

**HOST
NATION**

HostNation Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 30th September 2020

**Friendship
improves happiness
and abates misery, by
the doubling of our
joy and the dividing
of our grief.**

Marcus Tullius Cicero

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“ We are far more
united than the things
that divide us. ”

JO COX

Report of the Trustees 2019-2020

HostNation incorporated as a charity (CIO) and registered with the Charity Commission in September 2018. HostNation is a registered charity no. 1180004.

The Trustees present their second report along with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 30 September 2020.

Our objectives as defined in our constitution are:

1 The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among those who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants who are socially excluded on the grounds of their immigration status and social and economic position by providing:

- A local 1:1 befriending service that offers friendship, social opportunities, community connection and support, in order to address social isolation amongst asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- A service that facilitates inter-cultural relationships to help prevent the self-exclusion of migrant communities from the wider community.
- Increased opportunities for social integration and engagement in the local community to enable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to positively participate in society.
- Increased opportunities to practice and improve the English skills of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in communities in the UK through friendship with native English speakers, in order to promote greater social integration.
- Opportunities for positive action by citizens to change the circumstances that have led to social exclusion amongst asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

2 The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit amongst those who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with a view to tackling discrimination, inequality and social disadvantage by providing:

- Connection and relationships with UK citizens and residents who can treat them equally, identify opportunities for them and help build their sense of self-worth.
- Meaningful social interaction and inter-cultural relationships between British citizens and asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to encourage greater social cohesion and cultural diversity in communities in the UK.
- A means by which the public can engage with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants as individuals and people with needs, not simply statistics.

“You can be yourself and forget about your traumas. I’ve learnt that there’s hope, there’s a future here in London.”

REFUGEE



Purpose and Activities

We connect socially isolated refugees and asylum seekers with volunteer befrienders to experience our cities together, practise their English, build their independence and help them participate. We want to help them thrive rather than simply survive.

What we do: our vision & mission

As a digital introductory platform, we tackle the loneliness experienced by asylum-seekers and refugees in our cities by making it easier for those of us at home in Britain to connect with those looking for a place they can call home.

HostNation aims to transform social relations in our communities, by using technology to bring local people and refugees together through small acts of hospitality, inclusion and friendship.

HostNation started in 2017, incorporated in 2018 and is a befriending service operating across Greater London.

- **Our proposition is based on the altruistic impulse of loving a stranger** – 400+ people have registered with us to befriend a lonely refugee
- **We offer a bridge that connects people socially** – we have made 250+ matches
- **We've built a community and a volunteer movement** – we have the largest online resource of volunteer refugee befrienders in the UK
- **We wish to take our digital proposition to UK cities beyond London** – we want HostNation to become the way to befriend refugees in our cities: online, easy, sustainable and scalable

We work in partnership with over 30 refugee service providers as well as NHS social prescribers, ESOL colleges and community organisations to identify socially isolated, adult refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. We then use our digital platform to make meaningful matches to local voluntary befrienders based on geography, shared interests and compatible demographics.

We facilitate face-to-face introductions and provide guidance, resources and relationship support for 3 months to help sustain relationships and encourage genuine friendship.

Building bridges, creating friendships: how we help

Refugees and asylum seekers arrive here having fled violence, persecution and war. They then face the daunting task of negotiating a different culture, language and system, away from loved ones or any support network.

It's not only hard, it's lonely. And on top of that, many are housed in the areas with the highest levels of deprivation and most at risk of Covid-19.

Many people live parallel but unconnected lives in the same London boroughs; generating inter-cultural friendships with people of different backgrounds, some with traumatic pasts who have been plunged deeper into isolation by Covid-19, needs careful facilitation. Post-Covid, social connections at a local level and opportunities to show solidarity are going to be needed more than ever.

Refugees tell us that they spend a lot of time alone and don't have enough to do, they feel depressed and lonely, they want to meet more British people and enjoy what London has to offer, but don't know how. Language is a key barrier; many asylum seekers and refugees have difficulty accessing ESOL classes and the lack of opportunities to improve and practise their spoken English isolates them further.

At HostNation we believe that every refugee deserves to have a friend. The opportunity to meet someone who treats them as an equal, to be invited out and to practise English in a fun, friendly and non-judgmental context, can have a transformative impact on their lives.

