

# **Borderlands**

## **Strategic Plan, April 2023 to March 2026**

### Contents

#### Review of our current position

About Borderlands	2
Our values	2
Our theory of change	3
Internal review	4
Our current financial position	5

#### Our Ambition

Our vision	6
Our strategic aims	6
What we need to do to achieve this	6
Risks, challenges and opportunities	8
Financial review	10
Longer term outlook	10
Monitoring and reporting system	11

#### Action Plan

Detailed action plan for Year 1 (separate document)

Borderlands (South West) Ltd is a Company Limited by guarantee, number 07607693 and a registered charity, number 1143313.

## **Review of our current position**

### **About Borderlands**

Borderlands has been supporting refugees, asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration status since 2011. The charity was registered in 2011 following a long history of the parish at St. Nicholas of Tolentino RC Church providing support to the local community in need. Through the relationships established between the parish and those seeking refuge over a number of years, we were able to identify the needs of those seeking refuge and the best way to respond.

### **Our values**

- *Warmth*: Borderlands is a place and community for genuine relationships that creates the warm feeling similar to friendships and family.
- *Sharing*: Borderlands is a place where we share with each other and help one another.
- *Dignity*: Borderlands is a place where everyone is recognised as an individual and embraced with dignity; we strive for justice and dignity in the world.
- *Respect everyone*: Borderlands is a place where individual and group identities are respected and celebrated.

These values are reflected in the following statements which describe how these values have arisen and how they are put into practice:

- Borderlands is deeply rooted in its community; it has grown out of the first-hand experiences of that community
- It is fluid and flexible in how it works and tries to be decisive, willing to change, proactive and responsive to people's needs (for example, changing services during Covid; setting up a foodbank; having staff at a hotel every week; ensuring that we address the initial welcoming of people; offering mentoring to refugees)
- We want to empower the people we work with and work alongside them, accompanying them on their journey and learning from them
- Our work is based on developing strong relationships with our members, the parish, the wider community and other agencies working with asylum seekers and refugees as part of The City of Sanctuary and Bristol Refugee & Asylum Seeker Partnership
- People involved in Borderlands as staff, trustees and volunteers have different drivers. For some this is faith based, for others based on their experience as volunteers, field workers or in the community.

## Our theory of change

Activities & services we will provide	Short and medium term outcomes: changes that will start the journey	Long term outcomes: changes that will help us to bring about our goal	Our long term goal: the world we want to see
<p>Well-structured welcome service, both at Borderlands and through outreach</p> <p>The Welcome Centre offers a range of basic and wellbeing services (eg ESOL/learning) and other agencies are available to provide support</p> <p>We offer a mentoring programme</p> <p>We signpost and refer members to other services and agencies</p> <p>Our model is to enable members to move from intensive support to independence</p>	<p>People are given the knowledge and information they need so they are able to advocate for themselves and their rights</p> <p>Their basic needs are being met (food, a hot meal, SIM card/phone, community)</p> <p>They have a chance to learn/improve their English</p> <p>They have developed a network and a community</p> <p>They know how to access education, jobs and volunteering opportunities</p> <p>They have access to health care (physical and mental health and wellbeing)</p>	<p>People have moved on - they have jobs, a community, education, opportunity</p> <p>New members hear positive stories and have positive experiences, feel welcome and safe</p> <p>A diverse range of people have equitable access to our services, which are transparent, and those of other agencies</p> <p>We give volunteers opportunities to understand and learn in a professional environment</p> <p>People have choice and dignity; they have developed confidence and self-esteem; they have a sense of purpose</p>	<p>Asylum seekers and refugees are able to become independent and live in a compassionate, just and understanding community</p> <p>They are able to seek and find safety, to have their basic needs met and to become integrated into society</p> <p>Borderlands is a model of how to welcome and support people, working effectively with our partners</p>

