damian Ozokwere  
Sister Margaret Walsh  
Keith Athiade  
Bhavna Solanki  
Leighton Padotan  
Roy Gardiner  
Leonie Hart  
Jacques Matensi-Kubanza  
Mary Tomlinson  
Julie Shields  
Lisa Goodson

## Brushstrokes Staff

Dave Newall – Project Manager  
Jane Alsop – ESOL Coordinator  
Martin McNally – Volunteer Coordinator  
Nigel Chandra – Centre Coordinator  
Lucy Clark – Resources Coordinator  
Harriet Thuambe – Senior advice and outreach worker  
Lukano Omunson – Early Action advice worker  
Hawar Amin – Advice worker  
Lorriane Cruickshank – Advice worker  
Salman Mirza – Immigration Adviser  
Carol Mendez – Monitoring and Administration Officer  
Fatmire Braha – Resources assistant  
Sijabulisiwe Dube – EUSS/ Immigration adviser  
Julie Oneill – EUSS Project Coordinator  
Karolina Borkiewicz-Singh – EUSS advice worker

## Sessional Staff

Dee Sturman – IELTS/OET Teacher  
Helen Clare – IELTS Teacher  
Geoff Wheeler – IELTS Teacher  
John Williamson – IELTS Teacher  
Liz Norton – IELTS Teacher

*Brushstrokes is a partnership between Father Hudson's Care, the Infant Jesus Sisters, the Parish of St Philip Neri and the Sisters of our lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd*



Charity no. 512992

INFANT  
JESUS  
SISTERS

Charity no. 234216



Parish of St Philip Neri



Charity no. 272581

The Sisters of Our Lady of Charity  
of the Good Shepherd  
Charity no. 1163502



## Volunteers & Helpers

### **ESOL**

Maureen Alecock  
Susan Ahmed  
Hazera Begum  
Paul Beech  
Janet Boardman  
Barbara Eastgate  
Carol Green  
William Gurney  
Stephen Hardman  
Vivien Heenan  
Zan Howard  
Anne Maher  
Maryam Moradi  
Givashi John Mwanga  
Roz Simpson  
Martin Taylor  
Junior Moyo  
Mary-Rose Puttick  
Andrew Harwood  
Liz Norton  
Sr. Juliana O'Sullivan  
Deborah Pugh  
Sonia Stranger  
Anne Tudor  
Andrene Miller  
Sonia Stranger  
Emlyn Evans  
Matthew Lacey  
Josephine Legere  
Joe Fleming  
Bashira Karokhil  
Geoffrey Snookes

### **Students**

Michael Barwick  
Gregory Beckett  
Henry Woodhouse  
Orla Breslin  
Berlind Fellemeier  
Elleanor Jones  
Mollie Arif  
Paul Prior  
Bilal Ahmed

### **Administration**

Shahla Ahmed  
Gurjit Dhariwal  
Bani Kaur  
Elsa Hallaci  
Jessica Hunter  
Mary Tomlinson  
Anna Lockley-Scott  
Badriya Karajha

### **Advice Volunteers**

Melonie Barnaby  
Petelo Sakwanga  
Hawar Amin  
Lorraine Cruickshank  
Kathy Fryatt  
Julie O'Neill  
Stephen Hardman  
Hajar Nejad  
Damaris Mulowoza  
Priya Sahota

### **Asylum Guides**

Annina Lee  
Josh Evans  
Marisol Reyes  
Atyaf Sultan  
Francois Mouchipou

### **Driver**

Kate Slade

### **Resources & Catering**

Parveen Akhtar  
Anwara Bari  
Mary Geach  
Asha Gharu  
Makbule Gokberk  
Jennifer Hall  
Helima Ismaeel  
Claire Langley  
Costacia Mukankusi  
Nabilla Nasyilla  
Seema Raymond  
Mahtaj Shiraz  
Diane Hill  
Babatunde Oyenekah  
Alina Stennett-Mirza  
Franck Gouhomple  
Arsida Balaj  
Alwina Coetse-Evenson

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## *Chairs report*

As always I am in awe of the hard work and dedication of Dave Newall, the staff and volunteers of Brushstrokes Community Project. This year, more than ever, I feel inspired by their dedication and motivation to welcome the stranger; Brushstrokes continues to be the local project supporting so many in need – those in crisis and destitution, those who need a friendly face and those who want to learn/improve their English.

I feel a slight fraud writing this introduction as from October 2019 I have been adoption/maternity leave, however it has been a story of two halves. I am proud to be part of the move to our new building, something that has only been made possible by our partners and supporters and especially the Sisters of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Peter Deeley and Andrew Brazier. Whilst it has been wonderful to see the new building taking shape and the new spaces being used, there was considerable strain put on the manager, staff and volunteers to reduce the impact of the move on services and those we support. They need to be commended on their flexibility and commitment over this period.

Following the new building there were celebrations - the blessing of the building, the official opening, the 20th Brushstrokes anniversary and Christmas. From February 2020 the project began to respond to the changes going on around it and the pandemic. Again, I want to thank the resilience of Dave Newall, the staff, the volunteers for continually changing and adapting to best meet the needs of those we serve. The pandemic has shown how Brushstrokes is a project which is responsive to the local community and wider environment.

I would like to thank Andy Quinn, CEO of Father Hudson's Care, for taking on my role during my period of extended leave. The CEO covering is just part-way to show the importance of Brushstrokes to the wider Father Hudson's Care charity, alongside the considerable time commitments of our HR, finance and fundraising department to the project.

Whilst our building is no longer in the St Phillip of Neri parish centre, the parish remains a key partner who continue to support the project and our grounding in the Catholic faith and the gospel values of compassion, dignity and community. Due to the faith, commitment and sheer hard work of Brushstrokes and our partners, I know the project will continue for many more decades to come.

*Joanne Watters*

*Brushstrokes Chairperson*

*Head of Community Projects – Father Hudson's Care*

## Project manager's report

*"A human life is like a single letter of the alphabet. It can be meaningless. Or it can be a part of a great meaning"*

Looking back over this year I was struck by this quote and how the experience and achievements at Brushstrokes are inseparable from the diverse group of individuals who through coming together give meaning to welcome in this community. It is through the words, generosity, time and actions of volunteers, supporters, staff, service users and our increasing partnership with others that the story of Brushstrokes can be understood.

Together you make possible our capacity to welcome new arrivals and enrich this community. In turn those who come to Brushstrokes for advice, support or language classes help us understand what reaching out to them has meant. There is no better illustration of this than the creative banner made by one of the families we have been supporting since

March. We welcome and with generosity are welcome back into the lives of those who come and make their home here.

The story of Brushstrokes continues with the **move to our new premises this year**. We are grateful to all of those who helped bring this move to fruition, especially for the contribution from our new partner the Sisters of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd and the support of Peter Deeley and Andrew Brazier, without whom this would not have been possible.

The building provides more space for ESOL, advice, an IT suite and extra space for storage and distribution of resources. The large hall continued provides a weekly venue for our community café and other social activities. Who knew just how important this additional space would prove to be in March when the Pandemic lead to the national lockdown? The new building made it possible to adapt our service, keep staff and volunteers safe and continue to respond to the needs of the local community, through food and specialist advice.





The collective response to migration in Sandwell and Brushstrokes' role in this can be seen in the diversity of representatives who joined us for the official opening of the building by the Mayor of Sandwell, Cllr Ann Jarron (pictured below), who also adopted Brushstrokes as one of her Mayoral Charities; the level of interest amongst local people and organisations to promote Sandwell as a Borough of Sanctuary; the partnership approaches which have led to the development of Sandwell Language

Network providing increased access to English language provision for new arrivals and the 'Settling Well' project being delivered jointly by Citizens Advice Sandwell and Brushstrokes; and the EU settlement scheme project, delivering information and advice to vulnerable EU nationals, in partnership with three local voluntary sector organisations, which helped 1000+ individuals secure status this year.

At the opening of our new premises in September 2019 two of our service users spoke eloquently about their experience of life in the UK, how Brushstrokes had helped them and how they wanted to contribute to the local community. Both are highly skilled health professionals; one became a volunteer and through speaking at our opening ceremony has had further opportunities to speak about her experience at other events in Sandwell.



As **Brushstrokes celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year** we can reflect on how far we have come and how we have strived to maintain the ethos of welcome to all what we do, whether through advice, practical health, ESOL or social activities. Sister Margaret, Teresa Clements, Kevin Caffrey (Chair of Trustees at Father Hudson's Care) and Andy Quinn (CEO of Father Hudson's Care) were joined by current and former staff, volunteers, supporters and those

who have come to Brushstrokes for over the years to remember and celebrate.

We commissioned the evaluators Cloud Chamber to carry out an independent evaluation of Brushstrokes funded by our National Lottery grant. Comments from stakeholders and users included:

“I love working with them, as they have technical skills, delivered with heart, client centred; a happy organisation that really works hard.” – Stakeholder

“I have so many dreams for my new life and you give me the things I need to reach these dreams” – Service User

“I am very happy with Brushstrokes because you help me with everything and make me feel better and stop feeling sad. I feel more happy because my confidence has improved because before I was sad and did not understand about everything. Now I feel free to talk and I have more friends because I meet them at the [Brushstrokes Community] café. I feel 100% England is my country. I want to stay here for a long time.” – Service User

We will use the feedback from the evaluation report to inform and develop our strategy and services for 2020 and beyond.

*‘What does serving mean? Serving means giving an attentive welcome to a person who arrives. It means bending over those in need and stretching out a hand to them, without calculation, without fear, but with tenderness and understanding, just as Jesus knelt to wash the apostles’ feet. Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity. Solidarity, this word that frightens the developed world. People try to avoid saying it. Solidarity to them is almost a bad word. But it is our word! Serving means recognising and accepting requests for justice and hope, and seeking roads together, real paths that lead to liberation.’ (The Church of Mercy: Pope Francis)*

The words of Pope Francis illustrate the essential complementarity of both service and solidarity, reminding us of the responsibility and privilege we have in the work of Brushstrokes and also in this year bringing home the significance of working with others in true partnership. Thanks to all who have been a part of the story this year.

*Dave Newall  
Project Manager*

## *Brushstrokes highlights for 2019/20*

Brushstrokes community project is part of Father Hudson's Care. Established 20 years ago in Smethwick, where it is still based, Brushstrokes provides holistic support to asylum seekers, refugees, EU nationals and other migrants across Sandwell and West Birmingham.