Accelerating these opportunities is especially vital at a time of rising intolerance, hate crime and negative stereotyping of refugees and asylum seekers.

Befriending changes lives

Friendships like these have been a lifeline in lockdown. Here's a recent message from one of our befrienders to her refugee friend (which arrived in the post along with flowers and chocolates). When she gave us permission to share this, Mimi said: **"Thank you HostNation for my wonderful friend. I really appreciate having her."**

Mimi jan
How I love you! I know it won't be long before we can laugh again together, and cry, and hug and celebrate the good things in life.
Thinking of you makes me smile.
With all my love, Sally



HostNation and Covid-19

Loving a stranger in the time of coronavirus

The photos below were taken in a fancy dress photo booth at our 2019 Christmas party. Little did we know that we would not be able to host another event to bring our befrienders and befriendedees together in 2020.



The pandemic was a big challenge to a small charity whose mission is to tackle social isolation. Our introductions were brought to a juddering halt by Covid-19 as we suspended making matches for the 4+ months of the spring lockdown. Relationships are built by experiencing life together and creating shared memories. As social distancing is the antithesis of what HostNation is about, we had to think creatively about our approach.

Despite few opportunities to meet up to experience what London has to offer or to enjoy a walk or a meal together, our volunteer befrienders have stepped into the breach to help battle isolation and poor mental health during the crisis. With support, encouragement and sign-posting from HostNation, they have been a lifeline for their befriendedees during lockdown. They have continued with small acts of kindness, inclusion and friendship whether it's checking in on WhatsApp, regular video-calls, dropping off food, helping with phone credit or lending an iPad pre-loaded with films. Asylum seekers and refugees, often self-isolating in miserable conditions and shorn of the support services that give some stability to their lives, had someone showing them that they care and that they are not forgotten.

London boroughs such as Newham, Redbridge, Hounslow and Brent, where our refugee referrals are often housed and northern cities such as Middlesbrough, where they are regularly dispersed, have the highest death rates from Covid-19. These are the boroughs where HostNation was operating in 2020 and Middlesbrough is the city we plan to target next. These areas

have the highest levels of deprivation, health inequality, poverty, temporary housing and ethnic diversity. They house the most at-risk communities with the least government support – many without recourse to public funds. Refugees and asylum seekers have been one of the minority groups (mostly BAME) affected disproportionately by the crisis.

Lockdown has only compounded problems of loneliness and isolation. Still carrying the experience of trauma, exacerbated by poverty and digital exclusion, refugees and asylum seekers are at greater threat of mental ill-health. Desperate to get on with their lives in the UK, those eligible to work have either found training courses cancelled, or work in some of the hardest hit sectors – hospitality, construction, security or in the GIG economy – and continue to work because they cannot afford not to. Many others have been cooped up in hostels or shared houses, (some with young children) and starved of activities and outside contact; fearful of catching the disease, they have stayed cut off in their own rooms and locked out of local community support groups due to barriers of culture, confidence and language. The places that provided them with a sense of community and belonging and sometimes paid their fares and offered them free wifi – drop-in centres, ESOL Colleges, libraries, churches or mosques – have had to close.

Introducing smart befriending

Despite some easing of restrictions the restoration of many of these services simply hasn't happened. It's clear the return to normality will be long and slow. Continuing social distancing rules will make gatherings under one roof difficult, if not impossible. More feasible have been the sort of one-to-one meet ups that HostNation facilitates. In July we re-launched our service and introduced 'smart befriending' a hybrid of online and face-to-face, making it easier for refugee organisations that were not delivering in-person services to refer, and giving befriender and befriendedee the opportunity (and resources) to befriend via video. This also enabled us to support those living further out – in the more deprived outer boroughs. As soon as restrictions eased and both parties felt comfortable about meeting and using public transport, we encouraged it, especially in the summer months when open air activities and greater enjoyment of parks and nature – both good ways to start reconnecting safely with the city – were possible.