## **Internal review**

### Resources

- Our dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees strive to deliver more and better services
- We are flexible in meeting new challenges and creating new services
- We have a strong focus on helping the people we work with to be equipped to take charge of their own lives
- We have been successful in obtaining grants from public and grant making bodies as well as donations from individuals
- We work with other organisations in BRASP to ensure we offer services on different days; mentoring and the social supermarket are not offered by other BRASP members; we work closely with other agencies on our outreach work

### Our Achievements

- We have established our reputation over the past 12 years in delivering services to refugees and asylum seekers which are valued and effective
- We have provided support to more than 1700 people. At any one time, we are working with about 200 people
- Outcomes: we produce a regular impact report for the board and our funders, setting out what we have achieved with our members

### We currently deliver the following activities:

- A Welcome Centre which offers a safe place for refugees and asylum seekers to meet and provides weekly destitution payments, community meals, information and more
- Signposting to education, health, leave to stay applications, jobs, accommodation.
- Mentoring - we partners refugees and asylum seekers with volunteers over a six month period to provide one-to-one emotional and practical support
- English Classes - Our English teachers help our members to develop their language skills and feel more integrated into wider society
- Wellbeing activities, which include sewing and yoga for women and fitness classes for men
- Sleep Support and Relaxation Sessions for those experiencing stress or anxiety and struggle to sleep, our facilitators give tips and share skills on how to relax and prepare to sleep
- Outreach to people in hotels
- The house we own is now managed by Ashley Community Housing

## **Our current financial position**

Over the past year, we have been improving our financial management information so the board has accurate, timely and relevant data. We will continue to improve and develop our internal reporting and to set robust budgets to monitor our performance against.

We have a good track record of applying for grants from foundations and statutory sources. We have been developing our measurement of our outcomes and impact so that we are able to demonstrate that we are using our income effectively and delivering value for money to those who support us financially.

### Reserves

At the end of our financial year to March 2023 we had £226,000 in unrestricted reserves.

### Income:

In 2022/2023, our income was £278,000. This was made up of

Grants	225,300	81%
Donations/gift aid	42,600	15%
Rental income	10,000	4%

### Expenditure

Our expenditure during 2022/2023 was £276,000. Of this, salaries, National insurance and pension contributions amounted to £182,000 (66%).

## **Our Ambition**

### **Our vision**

We have a vision for a world where refugees and asylum seekers can seek sanctuary and justice, can make full use of their talents and abilities, feel valued for their contributions, and build worthwhile lives.

We want to help refugees, asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration from exclusion to belonging.

### **Our strategic aims**

Over the next three years, we want to:

1. develop a structured approach to welcoming people
2. provide services for members to enable them to address their wellbeing needs and engage with other agencies
3. support campaigning and advocacy on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers
4. develop the 'infrastructure' of Borderlands to ensure we are resilient, flexible and stable

### **What we need to do to achieve this**

#### 1. Developing a structured approach to welcoming people

We will:

- make sure that the introduction, induction and welcome processes are structured and fully documented
- work with other agencies to develop a process which ensures that all new arrivals in greater Bristol are welcomed, wherever they are located
- develop our outreach services for those who would struggle to get to us
- make The Welcome Centre attractive, warm and really welcoming for first time visitors and people returning

#### 2. Providing services for members to enable them to address their wellbeing needs and engage with other agencies

Members' needs differ and change over time, so Borderlands needs clarity about what services it can offer directly and when someone needs to be referred elsewhere. Some services are available elsewhere - Borderlands may not need to deliver these services. Being part of BRASP and wider

relationships are important to ensure Borderlands is part of comprehensive delivery across the whole of Bristol.