**1) We celebrated moving to our new larger premises in September 2019 and our 20th Anniversary in November 2019.**

**2) We supported 1728 individuals from 109 different countries across from over 30 different local authority areas.**

**3) Helping individuals learn English:**

- 246 individuals involved in English language provision this year.
- Brushstrokes plays a key role in Sandwell Language Network and funding through this network has increased access to ESOL and a new IELTS course for non-medics.
- Development of a new Occupational English Test course for migrant health professionals through the Healthcare for Overseas Professionals project.

**4) Providing new arrivals with information and advice:**

- Expansion of advice services across Sandwell and Birmingham to four locations to support immigration, asylum support and EU settlement issues.
- Secured funding for immigration and full-time specialist welfare benefits adviser.
- Secured funding to provide advice for EU citizens wanting to apply for the EU settlement Scheme helping over 1000 people.
- 303 Home visits conducted this year with a focus on Single Asylum Seekers in HMO accommodation and vulnerable families.
- 107 refugee households supported through our refugee pathway work.
- Asylum seeker orientation sessions established bringing new arrivals together with local services to increase their understanding and improve access.

**5) Meeting practical needs:**

- 4980 provisions of food this year.
- In responding to COVID we set up a delivery service delivering food to clients who were vulnerable or self-isolating.
- Clothing provided to 687 people
- Baby equipment provided to 87 families
- Baby packs help 47 new mums

## 6) Enabling volunteering:

- We have continued to develop more volunteer roles this year.
- We have 61 active volunteers
- 9 volunteers moved into employment this year
- Nomination for Young Inspirational Volunteer of the Year award.

## 7) Partnership, influence and recognition

- Brushstrokes was nominated by Public Health Sandwell for the Thrive Mental Health Star award this year in recognition of the work we do to promote mental health and wellbeing among new arrivals. We were delighted to have been chosen as the Winner of the organisation category for the Black Country.
- We have worked with Sandwell Council to increase access to practical support, immigration, housing and welfare benefits advice for vulnerable families with No Recourse to Public Funds.



“I do like the model – I can’t think of any other organisation that really embraces people right from the beginning, and helps with all of the little bits” – Stakeholder

- Clear referral pathways are in place with several council departments and organisations who form part of Sandwell Advice Provider Network. We are supporting other organisations who have or wanted to develop OISC level 1 immigration advisers through consultation, supervision, training and delivery of a new immigration clinic in Oldbury.

“Brushstrokes contribute strongly to wider partnerships. That stands out for me; with the intention of doing the right thing for the people of the borough” Stakeholder

- New partnership with Public Health and SWBCCG to pilot Blood Borne Virus screening for new arrivals.
- We have provided access to specialist advice, training and support to other local VCS organisations, bringing EWAcic, Emconet and Ileys into a partnership to deliver support to EU nationals wanting to apply to the EU settlement Scheme, building a relationship with R.U.D.A to engage and support Romanian nationals and providing space during COVID for other organisations to work and see clients.

“Brushstrokes are invaluable to us, in supporting migrant communities” Stakeholder

- Brushstrokes has remained an active member of Sandwell New arrivals Partnership, the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership voluntary sector priority working group, the regional Destitution steering group, Sandwell Advice Providers Network, Sandwell Homelessness Forum and Sandwell Consortium, ensuring the needs of new and emerging communities are championed in the review and development of policy and practice.
- Our Asylum Early Action work has been shared at regional and national level. Our experience of asylum early action has contributed to discussions with the Home Office about early action initiatives within the asylum process.
- We have been actively involved in regional work with WM funders network, local authorities and other VCS organisations to help develop a greater understanding of migration, funding and coordination of work on migration<sup>1</sup>. We have shared our practice at one regional session on Migration focusing on our integrated approach to refugee and migrant homelessness and the benefits of outreach and home visiting. We led work on asylum early action for the second briefing event. We are working with Birmingham City Council to help promote early action approaches to work with new communities in conjunction with Refugee Action.
- Our partnership with the local NHS on IELTS and OET is unique .That 118 individuals with overseas healthcare qualifications and experience have been able to access support to help move them closer back to work in the NHS has made a huge difference to them and is already in some cases benefiting the wider community as some are now working for the local NHS trust.

“The project around IELTSs phenomenally successful. Without Brushstrokes, and the links they have, the trust and the people, to set up the project wouldn’t have had the same level of success. Without that core funding, certainly not in a position to engage with the use-it project” – Stakeholder

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<sup>1</sup> <http://migrationpolicy.org.uk/wm-funders-events/>

## *Progress on priorities for 2019/20*

### **1. Ensure the smooth transition of our services into new premises.**

Complete: Brushstrokes moved into the new premises on Smethwick High Street in September 2019.

### **2. Continue to develop our work on migrant health.**

Complete and ongoing: We organised a TB awareness session and have involved representatives from SWBCCG in our asylum seeker orientation sessions this year, enabling new arrivals to understand more about local NHS services and how to access them. The later part of the year saw us provide translated information and update on COVID through our ESOL, resources and advice provision. We continue to work with colleagues at the CCG, TB team and Public Health to develop a pilot Blood Borne Virus screening session.

### **3. Ensure core posts are funded and continuation funding is secured for immigration, specialist welfare and housing advice.**

Partially complete: This year has seen us secure funding for immigration advice in Sandwell and the provision of a specialist welfare benefits adviser through the 'Settling Well' project. We continue to look for funding to deliver more specialist housing advice and immigration and welfare benefits advice for those clients living outside of Sandwell.

### **4. Delivering new projects where funding is secured.**

Complete and ongoing: Further funding was secured to continue the work with single asylum seekers in HMO accommodation, which enhanced our ability to respond to the needs of more vulnerable clients when the first COVID lockdown started. We have delivered the settling well and EUSS projects and secured extensions for both into 2020/21. Work on the development of the health screening has been hampered by COVID.

### **5. Secure resources to develop additional management support for our advice services.**

Complete and ongoing: We were able to recruit an Advice service manager this year. This post is helping to continue to improve and integrate our advice services.

## 6. Working with EU communities.

Ongoing: We have significantly increased our engagement with EU nationals this year to 25% of our service users. Our connection with EU community organisations and the delivery of information and advice on the EU settlement scheme, funded through the Home Office, has increased awareness of the challenges many EU nationals are facing. This work has informed the development of the 'Settling Well' project and increased access to housing and benefits advice as well as highlighting the need for support in development of IT skills and employment support for EU citizens. The needs of EU rough sleepers were taken forward in a partnership project with Sandwell Council in February and March.

## 7. Sustain effective partnership and network engagement ensuring a strong evidence base to influence migration policy and practice.

Complete and ongoing: Brushstrokes has continued to develop meaningful partnership work for the benefit of new communities this year. We are delivering refugee support with Sandwell Councils LAASLO's; Settling well in partnership with Citizens Advice Sandwell; Lead the EUSS project with Ileys Community Association, Emconet and Europeans Welfare Association as delivery partners. Through our immigration project we have provided training, supervision and coordination for other level 1 advisers and helped develop a new immigration advice provision in Oldbury.

Brushstrokes, alongside our friends at Bearwood Action for Refugees, has played a key role in helping build momentum for Sandwell to become a Borough of Sanctuary.

We are providing evidence on the impact of the EU settlement scheme; the new AASC and AIRE contracts; the impact of COVID on those we work with and challenging policies and practice which incorrectly denied EU nationals their entitlement for benefits.



Our work with West Midlands Funders, local authorities and other voluntary sector organisations to coordinate a number of briefing events looking at migration, funding and priorities for migrant communities has enabled us to share good practice, spotlight asylum early action and increase opportunities for coordination and collaboration on the funding and delivery of services for and with new communities.

#### **8. Strengthen service user and community involvement in the development and delivery of services**

Ongoing: We have ensured more frequent focus groups and opportunities for service user feedback have been created this year. Through our asylum early action work a number of our service users have participated in a national expert by experience panel. The implementation of asylum seeker orientation sessions and the development of an OET course are examples that highlight our responsiveness to community identified needs. We continue to explore opportunities. Orientation sessions and the role of service users sharing their experience at our official opening have also created opportunity for service users to engage with other agencies and help shape service delivery.

#### *Priorities for 2020/21*

1. Continue to respond and adapt our service to meet the needs of new communities during COVID-19 in ways that empower individuals and prevent them falling into crisis.
2. Develop and sustain a holistic service that combines advice, practical support, ESOL, employment support, digital skills and social and community activities. Embed IT into ESOL classes - particularly with regard to employment.
3. Working with EU community organisations and service users to ensure services are in place to provide advice and support when at the current transition period ends
4. Sustain and increase social policy and influencing work on migration at a local and regional level
5. Ensure the building is being used to its capacity i.e. rental to other organisations for activities.
6. Strengthen service user and community involvement in the development and delivery of services for new communities in Sandwell and West Birmingham
7. Continue to develop our work on migrant health including delivery of health awareness and piloting health screening sessions. Continue to develop relevant English language provision in response to the needs of the community e.g. health
8. Ensure sustainable funding of core posts and projects that meet the identified needs of new communities.
9. Develop more regular social events to address isolation, foster friendships and peer support including conversation groups/cafe/trips/social drop-in sessions, developing and adapting delivery in response to the pandemic.
10. Develop a new 3-year strategy for 2021 - 2024.

## *New neighbours in 2019/2020*

This year we have been able to help more people from more nationalities on a wider range of issues.



- 1728 service users (Up from 1536 in 2018/19)
- 3837 Beneficiaries including 771 families and 1561 children



47% male



53% female



- We helped individuals from 109 countries of origin this year
- Up from 96 in 2018/19
- Increasing numbers of Sudanese, Iraqi, Nigerian, Pakistani, Iranian, Eritrean, Romanian and Polish nationals have been seen this year.



- 65% of service users lived in Sandwell
- 27% lived in Birmingham
- 41% of service lived in Smethwick
- 8% of service users lived in Oldbury and 8% in West Bromwich.