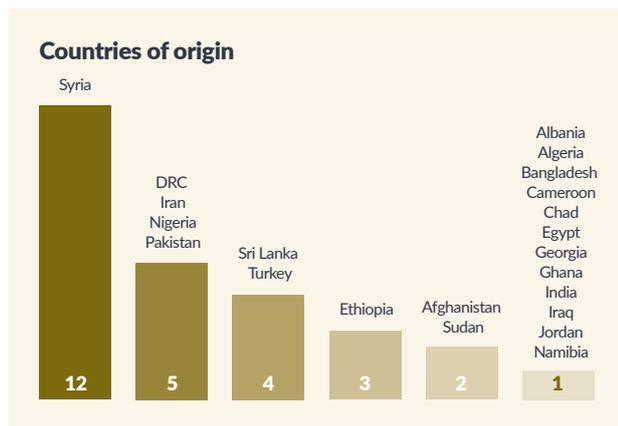
For many refugees referred to us, with no family here and few friends, HostNation befriending provides the only informal, social, support they have. We encouraged our befrienders to rise to the challenge of treating their refugee befriendedees as a part of their family 'bubble' as well as a part of the HostNation community. They have built their capacity for compassion and connection during this crisis. Meanwhile, in our cities, we've seen a groundswell of community spirit with a desire to sustain greater neighbourliness and connection in the future and in 2020 HostNation was overwhelmed with enquiries about volunteer befriending largely through Team London, the Mayor of London's volunteering portal.

During 2020 refugee organisations, social prescribers and health providers have told us that their refugee clients, who have been deprived of human contact and friendship for months on end, are going to need our befriending service more than ever.

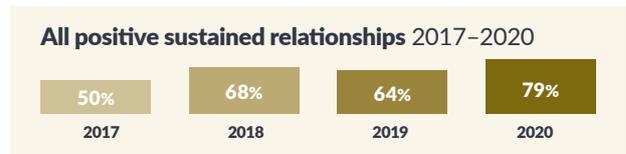
Befriending Matches and Outcomes

At HostNation, we pay close attention to the evaluation of our service. It allows us to track our performance but most importantly, it enables us to understand the nature of the relationships our befrienders form with their befriendees, which drives improvement of the outcomes.

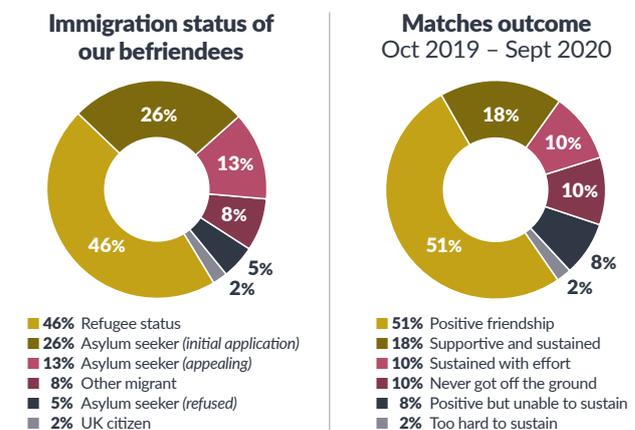
In this financial year 72 new referrals were made. This was considerably down on previous years (average 120) due to Covid-19 and the fact that many refugee organisations stopped delivering services on site and face-to-face for much of the year. The refugees we matched came mostly from Syria, Nigeria, DRC, Iran and Pakistan. The gender profile was 51% women and 49% men. Of these, 46% had already received their refugee or humanitarian protection status, while 39% were still awaiting their asylum application outcome. Last year, 70% of the refugees referred to us were between 18–39 years old.



Since we started matching in September 2017, we have introduced nearly 600 people to one another. We are proud of this number; however, our priority has always been making meaningful connections. Our focus is on quality, not the quantity of the relationships, and that's why we have always worked hard towards improving our outcomes. In 2020 so far, 29% more relationships reached positive outcomes after three months compared with 2017, our first year of operation.



Approx 80% of the matches we made were sustained beyond the initial three month commitment period that we ask for, with over half turning into genuine, long lasting, friendships. Befriending had a strongly positive impact on the lives of most of the refugees who found a befriender through HostNation. Of our befriendees, 84% said they felt better, more positive and happier after knowing their befriender for three months. An overwhelming 97% of befriendees said it was a positive experience and 81% felt that having a local befriender made them feel more welcome and included, while 84% of them report visiting new places with their befrienders. Participating in London life brings some normality and makes them feel more like an equal member of British society.