We will:

- develop the 'journey' model, so that members are able to access different services to help them at different stages on their journey.
- offer basic services (food, a hot meal, SIM card, community)
- deliver ESOL, IT and other educational courses
- offer sleep support, relaxation and other wellbeing activities
- provide signposting and referrals (including inviting agencies to regular sessions at Borderlands)
- as part of our BRASP commitment to increasing lived experience participation and leadership, offer opportunities to our members to participate in shaping, developing, evaluating and giving feedback on our services; this includes developing routes to leadership for members so they can explore ways of becoming a staff member, trustee or volunteer, with Borderlands or elsewhere
- participate fully in BRASP and work closely alongside other BRASP members
- ensure we are more visible to people who need our services and ensure we offer the right services
- explore how best to tackle the growing need for access to mental health services, working in partnership with specialist providers in a trauma-informed model

### 3. Supporting campaigning and advocacy on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers

We will:

- ensure we are up-to-date and engaged in the national, regional and local debate on policy and legislative proposals
- continue to participate in specific campaigns, such as free public transport
- work with City of Sanctuary to support their campaigns

### 4. Developing the 'infrastructure' of Borderlands to ensure we are resilient, flexible and stable

Borderlands wants to grow whilst ensuring everything is done well, quality is maintained and there is a clear quality standards framework in place. Our financial sustainability is vital. Borderlands needs a strong individual identity. It is part of BRASP and recognised by key players in the city. There is a strong foundation, a Christian ethos and a long history to build on and honour.

Borderlands sometimes describes itself as 'member-led' – clarity about what this means in practice is needed. Members are not in a legal sense members of Borderlands, only the trustees are. There are no members or people with lived experience on the board.

There are different perspectives about Borderlands' future premises needs and how best to meet those needs. For example, BRASP may try to develop a purpose-built facility as a central hub or Welcome Centre where many agencies can work together – Borderlands might be part of this. This would enable a more comprehensive range of services to be delivered cost-effectively. If Borderlands grows, it may need more space for service delivery, storage and work spaces; there may be a need to deliver more services from satellites. Operating from a Christian church can pose difficulties for people of other faiths – this issue needs to be explored further by the trustees and staff as part of planning for the future of Borderlands.

We will:

- ensure we are meeting the principles of organisational resilience -
  - purpose: delivered with clarity and integrity
  - money: managed with intention and control
  - people: with an appetite to learn
- explore and understand what working with people mainly from non-Christian faiths means for us; ensure we hear the voices of members and that we reflect and respect members' cultures and faiths
- review the balance between in-house capability/capacity and subcontracted services in areas including fund-raising, finance, HR and IT
- ensure we have training budgets and plans in place for staff, trustees and volunteers (including in areas such as working with the media, campaigning and awareness raising)
- review our need for space as our services develop, including satellite services, confidential and office space, Welcome Centre activities and storage

### **Risks, challenges and opportunities**

We operate in an uncertain and changing environment, due to political, economic and geo-political issues which are beyond our control. We need to be resilient to be able to deal with the risks and challenges we face, whilst being open to the opportunities that will arise.

- Demand for our services may increase faster than we can expand resources so we need to be able to say no when necessary and to ensure that we stay focussed on our core services



- Growth in service delivery may be constrained by space limitations so we need to consider our medium and long term options which include having more outreach services; some constraints on our capacity are already evident
- Legislative changes may prevent us from delivering some of our services and our funding may be impacted by economic turmoil so we need to be able to pivot and adjust our service delivery
- Geopolitical and health events such as war and pandemic may increase demand for services with little warning and environmental impact may cause larger numbers of refugees to move to the UK so we need to be clear about how much demand we can absorb
- We have shown ourselves to be flexible in rapidly meeting new challenges and creating new services. Our resilience was demonstrated when we created new services complying with government regulations during the Covid lockdown. We moved fast to visit refugees and asylum seekers in hotels away from the city centre.
- We will continue to develop and train our staff and volunteers so they are prepared for changes in our services. This will help us to maintain flexibility and be innovative and resilient
- We will review our processes and systems to ensure we are making the best use of our resources
- We will continue to build good relationships with the wider community and optimise our partnerships with other agencies, especially through BRASP
- We will find better ways of engaging our members through feedback and participation in improving our services and processes
- We have carried out a comprehensive governance review and are in the process of implementing our Governance Action Plan