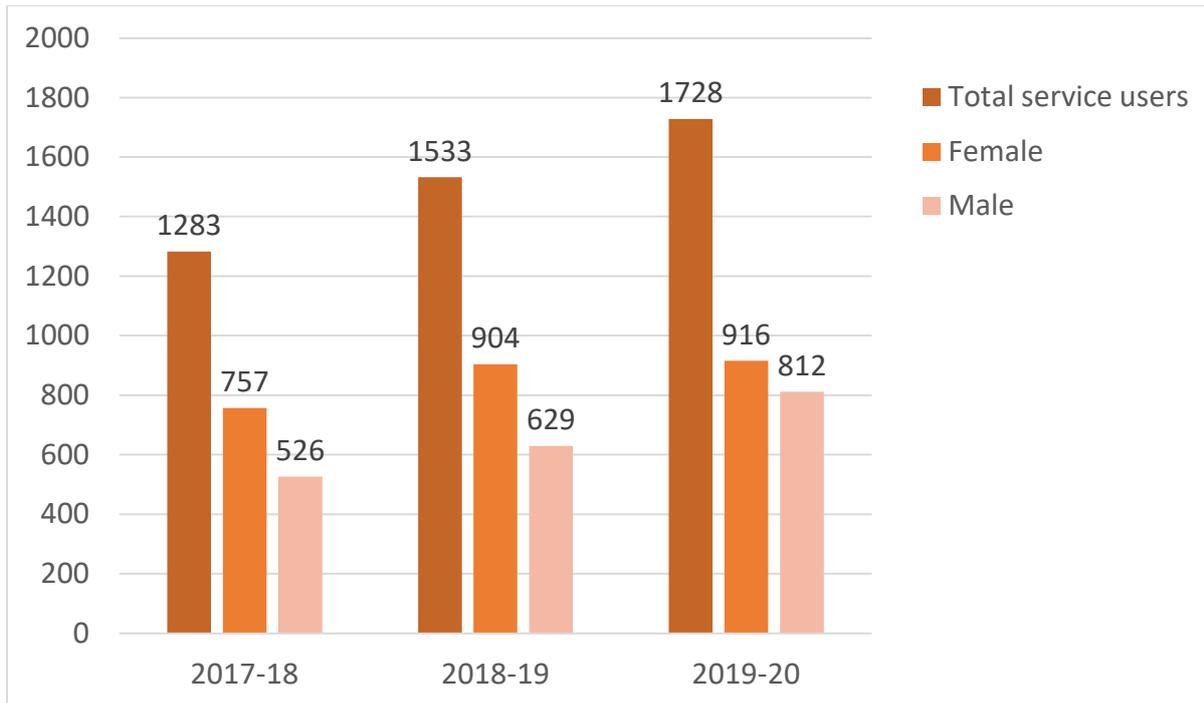


- Asylum seekers and refugees make up 49% of service users
- Down from 61% in 2018/19
- 25% of service users were EU nationals making them the second largest group of clients.

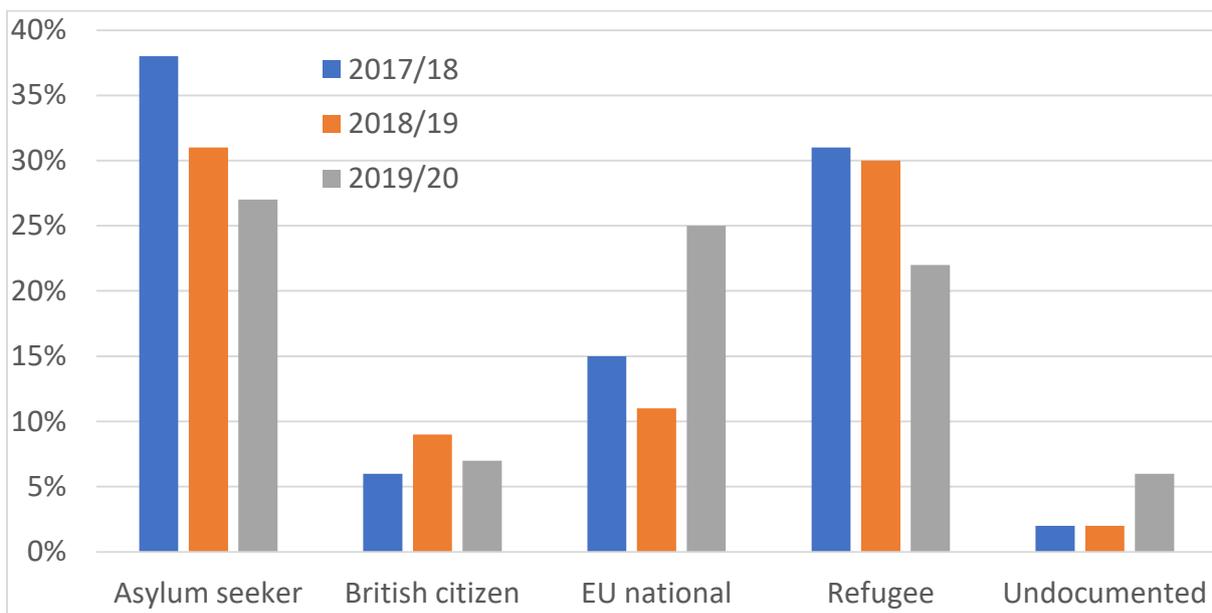
**(Further information on our service user profile is included as an appendix.)**

Brushstrokes service user profile has changed significantly over the past 3 years. We are seeing more people, from more countries of origin and more Local Authority areas. As we have developed new services to support the emerging needs of specific groups the profile of our service users by immigration status and nationality is also changing. The data below highlights the responsiveness of our service and how quickly we have been able to adapt to ensure individuals obtain the support they need, this is especially evident for example in the significant increase in EU nationals accessing our service this year.

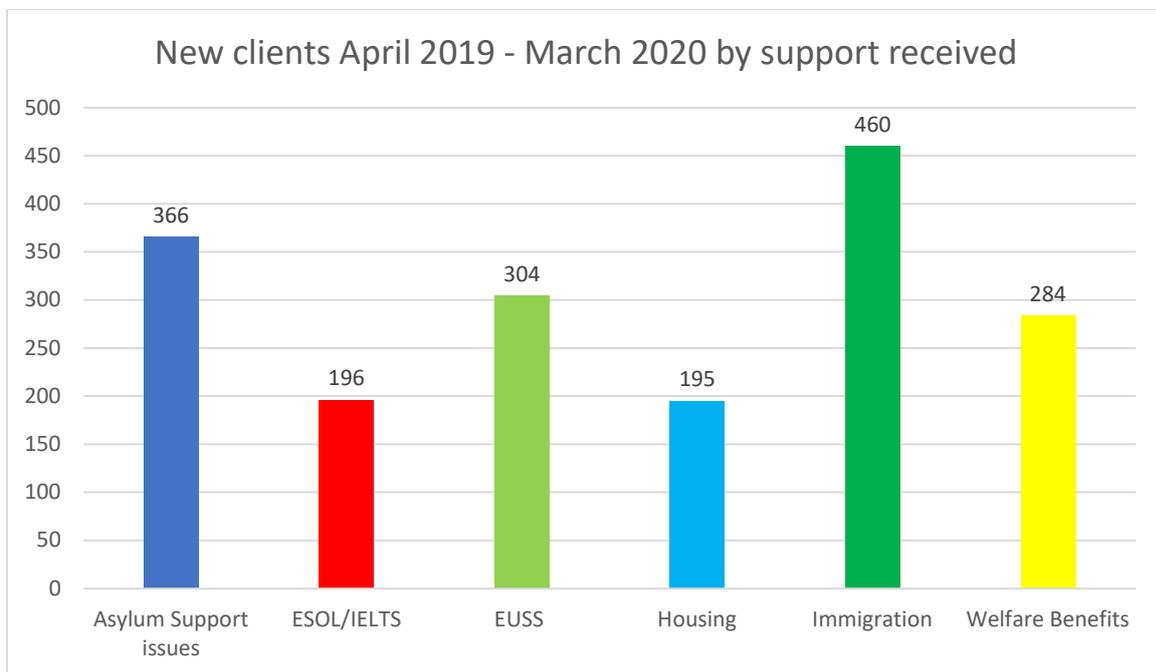
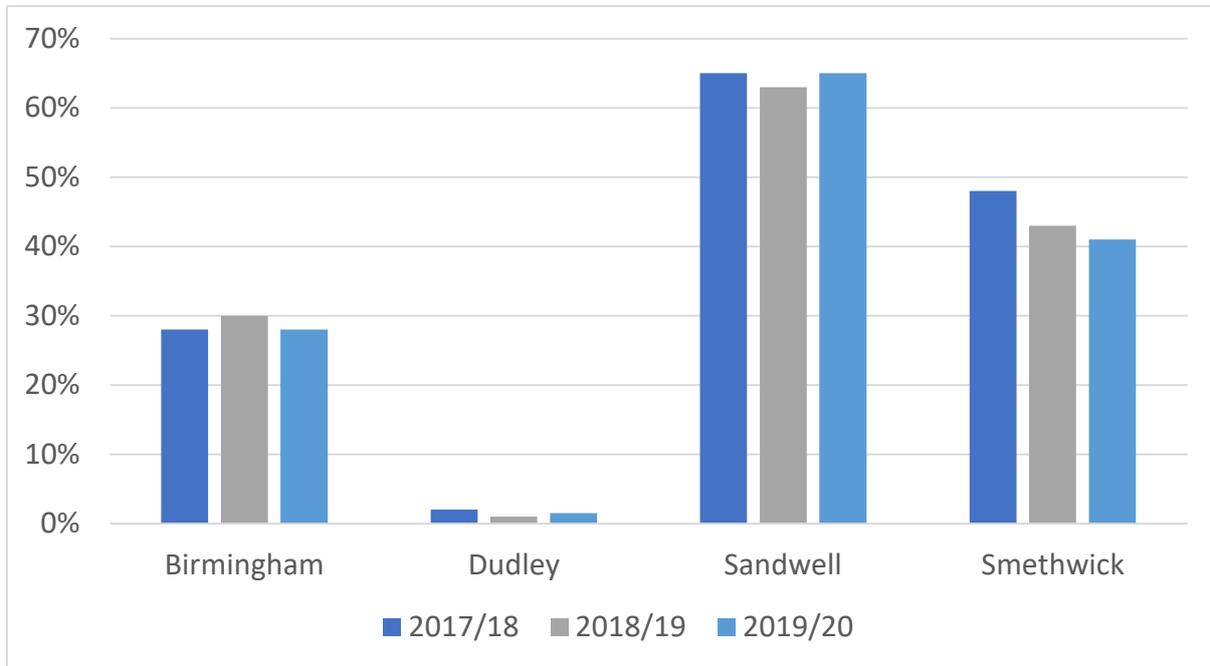
**Service users per year total and by gender 2017 - 2020**



**Service users by Immigration status by year 2017 - 2020**



**Percentage of service users per year by most common area of residence 2017-20**



The above chart illustrates some of the areas which NEW clients came to us for support with this year. This is in addition to support being provided to existing Brushstrokes clients.