The greatest benefits of befriending are emotional

But the greatest benefits of befriending are emotional. Trying to find your feet in a new country where culture, people, language and everything else is unfamiliar, can cause tremendous amounts of anxiety as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation. Our refugee friends greatly appreciate having a befriender who regularly checks on them, who is genuinely interested in their well-being and who spends time with them, chats and listens. Last year, 97% of the befriendees we matched reported feeling less lonely since they met their befriender.

"We got on well with her family, very lovely people. When I'm with them I feel like I'm with family. I [was] feeling so lonely. I feel like I have a sister here. She's always open to listen. She checks on me. I became a part of her family." ASYLUM SEEKER

"He boosts my confidence and motivates me. If you are at home you don't explore anything, I can go out but I am shy, not opening up to new things, he inspired me to try. It really helps with your mood, I learnt I should go and do stuff." REFUGEE

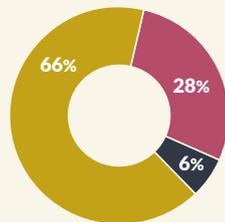
Befriending Matches and Outcomes ctd

Outcomes

One of the most important tangible benefits of befriending is an opportunity to practise speaking English with a native (or proficient) speaker. Of our befriendees, 66% said their English had improved thanks to having a befriender, while 28% already had a good level of English. They really appreciate being able to practise in a relaxed, non-judgemental environment.

Has your English improved because of knowing your befriender, or there is no difference?

- 66% Yes, improved
- 28% English was already good
- 6% No difference



Befrienders

However, befriending not only has an impact on the refugees. It is often a hugely rewarding and inspirational experience for our befrienders. They appreciate learning about their befriendees' culture and their way of life. They are often inspired by their friends' resilience and bravery. And they find it eye-opening to learn about their circumstances. Last year, 88% of our befrienders found the befriending experience rewarding and gave it an average score of 7.8 out of 10 for how positive it had been.

“He is like another member of my family and I can only thank you for that. I can honestly say that joining HostNation is one of the best and most rewarding things I have ever done.”

BEFRIENDER

The impact of Covid-19 on outcomes

“It’s been a very particular time, making such a strong connection during Covid from scratch. It’s something very touching and heart-warming. It feels like a real friendship. She’s very inspiring and very determined.” BEFRIENDER

The pandemic not only affected the number of matches we were able to facilitate, but it had a profound impact on the nature and the outcomes of the relationships. Many befrienders and befriendees who were introduced before March 2020 reported their developing friendship being abruptly disrupted by the first lockdown. However, most of them stayed in touch via the phone and were hoping to see each other again once the lockdown was lifted.

“If the pandemic hadn’t happened, we would have met up a lot more, it would have been easier. We had a list of places we would have gone to.” BEFRIENDER

In some instances, befrienders proved to be a lifeline for their befriendees, not

only talking to them regularly, but also delivering food and medicine to their doorstep.

“We’ve had a lot of video contact during this time, Face-Timing about twice a week. I’ve taken food round as well 4-5 times, I have seen her at a distance, and I met her son as he gets the bags of shopping that I’ve brought over.” BEFRIENDER

“I love meeting Sandra, she is a lovely person and has a very positive energy when we meet and spend time together. We go for two-hour walks.” BEFRIENDER

“We still haven’t met in person, it’s been entirely online but we do incredibly well together.” BEFRIENDER

When we started matching again in July after the first lockdown was eased, we encouraged our befrienders and befriendees to use video technology and phone calls to supplement face-to-face meetings or use it when the latter was not possible. We provided tips, topics

and resources for online conversations. Many of them tried to see each other in person as much as the restrictions allowed and used the phone and internet to keep in touch in between.

They often spent time going for walks but were looking forward to being able to enjoy other attractions and explore London more freely once restrictions are lifted.

Our new model of ‘smart’ befriending allows the flexibility for befriending to evolve in a manner that feels safe for both befriender and befriendees.