## Advice

Advice was provided via appointment, drop-in, home visiting and outreach clinics in Sandwell and Birmingham. Brushstrokes has a number of advisers and projects delivering advice on Immigration, Welfare Benefits, Housing and Homelessness, access to health care, asylum support, destitution and NRPF and the EU Settlement Scheme. The Settling Well and EUSS project are featured later in the report as example of our work in partnership with others.

The most common requests for advice this year were for



- Immigration (25%)
- Asylum support Issues (20%)
- EU Settlement Scheme (17%)
- Welfare Benefits (16%)
- Housing (15%)



- 303 home visits were completed this year
- 107 Refugee Households supported to manage the transition from asylum support and provided with support to access accommodation, training, employment and welfare benefits.

### Asylum Early Action project



- Legal representation secured for 135 individuals
- GP registration secured for 136 individuals
- 34 new individuals supported by an 'Asylum Guide'
- Monthly advice clinic running with Handsworth Welcome



- 313 asylum seekers supported by the Early Action advice worker to the end of March 2020

### Immigration advice



- 460 individuals received immigration advice



- 59% of new immigration clients lived in Sandwell, a 13% increase on the previous year
- 30% of immigration clients lived in Birmingham

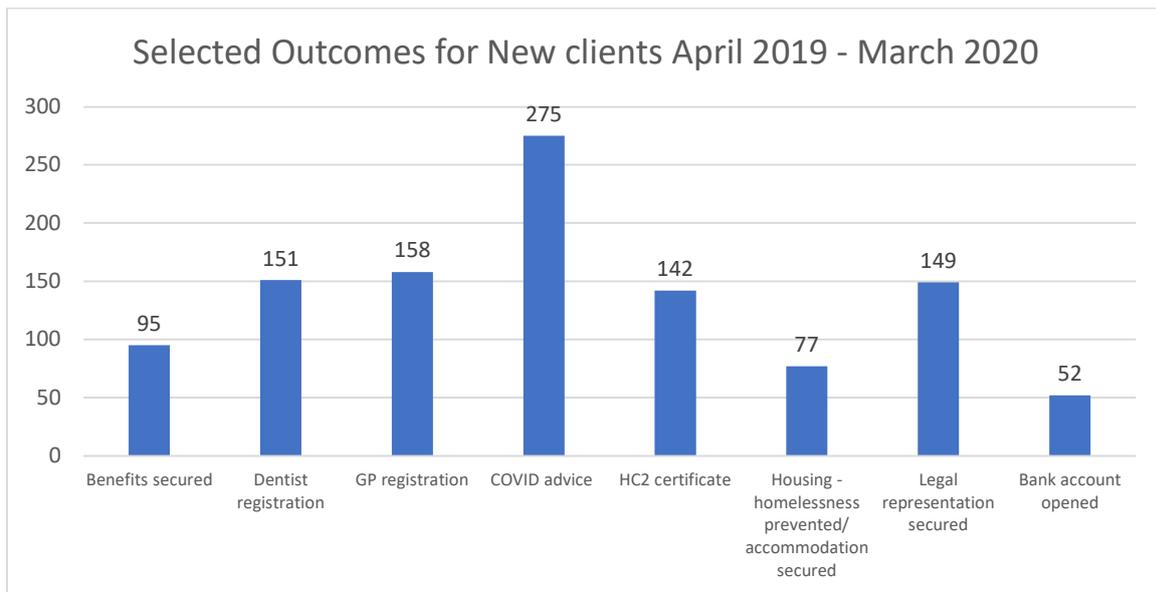


- Advice at OISC level 1: 17%
- Advice at OISC level 2: 65%
- Advice at OISC level 3: 18%

### EUSS and Settling Well



- 227 individuals provided with specialist benefits advice through the Settling Well project
- 1000+ individuals were supported to apply for pre-settled or settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme project.



1342 new advice and support cases were opened this year. Clients accessed advice through a mix of outreach and home visiting, drop-in and appointment-based services at our office. Advice has also been provided by staff at clinics in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Handsworth wood during this period.

### *Immigration advice*

Our immigration work has provided a lifeline to many individuals and families this year. The weekly drop in services ran on a Thursday and Friday where there were no limits on numbers and no one was turned away as a result we were able to see people within a week if not sooner.

The drop in we had a classroom style service running for people filling on-line application forms to meet their tight deadlines, while we also gave one to one advice.

"Thank you so much for supporting us at every stage of the application, the way you guide us and explain things makes us feel reassured and prepared, whether we win or loose our appeal we will always be grateful for your help, you are like a tough father figure to us.

Charles

We have continued to assist clients with fresh asylum claims, discussing evidence and merits, we generally get people at the beginning or end of the process. A from Iran, was granted UK refugee status. He was initially refused asylum in 2017 at the immigration courts but following discussions and advice from the Brushstrokes' immigration team, he submitted sufficient evidence for a fresh claim based on his political activities in the UK.

The clients we work with are not simply victims or passive in their difficult journey circumnavigating UK immigration rules and regulations. They not only take an active role, they have influenced government policies locally and nationally. They often see others in the waiting room at a different stage to them but on the same road ,so they put out the hand of assistance, it could be a reassuring conversation, or a discussion of shared experiences, this matters in a hostile environment.

"Thank you for your support and advice you are a blessing to this world. God bless you. I hope I can return the favour sometime in the future. I will always be thankful to you" F Z

We secured her and her family leave to remain after multiple attempts over the last 13 years in the UK.

Through this year our Immigration adviser has provided support to others looking to pass their OISC level 1 exams as part of Sandwell Advice Providers Network (SAPN) and established a new weekly immigration advice drop-in in Oldbury supported by other level 1 advisers from SAPN and Citizens Advice Sandwell. This is extending the provision of free immigration advice to those who need it most in Sandwell.

### *Advice for asylum seekers and refugees*

Our proactive outreach particularly to single asylum seeker to the end of March 2020 was invaluable in helping us to respond to COVID. Through visits during the period November to March we identified a number of individuals who had been victims of domestic violence, supporting them to access local specialist counselling and help; several asylum seekers who were extremely socially isolated and who were experiencing moderate mental health issues; lone parents with young children and individuals who had serious health or mobility issues. Knowing these clients, we were able to contact them at the start of lockdown and ensure they were OK and could provide any additional support they needed such as a food delivery or telephone advice.

Through our Asylum Early Action approach, the connection between outreach and home visiting, asylum guides and earlier engagement with services has been more clearly evidenced. One of the key outcomes from our work has been the earlier approach for support from those granted refugee status and the confidence among a growing proportion to take action themselves as a result of the information and advice provided prior to gaining refugee status.

“Brushstrokes have been the go-to place for me whenever in doubt about my circumstances or looking for direction about my asylum claim. Since I started coming here and meeting with my asylum guide, I feel the commitment she has with the service of Brushstrokes. A very hardworking person. I have recommended their services to many asylum seekers I meet in the street and they all get positive results from the service. I highly recommend Brushstrokes service to anyone seeking help especially with Asylum Guide, and I am very happy anytime I come here.....” — Asylum Guides client

*Strong and effective partnerships, securing better outcomes for new arrivals and the community.*

#### USE-IT!

#### Helping migrant health professionals - helping the local NHS



- **Over the life of the project Brushstrokes has provided IELTS and OET classes for 118 health professionals.**
- **At the time of this report 12 individuals had passed at the required level to move towards employment in the NHS.**
- **In 2019/20 a total of 79 students studied on IELTS and OET courses with Brushstrokes.**

The USE-IT! Project<sup>2</sup> came to an end in December 2019. We never imagined that in 2017 that we would have gone on to develop and deliver IELTS<sup>3</sup> provision for refugee and migrant health professionals and that the partnership with Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospital Trust would lead to work placements, employment and further longer-term funding to sustain community based IELTS and provision of OET<sup>4</sup> for migrant health professionals wanting to return to work in the health sector. The delivery of the project has been made possible by the vision and leadership of colleagues at NHS learning works and their understanding of the value of local community-based language provision and additional support.

<sup>2</sup> <http://useituia.co.uk/strands/skills-matching>

<sup>3</sup> International English Language Testing System

<sup>4</sup> Occupational English Test

We are the only community organisation in the West Midlands providing access to free OET courses. Attendance has been excellent and course evaluation extremely positive. One of the positive outcomes from the OET course evaluation has been how much students have benefitted from peer support. We want to thank Dr Laura Pugh and her student placements at Cape Hill Medical Centre for their OET and IELTS evening workshops and Professor Steve Sturman, Consultant Neurologist at University Hospital, Birmingham for his Q&A session for our OET students.

“I found the OET course very helpful. The OET teacher gave us feedback on our writing and also provided us with reading and listening materials as well as a great emphasis on useful tips for all four sub-tests. The speaking practice for the mock exam was really helpful. I had a chance to meet other health professionals at Brushstrokes. This was encouraging me not to lose hope as there are many of us who are trying to help each other get back to our career.

Doctor originally from Iran, passed OET January 2020



USE-IT! leaves a significant legacy or effective partnership between the NHS and voluntary sector, the funding and development of the Healthcare overseas Professionals project (HOP). HOP is continuing to fund Brushstrokes to provide IELTS and OET courses, a model that has been shared regionally and nationally that is unlocking the potential of healthcare professionals who are already in the UK and with some additional support can move towards employment in the health sector and meet current staff shortages.

The IELTS and OET courses successfully moved to online platforms at the end of March 2020.

“I am a Refugee Doctor. Once, struggling to get back to my profession and going through a very depressive phase but now registered with GMC and serving in the NHS. After passing my PLAB exams, when I submitted my papers to GMC, they told me that my IELTS had expired and I needed to retake IELTS or OET. Brushstrokes helped me and registered me for OET preparation classes. I learned and improved my linguistic skills there. In addition, I learned the examination technique enabling me to pass the exam. Furthermore, I met many medical and allied health professionals studying there and struggling to get back on track and they helped me to get rid of my depression.

Brushstrokes provided us a platform, where we learned with dignity, self-respect and without any discrimination and enabled us to become a productive and respectable member of the community” Doctor originally from Pakistan, passed OET November 2019

## Settling Well

Brushstrokes was equally proud this year to be able to start delivering the Settling Well project in partnership with Citizens Advice Sandwell. The project provides early interventions for individuals who have arrived in Sandwell over the past 2



years, helping them access services they require to 'Settle Well'. The project is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government until December 2020.

We are working with a team of community navigators employed by Citizens Advice Sandwell who provide practical assistance and hands on support to recent arrivals. This includes helping individuals to access education, health services, English language classes and finding local groups that will enable them to meet new people and learn new skills. Finding access to all these services could prove extremely difficult for families and individuals in the initial period of moving to a new country.

Through a senior adviser, Brushstrokes provides supervision and support for a team of community navigators and specialist advice for migrants living in Sandwell where their immigration status is affecting their access to housing, health, social care and welfare benefits. Through this year she has helped 227 clients with applications for benefits, appeals and housing matters. Individuals came from 37 different nationalities, with the most common being Dutch, Indian, Italian, Polish and Swedish. A total of £425,479 in benefits has been secured for clients this year. The following case study highlights the benefit of this partnership approach in supporting new arrivals to settle well in Sandwell:

71-year-old EU national and their 17-year-old son has lived in the UK for more than 10 years but not been employed during this time. They receive a State Pension and Private Pension and live in a council property. They had gained Settled Status in the UK July 2019 and came to Brushstrokes in September after being referred by the Welfare Rights Team Sandwell Council.

We supported to client with applications for Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. As a result of our support the client was awarded Pension Credit but the Council refused Housing Benefit on a question of the status of his residency. Brushstrokes successfully challenged this decision and Housing Benefit was awarded March. To date they have secured over £25000.

This was a complicated case and involved more than 17 appointments over a 6 month period for Pension Credit, appeals and challenges for housing benefit and support for repairs and housing issues with the Council. Alongside the benefits and housing support, we referred the client to one of the Settling Well navigators who through working with the individual was able to link the client into social support, Sandwell Visually Impaired, Sandwell Council adaptations and therapy team, work on budgeting skills, debt support at Citizens Advice and IT support at Brushstrokes.

The work between Brushstrokes and Citizens Advice Sandwell has shown the importance of practical help and moral support combined with advice and guidance provided by a navigator and a specialist adviser, giving effective holistic support. As people feel supported, listened to, and welcomed, not only have we obtained results that may seem to be visible, we have also supported a client where support cannot be measured and have reached out a client who is vulnerable.

### *Specialist support for EU nationals*

- Providing information to over 1900 individuals in the period May 2019 – March 2020.
- Supporting almost 1000 people to complete and submit applications for settled and pre-settled status.

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is the new settlement route that will allow EU, EEA Nationals and their family members to settle in the UK in the lead up to and after the UK leaves the EU. The purpose of this scheme is to ensure that EU Nationals and their family members will continually be able to work study and settle in the UK permanently. Through this funding we have been able to help individuals who were Homeless, elderly, victims of domestic violence, those with long term health conditions, the Roma community, those with limited English and low or no IT skills.

The EUSS is open to any and all EEA Nationals and their family members; they only need to ensure they meet the identity, residence and suitability criteria.

Brushstrokes led on a successful partnership bid to secure a Home Office grant to provide advice and support for vulnerable EU nationals and their dependants to apply under the EU Settlement scheme. Staff from Brushstrokes worked alongside Emconet, Europeans Welfare Association CIC and Ileys Community Association delivering community awareness sessions, advice clinics across 6 locations in Sandwell and Birmingham and providing specialist immigration advice for complex cases. The strength of this approach, where each organisation has staff who speak a range of European languages and have good connections with specific communities is seen in the number of people we have been able to support in the past 12 months.

Contact with the EUSS project has enabled individuals to go on to access ESOL, advice on housing and benefits, IT classes and employment support. The following case study illustrates the difference securing status can make to individuals and the importance of the EUSS project being part of our holistic advice and resources offer at Brushstrokes.

When I met the client for the first time he was homeless and had been diagnosed with cancer. He had just been discharged from hospital and had no place to stay. He arrived in the UK in 2013 but worked cash in hand, so without tax a record it was very difficult to provide residence evidence for him.

He had no recourse to public funds at that time. We worked with him to apply to the EU settlement Scheme whilst our organisation supported with clothing, food, advice about community meals in the area. Our EUSS adviser prepared the list of possible documents a client can provide to prove his residence in the UK. Same day we contacted the Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC) and explained the details of the case. One week later the application for Settled Status was submitted and documents provided by client uploaded. The following week we contacted SRC again requested quick outcome of client's status regarding his difficult life situation. He was been granted settled status on a same day.

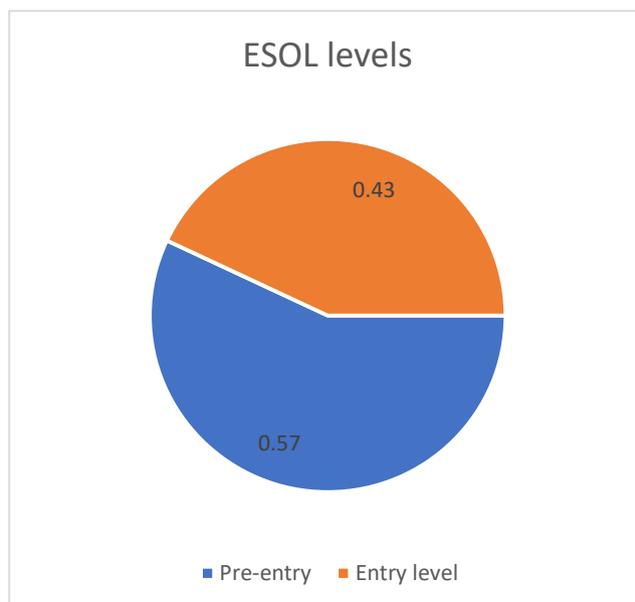
We referred him to our specialist welfare benefits adviser who gave him benefits and housing advice and having settled status now meant he was eligible. The following week he came in to share that he had managed to secure employment.

### *English Language provision*

We moved into our new building the last week in August 2019 the following week we were open and enrolling new students. While we have more classrooms, the smaller classroom space has necessitated smaller class sizes.

**Between April 2019 and April 2020, 246 people engaged with English language learning at Brushstrokes.**

- ESOL 167
- IELTS (International English Language Testing System) 59
- OET (Occupational English Test) 20
- 74% of our students are women
- Learners are from 37 different nationalities.
- 57% of learners are pre-entry up from 36% in 2018/19



The following feedback from learners highlights the difference being able to access local ESOL classes makes.

“When I first come to ESOL, I wouldn’t speak at all. Now I am much more confident...I learn some English and I speak much better. Everyone is like me here and it makes it easier to speak.”

“We meet outside Brushstrokes. We speak English because some speak Pashtu, and some speak Arabic. Lots of children go to the same school so we go to the park together.”

“Before I didn’t speak very good, but I am now Entry 3 ESOL and it has helped a lot... I play football every Sunday with a local team and I have made friends with them all because I can speak English.”

“Children go to school and my husband go to work, so I am home alone – my depression is solved because I am Brushstrokes, so I am with people. I had lots of problems before Brushstrokes. Brushstrokes help me a lot.”

Learners feedback

In March 2019 our ESOL classes closed, reopening over the coming months online and through WhatsApp.

### *Sandwell Language Network (SLN)*

Brushstrokes has played a key role in the development of Sandwell Language Network<sup>5</sup>, funded by the Controlling Migration Fund, the network aims to bring together existing community ESOL providers, increase access and the capacity of ESOL across Sandwell and provide training and support to new and existing ESOL staff.

There continues to be a huge need across Sandwell for English language provision. People who come to our classes in Smethwick travel from Tipton, Oldbury and West Bromwich. SLN funding has provided an opportunity to set up a pre-entry course in Langley where there are a number of asylum seekers. The Langley Library course started in January 2020 adding the number of pre-entry students learning through Brushstrokes. These learners will progress towards an Entry 1 accreditation through the English Speaking Board.

In September 2019 we were granted funding through Sandwell Language Network (SLN) to run an IELTS course for refugee professionals who needed to achieve IELTS to get into university and/or continue with their career. 13 students registered on the course. Their professional qualifications included political science, engineering, business administration, accounting and finance management. Through our involvement with SLN we have been able to secure access to IELTS for those non-medics who were ineligible for the USE-IT! And HOP provision.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.healthysandwell.co.uk/language-network/>

## *Life in the UK*

**We had 9 students studying for their Life in the UK course between April 2019 and April 2020.** Two students passed in September 2019 and a new cohort of 7 began in September 2019. This course was suspended in March 2020 but we are creating YouTube videos for students to study online.



Shekiba passed the Life in the UK test.

Having studied for 2 years at Brushstrokes, Shekiba went on to Sandwell College in September 2019.

## *Social activities*

Towards the end of the summer term, students planned a trip to the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The staff at Smethwick Rolfe Street Station were amazing and patiently allowed each student to ask for their own ticket and asked simple questions when they didn't give enough information. 52 students and volunteers had a great day out at the Museum and



Art Gallery. The social impact is such an important aspect of learning English.

Pictures - Learners at the Museum , buying their train tickets and at the Museum tea rooms.

(Pictured with cappuccino are The Teapot café owner, Melvyn, and ESOL learner, Mimoza.)



Better Health ESOL, pre entry students buying their own coffees at our local café The Tea Pot. The beginners' language group, taught by Jane, Melonie and Ann, each purchased their own hot drink and their requests, made in English, were assessed for accuracy and fluency.



Some of our IELTS and OET learners highlighting their skills as part of Refugee Week.

## Volunteering

Volunteering at Brushstrokes this year:



- 61 active volunteers
- 20 volunteers are refugees or were born outside the UK
- 9 volunteers gained employment during 2019/20



- 28 volunteers live in Smethwick
- 6 other volunteers live in neighbouring wards



- 5900 hours of volunteers
- Over 730 more hours than in 2017/18 (14% increase)



- Value of volunteer contribution to the organisation this year is £82,600 a 14% increase on the previous year<sup>6</sup>.

We have volunteers from Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Albania, Camerons, Spain, Afghanistan, Rwanda, India, Nigeria, Iran, Kurdistan, Ivory Coast, Iraq, South Africa and Ecuador.