“Everything was nice. We are looking forward to summer.” REFUGEE

“I’m not feeling good at the moment, but Nina is helping a lot. She picked up my medication and my shopping. She texts me constantly. Even though she is white and I am black, she makes me feel like we’re the same. She is amazing. It is a match from heaven.” ASYLUM SEEKER

Recent HostNation Case Studies*

Sue & Layla

Sue (*London befriender, female, 50s*) and Layla (*Iranian refugee, female, 60s*) hit it off immediately. Sue was really impressed and inspired by Layla. They live close by. Sue dropped off gifts during lockdown when they couldn't see each other and called regularly. They missed seeing each other and resumed face-to-face as soon as they could.



Sue & Layla having a socially distant lockdown coffee

SUE on LAYLA: *"It's crazy! The woman is incredible, she is so personable, she knows so many people, I wish I met her 100 years ago, we are such good friends, We see each other as equals, total acceptance, respect and warmth, we have the same outlook on life. She made me a beautiful Iranian meal and I was humbled. I never expected it to be so much fun. It was meant to be."*

LAYLA on SUE: *"Nothing helps like having a real friend. I feel like I've known her for ages. It is important the warmth your host gives you. She is the most valuable thing I have in this country. I told my family in Iran about her. I'm not strange in this country anymore, I have a friend in this country. It makes me optimistic about the future. I don't feel I'm lonely, I'm not homesick and life is more interesting. She is like a sister. She doesn't judge me."*

John & Amin

John (*London befriender, male, 20s*) works full-time as an analyst in London but taught maths and English to Afghan refugees while a student and later lived in Beirut getting to know a number of Syrian refugees. John and Amin (*Syrian refugee, male, 20s*) have a lot in common.

They are almost exactly the same age, passionately interested in sport, especially football and they share a lively intelligence and curiosity about the world. John has been very supportive, meeting Amin every week for several hours to help him with English and reading science articles together in preparation for his university application. It paid off and Amin is now at a top UK University studying engineering.



John & Amin out together

JOHN on AMIN: *"It's going really well. I'm with him once a week as we have been from the beginning. We do a lot of reading together. His English is getting a lot better. He's more confident. The big aim is to get him into university. He's a very, very nice guy I couldn't be more thankful to you guys for setting us up."*

AMIN on JOHN: *"John is speechless good personality and also amazing teacher. This is best way to learn to be fluent in English."*

*names of befrienders and befriendeds have been changed

Recent HostNation Case Studies*

Nick & Ali



Nick (London befriender, male, 20s) has done a variety of jobs in the past but now manages a team of 40 volunteers for a cancer support charity. He is a friendly, outgoing man. Ali (Sudanese refugee, male, 20s) arrived in the UK in 2019 and is at college studying maths and English. As well as sharing an interest in meeting and getting to know new people, both Nick and Ali are passionate football supporters.

NICK on ALI: *"Couldn't have gone better. It doesn't feel like volunteering, it just feels like having a mate. We are quite similar people and there just hasn't been any awkwardness at all. Ali's an Arsenal fan like my housemate and so he's been over to watch football and he's met some of my other friends as well. It was Ali's birthday two weeks ago so we celebrated at his favourite restaurant in Wood Green. I feel he has become more confident with his English once he realised that it didn't matter if he made some mistakes. We'll definitely continue to be friends."*

ALI on NICK: *"Yes, it has been very good. I couldn't have a better friend. We are better than good friends. We will be friends for life. It's made a big difference to my life. We have met in the park at Finsbury Park, have watched football on TV at his house, have had a meal in Wood green together and are going to a museum next week. I have met his flat mate and become friendly with him as well."*

Anna & Renuka

Renuka (Sri Lankan refugee, 50s) had been in the UK for over 10 years but her refugee experience had sapped her confidence. Despite being shy, she connected straight away with Anna (London befriender, female, 60s), a professional musician whose gentle manner enabled her to feel at ease. Conducting their relationship online, they shared examples of their creativity: Renuka displaying her craft work and art, Anna playing her music. Anna's encouragement, friendship and practical support (helping with her English, giving her an old laptop) allowed Renuka to blossom: she took her driving theory test and enrolled on a childcare course, becoming a keen student and active participant in class. Their weekly sessions became an enriching experience that both women looked forward to.

ANNA on RENUKA: *"She brings so much to our meetings. Sometimes we fall into silence - something that can actually be quite hard to do with others - we just gaze at each other lovingly. It feels a great gift. Renuka is extraordinary, we still haven't met in person really, it's been entirely online but we do incredibly well together. From the second meeting I've been thinking 'I'm seeing my friend'. We both can't wait to meet. She is very busy at college, she loves being first to raise her hand, when she knows the answer. She shows bravery. I feel very lucky that she Zoomed into my life!"*

RENUKA on ANNA: *"Usually I am a shy lady, before not talking with anyone. When talking with Anna I improve my confidence. Now I am not shy anymore, I am talking to other people. Before I don't like to go to society, I don't like to talk to other people, but now I am completely changed, have confidence, not scared. I feel not different, I feel I am the same as British people."*

Mary & Amira

Mary works for a North London charity that supports isolated parents, and is strongly sympathetic to the needs of vulnerable people in the city. Introduced to Amira a few weeks before lockdown, she showed her neighbourhood shops selling the food she missed, took her to the local library and drove her round the sights of central London she had never seen in her four years here. Knowing she loved gardening, Mary also pointed Amira to a community project she was then able to visit on her own. Their relationship continued to grow during lockdown, with Mary dropping off food for Amira and her son, and the two staying in regular touch on FaceTime or Zoom.

MARY on AMIRA: *"Amira is hugely grateful but she is an amazing woman. It's a weird mixture with befriending - the people you meet can appear extremely vulnerable and potentially over-dependent, but they are probably stronger than all of us."*

AMIRA on MARY: *"I want to say thank you. I was alone and I didn't know what happened to make Mary come into my life at a difficult time. I want to tell you: I can't believe some people can help here. When I spoke to my family, sometimes friends and family call me, I say Mary is my best friend."*

Mary & Amira
having a
socially distant
lockdown
coffee



*names of befrienders and befriendeds have been changed

Finances and Funding

Funding

We are immensely grateful to the following funders in 2019-2020:

TRUST FOR LONDON granted us £40,000 restricted funding from November 2018 – November 2020 to support our refugee service across London. They have subsequently agreed to provide us with a further £50,000 continuation funding from November 2020 – November 2022.

PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION were our first backers and provided start-up funds for R&D and to pilot HostNation in London in 2017. In 2019 we were the recipients of a further £12,000 package of financial support along with invaluable mentoring and coaching from financial, fundraising and strategic experts.

TEAM LONDON are part of the Mayor of London's Office and granted us £9,170 to support referrals made by social prescribers and to build referral pathways with NHS social prescribers across London's boroughs. This is restricted funding; £7,336 (80%) was received in 2019-20 and was used to cover dedicated staff time for this purpose.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY / DCMS COVID RESPONSE.

We received emergency funding support of £20,000 channelled through TNL to help keep our operations going through the second half of 2020. Half this funding is reported in this year's annual accounts.

We are also very grateful for all the individual donations – one-off, recurring and made in response to our Aviva crowdfunder appeal – which provided a further £12,650 in unrestricted funding in 2019-20.

Reserves and financial policy

The Trustees have taken a risk-based approach to reserves and agreed a reserves policy of 3-4 months running costs. HostNation has low fixed costs and virtually no overheads or liabilities (all staff work from home) combined with fairly high income certainty (funds secured for 2021 and 2022). We have been working on the basis of predicted running costs of £5,000 per month and therefore having at least £15,000 available in unrestricted funds to hold in reserve.

As a charity we are governed by the Charity Commission's financial regulations. Our core costs are staff salaries and freelance fees for project delivery. All petty expenditure and out-of-pocket expenses legitimately incurred while promoting and supporting the delivery of the charity's objectives, are paid directly or reimbursed. Any significant expense being considered, such as a training workshop or social events for befrienders and their befriendees, must be discussed with Trustees and management prior to approval.

Risk register

In 2019 HostNation's Trustees devised a register of the risks that we face customised to our operational realities and our assessment of external threats and opportunities. This was in order to enhance our ability to plan for and mitigate identified risks and

to spot new risks during the course of any year. Risk was defined as factors that meant HostNation is unable to meet its objectives either at all or at the planned levels of activity.

It was agreed to adopt a 3-stage traffic light system:

RED: HIGH RISK (*business critical requiring focus and mitigation, to be reviewed quarterly until mitigated*)

AMBER: MEDIUM RISK (*potentially constraining and needs to be reduced or contained, to be reviewed bi-annually*)

GREEN: NEGLIGIBLE/LOW RISK (*sign of confidence requiring no action*)

The risks we agreed to review regularly are:

- 1) Insufficient resources caused by failure to secure sufficient funding or manage our resources effectively.
- 2) Inability to achieve objectives and outcomes as a result of lack of human resources or ineffective deployment of staff.
- 3) Reputational damage caused by being seen to act unprofessionally, inappropriately or in a manner inappropriate to a charity.
- 4) Governance risks: failure by the Trustees to carry out their functions in accordance with best governance practice & charity law.

We started the financial year with all risks at green. As a result of the funding gap we anticipated prior to receiving the TNL/DCMS emergency grant or continuation funding, on 1.07.2020 the Board agreed that 1) Insufficient resources should turn to amber (to be reviewed in December 2020).

Staffing

We have a lean team running HostNation and delivering project outcomes. All staff are paid an agreed hourly rate above the London living wage. The two directors (doing approx. 20-30 hours per week) are on PAYE. During 2019-20 we also employed three freelancers – an operation manager mainly responsible for matching and screening, an evaluation manager working on monitoring and reporting outcomes using this to improve our process, service and relationships and a digital manager, building and supporting our website and digital database.

HostNation does not have a physical office and employees work from their own homes. To assist with their increased household expenses, HostNation pays its PAYE employees the monthly tax-free working from home allowance permitted by HMRC.

Trustees

We have four Trustees, two women and two men. Two of our Trustees, Dina Nayeri and Emiljan Gega (Treasurer), were both child refugees, fleeing with their families from Iran and Albania respectively. Our Chair, Daniel Silverstone, was CEO at both the Commission for Racial Equality and Interights (an international human rights charity). He grew up in a family marked by his mother's experiences as a child refugee. Three Trustees, including our Chair, have experience of befriending refugees through HostNation.

Watch Anneke Elwes (Founder) in conversation with Dina Nayeri (Trustee) here: <https://vimeo.com/360358161>

Prospects and Plans

Financial resilience in the time of coronavirus

We see ourselves as a 'progressive hybrid' combining face-to-face social interaction with intelligent use of digital for operational ease, leanness, efficiency and scale. This gives us a built-in resilience with low overheads that allows us flexibility and control over what we do and how we do it.

Nevertheless, Covid-19 affected the funding we secured during the course of this financial year. The annual cost of running HostNation with a lean team paid a modest hourly rate, is between £60-65,000. Our first set of charity accounts (2018-19) reports costs of £38,000: a reflection of our start-up status when expenditure was kept at a minimum and we still had considerable pro bono support.

We made a number of multi-year funding applications towards the end of 2019/early 2020 to give us financial resilience for when our Trust for London and Paul Hamlyn grants came to an end.

The decision making processes for these applications coincided with Covid-19 which affected timelines and led to many funds being diverted to frontline and emergency services. Funders focused on supporting existing grantees through difficult times rather than accepting new requests for funding.

There was a risk of a funding gap in our final quarter. We controlled our costs through reduced time, furloughing our two Directors on rotation for a month each and further pro bono support from our freelancers between March-July.

This saved us approximately £10,000. We focused on supporting our existing pairings and keeping HostNation afloat. In the meantime we made an application to DCMS/TNL for Covid-related funding and in mid-July received £20,000 for 6 months (£10,000 for the final quarter of 2019-2020 financial year and £10,000 to carry over to the first quarter of our next financial year (Oct-Dec 2020).

We also used the summer to request continuation funding from Trust for London and Paul Hamlyn who had shown faith in our work and to put in a bid for 3-year funding for our London operations from City Bridge Trust.

All three of these requests have been successful and we have now secured full funding for 2020-21 and 80% for 2021-22, giving us a stable platform for our London operation and research and development funding (Paul Hamlyn) for expanding to the North East (Teesside and Tyneside) and North West (Greater Manchester) in 2021.

“
Actually, I LOVE having a befriender. For the first time I've had a good friend here in the UK. Thank you HostNation.”

ASYLUM SEEKER

Future plans

The Trustees signed off on a proposal for sustained growth through partnership pilots in order to develop the HostNation model within existing organisations in early 2020.

At the same time, Investing in People and Culture (IPC) working in Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Gateshead and Newcastle, approached us, keen to develop a joint programme. They support nearly 2,000 asylum seekers and refugees each year either directly or indirectly. Preliminary discussions confirm that they share our mission and believe that refugee befriending can be a part of the overall solution to the integration and social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in our cities.

We plan to sustain and improve the London programme as a centre of excellence and best practice in 2021, whilst adapting our digital infrastructure to work in partnership with regional refugee organisations in order to share networks, expertise and risk whilst expanding opportunities to befriend.



Legal and Administrative Information

HostNation

Trustees:

Daniel Silverstone
Dina Nayeri Viegutz
Joanna Winterbottom
Emiljan Gega

Registered Address:

23 Lawford Road
London
NW5 2LH

Independent Examiner:

S D Clarke FCA
Haines Watts (City) LLP
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobolds Road
London
WC1X 8TA

Registered Charity Number:

1180004

Bank:

Metro Bank
One Southampton Row
London
WC1B 5HA

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission guidelines on public benefit and consider these measures when carrying out the charitable objectives of this Charity.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period that give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statement of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Daniel Silverstone, Chair of Trustees

Date: 9 December 2020

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of HostNation

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the period ended 30 September 2020, which are set out on pages 11 and 12.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed by:



Samuel David Clarke FCA

Haines Watts (City) LLP

New Derwent House, 69-73 Theobolds Road, London, WC1X 8TA

Date: 9 December 2020

Statement of Financial Activities

for the period ended 30 September 2020

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
INCOME				
Donations received	12,649	49,836	62,485	51,467
Other income	1,858	-	1,858	-
Total income	14,507	49,836	64,343	51,467
EXPENDITURE				
Charitable activities	7,439	48,873	56,312	38,151
Total expenditure	7,439	48,873	56,312	38,151
Net movement in funds	7,068	963	8,031	13,316
Total funds brought forward at 1 October 2019	13,316	-	13,316	-
Total funds carried forward at 30 September 2020	20,384	963	21,347	13,316

Balance Sheet

as at 30 September 2020

CURRENT ASSETS	2020 Total £	2019 Total £
Cash at bank	21,347	13,316
Net current assets	21,347	13,316
Unrestricted funds	20,384	13,316
Restricted funds	963	-
	21,347	13,316

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Daniel Silverstone, Chair of Trustees
 Date: 9 December 2020

Notes

forming part of the financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2020

1. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and in preparing the financial statements the Charity follows best practice as laid down in the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (SORP 2015) issued in 2015.

(b) Income

Donation income is accounted for in the period in which the Charity is entitled to receipt and the amount can be quantified.

(c) Expenditure is included on an accruals basis.

(d) Funds structure

Restricted funds are granted in accordance with the desires of the donors. Unrestricted funds are disbursed at the discretion of the Trustees.

(e) Going concern

The accounts are prepared on the basis that the Trustees have adequate resources to continue to operate.

The impact of COVID 19 is discussed in the Trustee report and the Charity has taken measures to mitigate this. Based on these assessments the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adapt on an ongoing concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts

(g) Financial instruments and critical accounting estimates and judgements

Basic financial instruments including basic financial liabilities – other payables – which are recognised at transaction price.

Cash at bank includes cash held with banks.

In the application of the accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and assumptions are based on experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual result may differ from these estimates, which are reviewed on an ongoing basis and recognised when appropriate.

2. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	COVID/DCSM Covid Fund	Freedom from Torture Hardship Fund	Team London Social Prescription	Paul Hamlyn Foundation Further Funding	Trust for London	Total
Income	10,000	500	7,336	12,000	20,000	49,836
Expenditure	9,511	250	7,336	12,000	19,776	48,873
Balance carried forward	489	250	0	0	224	963

3. INCLUDED IN CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE ARE SUPPORT COSTS OF:

	2020 £	2019 £
Wages	39,774	34,475
Professional fees	7,560	0
Travel & subsistence	870	1,031
Workshops/events/training	843	1,748
Digital and other direct costs	7,265	897
Total	56,312	38,151

No Trustees received remuneration or were reimbursed for expenses in the current period.

In 2019-2020 HostNation had two employees on PAYE. No employees were paid over £60,000.