As a project we could not deliver all we do without the generosity of our team of volunteers who gladly give of their time and skills for the benefit of our community. Through recruitment events, creation of new volunteer roles and concerted marketing efforts through our web site, Facebook and advertisements with external agencies. **We had 61 active volunteers in March 2020 and 73 individuals volunteered with us at some point during the year.**

The past year has been very eventful especially with a move to larger premises taking up much of our volunteer and staff efforts. During our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations past volunteers and staff sharing photos and stories. Our volunteers have also been recognised once again for their outstanding efforts by the Sandwell Volunteer Awards, The Volunteer Centre, Sandwell Council and the Mayor of Sandwell. Sandwell council met up with volunteers to congratulate them on their nomination for the Queens Award for Volunteering. The Mayor of Sandwell also nominated Nabilla for Young Inspirational Volunteer of the Year.



**Pictured Right:** The Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Ann Jaron and Nabilla. Nabilla was presented with a Gilded Certificate and Medal by the High Sheriff

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<sup>6</sup> Worked out using the formula in the “Annual Statistics” As Detailed By Warwickshire Community & Voluntary Action CAVA (According to the office of National Statistics, the national pay average for 2017 is just under £14)

Volunteers are able to benefit from a wide range of training and support during their time at Brushstrokes. To date training has also been offered to support the development of volunteers in other roles. These include awareness training on Modern Day Slavery, Risk Assessments, Mental Health Awareness, Asylum Guides, Universal Credit and Food Safety Training.

In house courses continue to be offered on subjects such as “Advice” Training and the Database software package known as “Advice Pro”. Support for our volunteers has also been arranged with a training session on “Vicarious Trauma” offering coping strategies for those who may hear traumatic stories. Volunteers are encouraged to join the Staff and have recently completed training on budgeting.



**Pictured:** Volunteers and staff receiving Food Hygiene Certificates

### *Volunteers gain Employment*

Over the past year we have celebrated the fact that nine of our volunteers have gained employment, several of whom are now working for Brushstrokes. Having individuals who have bought into the ethos of Brushstrokes, have given of their time and skills and been able to move into work with us is wonderful. The confidence that volunteering can bring and its impact on the lives of volunteers is illustrated in the following feedback from two of our friends.



***“Thank you all so much for an incredible placement experience! I’ve learnt so much from everybody here and truly feel you’ve helped me to grow as a professional and as a person. Thanks also for all that you do to help and empower the people of Birmingham and the Black Country. “Jessica***

In September, volunteer teacher, Sonia Stranger, started her Diploma in Education and Training (DET). Sonia has since moved on to a paid teaching role at Brushstrokes.

“Having a regular volunteering post at Brushstrokes has helped me work towards my Diploma in Education and Training. I have had regular and varied teaching hours. I have had a very supportive and knowledgeable mentor who has provided me with in-depth feedback both formally and informally.

Brushstrokes has been an integral part of my academic development and the development of my teaching practice. Having the ongoing opportunity to work within the charity sector has offered me a valuable insight into the area which I wish to continue to work in and aspire to be a part of.” Sonia

**Students:** We benefit from the connections with our religious institutions and continue to receive students. We have had two Jesuit novices from Manresa House, four seminarian students from Oscott College and two Columban Missionary volunteers.



St Mary's College Oscott CIO  
THE SEMINARY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM SERVING  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND, WALES & SCOTLAND.

In addition, we have had students from Aston University, University of Birmingham, Hillcrest School & Sixth Form Centre, John Henry Newman Catholic School, King Edward's School, Birmingham and St. Paul's School for Girls, Edgbaston.



“It's nearly five years since I started as a volunteer with Brushstrokes Community Project. In those days it was at the back of St Philip's Church in Messenger Road — a small team under the guidance of Martin, the Volunteer Coordinator. He started the community cafe, cooking food from Fareshare, an organisation which distributes excess food from local supermarkets and shops. We've now moved to bigger and better premises on Smethwick High Street — so much more accessible for our clients and the kitchen is 100 times better! Although not perfect, it's made life much easier. Martin emails with the list of food donations on Thursday and from this we draw up the menu — sometimes quite a feast dependant on what we have been given. We are generally able to offer three main courses, a salad, fresh vegetables, and there's always a vegetarian main meal. Dessert is often an enormous cake donated by Costco which everyone loves, as well as fruit. The cafe isn't just about feeding people, it is somewhere everyone is welcome; it's not just the food — there's friendship, laughter, help and kindness on the menu too. So, its closure due to the Coronavirus scare is a great disappointment to us all. Instead, I now help the Resources team pack bags and boxes of food which is distributed by volunteers to people in need in the local surroundings.

It's great to know that real help is being given where it's needed. Just as soon as we can, and it is safe to do so, we will reopen the kitchen for our normal Friday lunch, and there will be a great welcome and renewing of friendships... the cafe isn't just about the food — it's the communal sharing of food and conversation... I wonder what will have happened to some of those really socially isolated folks. It must have been/is still very hard for them."

*Community Café Is a Wonderful "Place of Welcome" to all.*

Over the past year, in our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Place of Welcome, the Café has welcomed people from over thirty-two different countries and has served up over one thousand, three hundred hot meals (**1300**). In addition, it celebrated specific events such as our annual "**BIG Lunch**" community party and "**Refugee Week**".

The catering volunteer team also prepared food for our annual Christmas party and remains a "Place of Welcome" for all.

*"The café is a chance to meet people from different cultures..." Irvin*

**"This is my second visit. The café is good for everyone...meeting people.....everyone is welcome"  
Mohammed**

The Café has also been visited by The Mayor of Sandwell who recognised the success of the Café and congratulated our volunteers on all their work.



(Pictured: Café Volunteers with the visiting Mayor Councillor Ann Jaron)

## Resources

This year we were able to provide the following:



- 4980 individuals provided with food



- 161 referrals to Smethwick food bank



- 687 clothing packs provided



- 47 baby packs provided
- 87 provisions of Baby equipment



- 499 provisions of household items

The provision of practical support through food, clothing, baby equipment and household items has always been a core element of Brushstrokes service.

“When I first arrived in this area, I was extremely nervous and anxious. My health visitor brought me to Brushstrokes last year because I was very scared and living all alone with my baby. I was not seeing anyone, but you have helped me in many ways. You provided food and toys for my baby and became friends with me. I came to the café alone for the first time and felt welcome. Now I go to the shops by myself and feel more confident. I speak to neighbours now and people in shops. You have helped me so much and I appreciate everything you have done for me.” Service user

The move to new premises has enhanced our resources provision, creating additional space for sorting and storage of clothing and household items. With our new resources room, we have been able to introduce clothing appointments that empowers clients to make their own choices and with dignity. Any choice is powerful when you feel you have no choice.

Regular engagement with clients over food preferences leads to the purchase of most requested fruit and vegetables. Personal relationships with clients enable food parcels to be tailored towards a family's needs or preferences as well as culture.

Never has this service been so vital as the national lockdown in response to COVID started in March. Life as we know it changed completely and caused many of our clients to become much more vulnerable. We wanted to make sure that the essential services of Advice and



Resources were maintained for as long as possible so that people would know that they still had somewhere to go to be listened to, or supported, and that even when other organisations closed their doors, Brushstrokes remained open for our client's needs.

Services switched from inside the building to outside to our car park, we were so thankful for the good weather! The whole team worked together to create a list of clients that were particularly vulnerable due to their age, existing health conditions, distance from the centre and single parent families with young children. We contacted these people to make them aware that we would still be open and food distribution would be continuing twice weekly.

Ramadan fast-Breaking Packs were provided through donations from Feraz @UCF and other local Islamic communities for those fasting during the 4 weeks of Ramadan. Ongoing support from local businesses, funders, joint work with Sandwell Council and the food banks in Smethwick and West Brom has enabled a coordinated approach to providing food for those individuals and families most in need.

This year has seen us increase the level of food provision to those most in need in our area and enabled us to respond to the impact of the COVID pandemic in March when individuals lost employment or began to self-isolate.

Client E arrived in Sandwell in February. She lives in 5 miles away from our centre with her two children aged 16 and 9. She has been struggling to provide food and clothing for her children since her arrival and relied on her community for help. She was directed to Brushstrokes by a friend, and since the beginning of October, has been walking weekly to Brushstrokes to receive food and clothing support. Client E struggles with existing back injuries and an appeal on Facebook resulted in a donated trolley to help with the carrying of food home each week. She has been referred to the Asylum team and hopes to be matched with an asylum guide as well as receive advice with regards to her asylum claim. "Thank you very much from all of my heart. It calms my soul and your communication from the angels gives me strength to think that there are still good people. From all the storms I have gone through in life I say I come to your country that I will see the sun rise again. And I meet rare people like you and I thanked God."

### Christmas Toy Appeal and Christmas Family Parties:

Once again, our resources coordinator was able to go out and meet pupils from local schools and local church groups and appeal for toys for those may not otherwise receive a Christmas gift. Enough toys were collected to provide over 150 gifts on party day, deliver more than 50 through outreach, take referrals for families supported by outside agencies, and keep a selection for birthdays throughout 2020! Good quality pre-loved toys and games were put out in the weeks leading up to Christmas for families to choose gifts to give their children themselves.



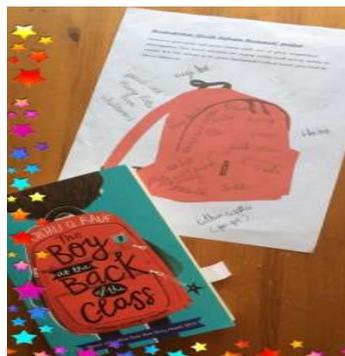
### Working with others raising awareness and generating support



**Month of Remembrance:** Pupils at St John Bosco RC Primary School in West Bromwich wrote prayers for family members that had passed away in exchange for a money donation. Staff joined together to create food boxes for homeless and destitute clients, along with a prayer encouraging them not to give up.

Relationships made with Bloody Good period project to provide free sanitary pads for all women who pass through the centre each week. These are also included every 4 weeks in food deliveries. We hope to work with them in the coming year on a collaborative project to reduce the anti-social stigma of periods across marginalised ethnic groups.

**Baby packs:** Lucy devised a calendar of engagement for schools that wished to support our resources department on a regular basis. Alongside Health Futures UTC and St John Bosco, money was collected, and items purchased to create 10 baby packs distributed to new mums in the local area. Some of these are our own clients; others are referred by local midwives. All items in the Baby packs are new and in complete packs



### Child Refugee Backpack Project:

Another project that schools can become involved in is the Child Refugee Backpacks. Lucy worked alongside the Mini Vinnie's at Our Lady and St Hubert's RC Primary School, Oldbury to find out more about children who have to flee their homes due to war and violence.

The pupils created a list of things that a child newly arrived in this country might need to help them settle into a new home. They organised a pupil-led fundraising activity day, and raised £270, enough to purchase the items for 9 Backpacks

The following case study highlights the impact our resources provision can make as part of our wider support for new arrivals.

Client R is a 39-year-old single male who arrived in the country in May 2019 from Iraq. In Iraq he was a mechanic. Brushstrokes was recommended to him by a fellow Iraqi asylum seeker who had already registered and received advice from the Brushstrokes Immigration team. Client R first registered with Brushstrokes in July 2019. He was told about all of our services and made an appointment to meet with the Early Action team for help with his ID card which was incorrect. Client R has been invited for substantive interview but sadly received a negative decision. He is currently in the process of his appeal using a solicitor recommended to him by the Early Action team.

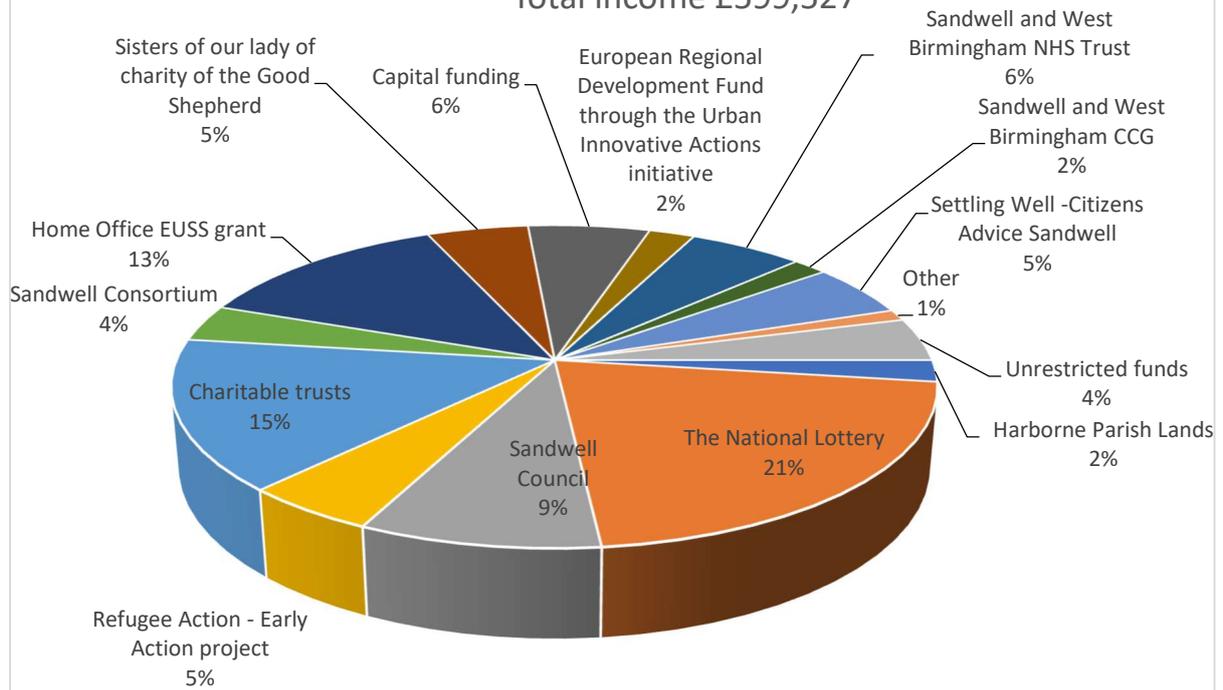
Client R began to access Resources in the form of food and clothing and now comes weekly for food. He has also received clothing and toiletries and is much happier with the method of choosing his own items since the premises move.

Client R has enrolled on the ESOL programme and currently attends 2 classes a week, studying at Entry level 2. He has also applied to be a volunteer at Brushstrokes and is awaiting clearance, however R regularly assists with the setting up of our Community café when he has finished his ESOL class, has helped us to get ready for Community events and is always offering support with other jobs around the building. R has helped with translation in meetings between clients and advisers.

“Brushstrokes do everything for me. It is like my home and I have been made to feel so welcome. Lukano, Lucy and Nigel can help me with anything I need, and people are so kind. I have so many dreams for my new life and you give me the things I need to reach these dreams. I will start small and work up so that I can help others who are new like I was, like you have helped me. I am so determined to succeed.”

\*Update - Client R has just received LTR and will continue to access support through Brushstrokes with one of our new ‘Kitchen Starter Packs’ and help to claim Universal Credit and application for housing.

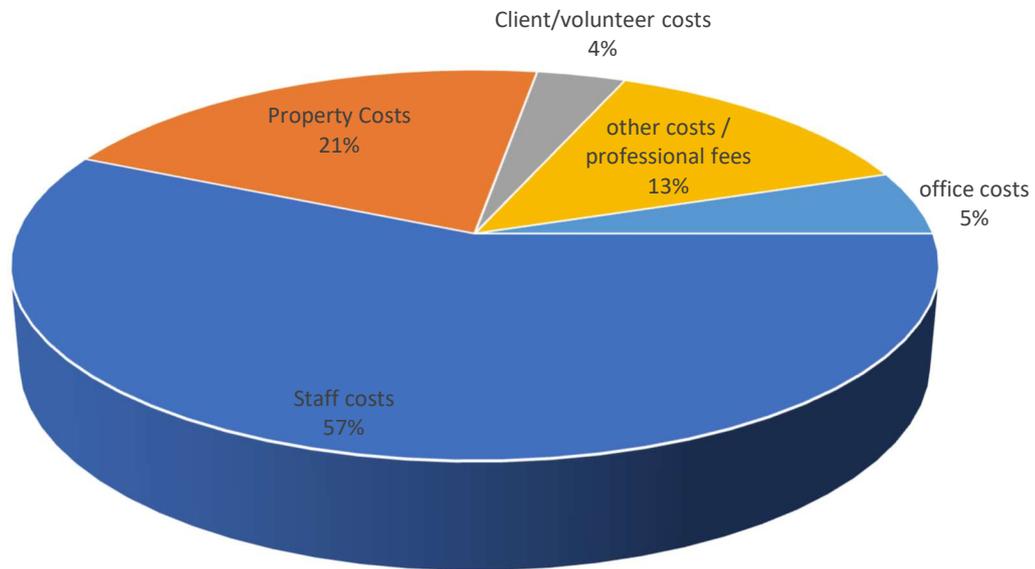
**Brushstrokes Income for year ended 31st March 2020**  
**Total income £599,527**



**Notes**

- Charitable Trusts includes grants from Garfield Weston, The Charles Plater Trust & The Society of the Holy Child Jesus CIO
- Sandwell Consortium includes funding for the Better Health Programme and Sandwell Language Network
- ERDF funding was for the USE-IT! Project.
- Capital Funding includes funding for costs associated with the move to new premises this financial year

Brushstrokes Expenditure to year end 31st March 2020  
Total £554,118



Note:

- Property costs include one off capital expenditure and costs related to the new premises
- Professional fees/ other costs include £44375 costs for delivery partners on the EUSS project
- Central support costs including HR, finance, fundraising and central management are £78030 and these have been covered by FHC core funds for this year other than £8539 from the National Lottery.

**Brushstrokes would have been unable to deliver our range of services without the support of our funders. We would like to express our thanks to the following:**

- The All Churches Trust
- The 29<sup>th</sup> May Charitable Trust
- The Big Lottery Fund (Awards for all)
- Caritas Archdiocese of Birmingham
- The Charles Plater Trust
- The Cooperative Community Dividend Fund
- Edgar E Lawley Foundation
- Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
- European Regional Development Fund through the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative (USE-IT! project)
- Father Hudson's Care
- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- Green Hall Foundation
- The Grimmitt Trust
- Harborne Parish Lands
- The Hilden Charitable Trust
- The Infant Jesus Sisters
- The Joseph Hopkins charitable Trust
- Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- One Stop Carriers for Causes
- The Rowlands Trust
- Refugee Action
- Sandwell Consortium – Better Health Programme
- Sandwell Council
- The Society of the Holy Child Jesus CIO
- Zurich Community Trust (UK) Limited

**Donations have been received this year from the following:**

- Parishes, religious orders, schools and organisations within the Archdiocese of Birmingham

- Other faith communities
- Foodbanks in Sandwell and the Black Country
- Housing Options West Midlands
- Tesco Fareshare food cloud

We would also like to give a special thanks to all those individuals who have donated finance, food and resources to us this year.



## Building and resources



(Halesowen)

## We would also like to thank our suppliers for their support:

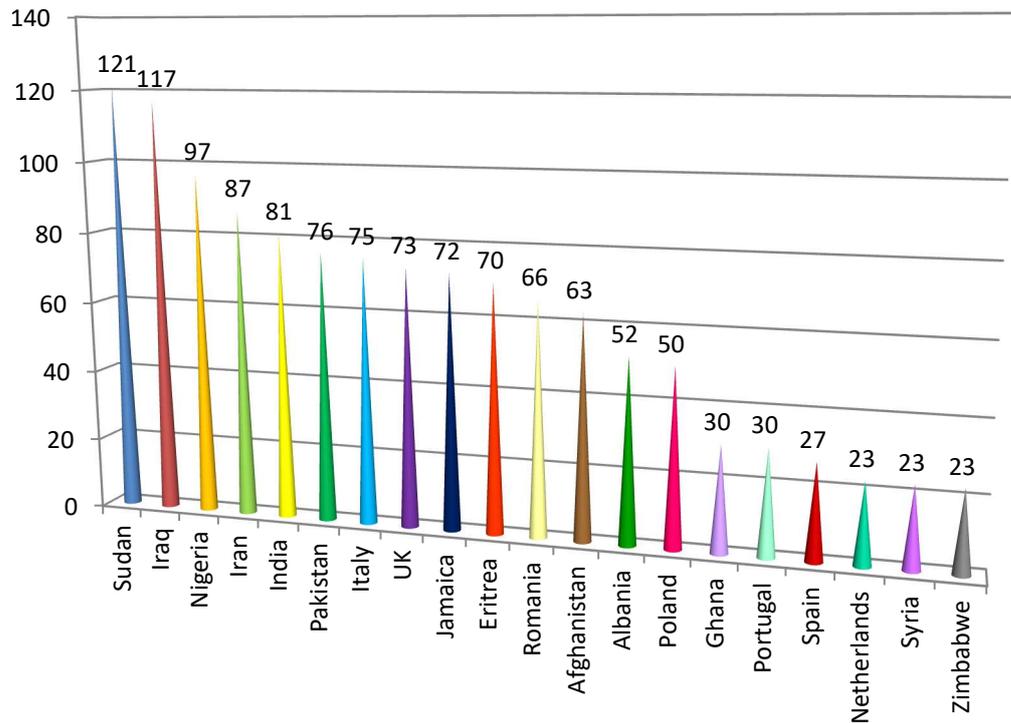
*Mel Wood Electrical, Ace Caterland Ltd, Sandwell Removals, Corona, Midshires, Amyco Doors, Armour Guard Films Limited, Central Locksmiths Ltd, and Access Innovations UK Ltd.*

## Appendix

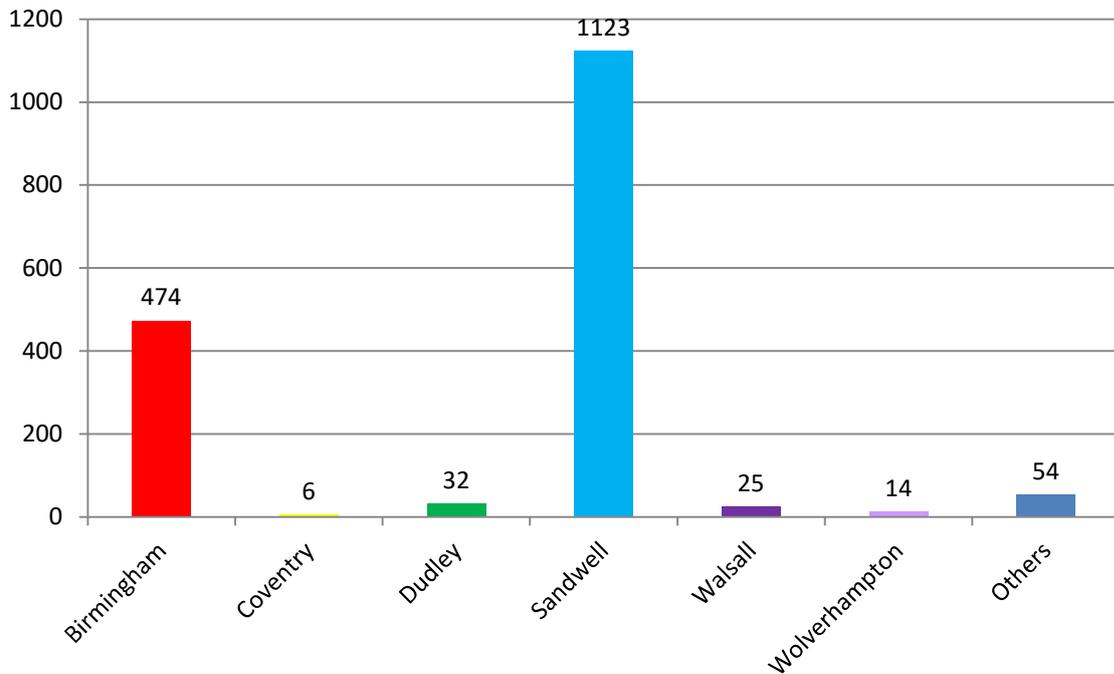
### Countries of origin of Brushstrokes Clients 2019/20

<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>Cote d'ivoire (Ivory Coast)</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Monserrat</b>	<b>Somalia</b>
Albania	Cuba	Iraq	Morocco	South Africa
Algeria	Czech Republic	Italy	Namibia	Spain
America	Denmark	Jamaica	Netherlands	Sri Lanka
<b>American Samoa</b>	Ecuador	Japan	Nicaragua	Sudan
Angola	Egypt	Jordan	Nigeria	Swaziland
Armenia	El Salvador	Kazakhstan	Norway	Sweden
<b>Austria</b>	Eritrea	Kenya	Oman	Syria
Bangladesh	Ethiopia	Kosovo	Pakistan	Tanzania
Belarus	Finland	Kurdistan	Palestine	Thailand
Belgium	France	Kuwait	Philippines	Togo
<b>Bermuda</b>	Gambia	Latvia	Poland	Tunisia
Bosnia	Georgia	Lebanon	Portugal	Turkey
Botswana	Germany	Lesotho	Republic of Serbia	Uganda
Brazil	Ghana	Liberia	Romania	Ukraine
<b>British Virgin Islands</b>	Greece	Libya	Russia	United Kingdom
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Grenada	Malawi	Rwanda	Venezuela
Cameroon	Guinea	Malaysia	St Lucia	Vietnam
<b>Columbia</b>	Honduras	Mali	Saudi Arabia	Yemen
<b>Congo</b>	Hungary	Mauritania	Senegal	Zambia
Canada	I-Kiribati	Mexico	Sierra Leone	Zimbabwe
China	India	Mongolia	Slovakia	109 Nationalities

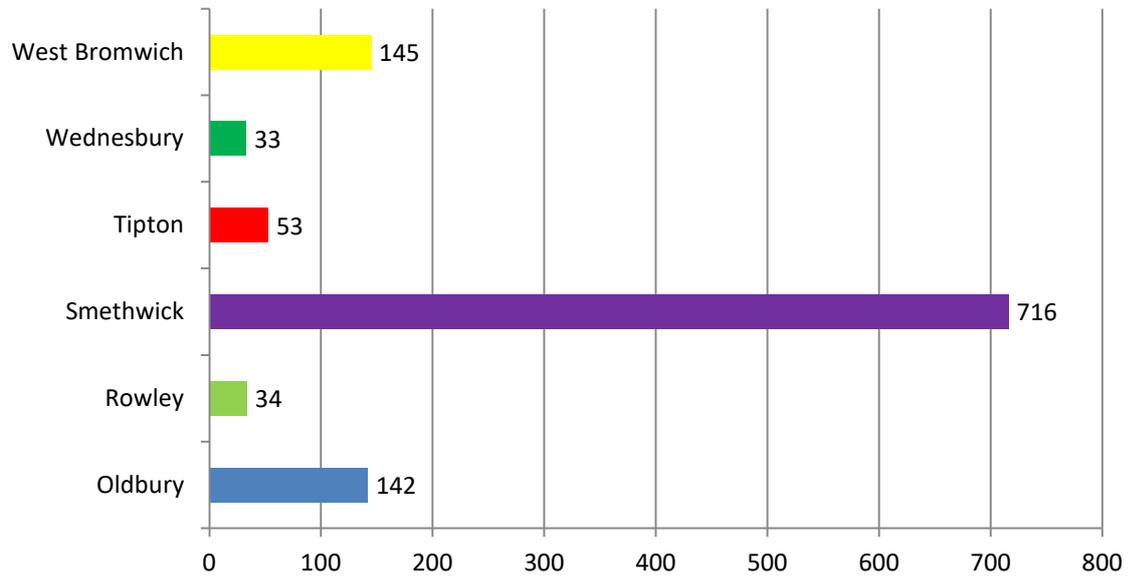
### Top 20 nationalities of service users 2019/20



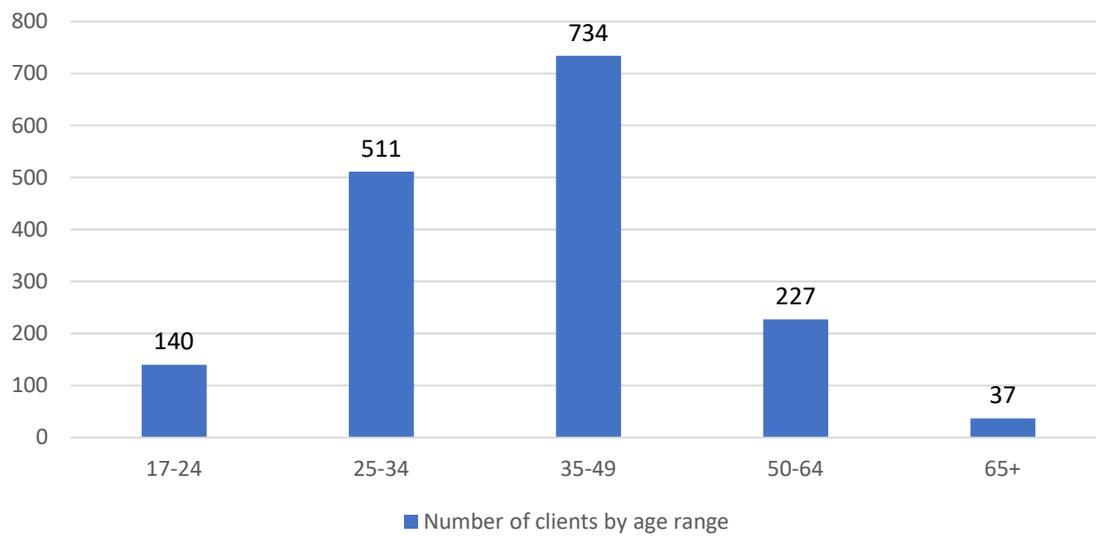
### Service users by local authority of residence



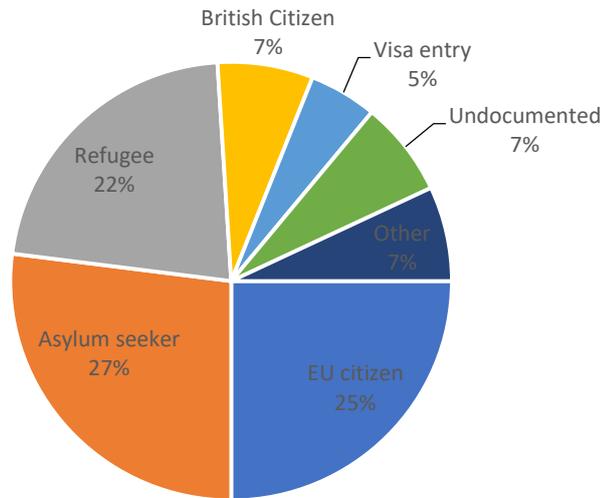
## Service users resident in Sandwell by town 2019/20



## Service users by age range 2019/20



## Clients by immigration status 2019/20



If you would like any further information about Brushstrokes, would like to volunteer or support our work in any way please contact us at:

[info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)

Call us on 0121 565 2234

Or call at 253 High Street, Smethwick, B66 3NJ

If you would like any further information about this report please contact Dave Newall, Project Manager: [David@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk](mailto:David@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk)