Volunteer Information Pack



About Us:

The Network started in 2017, as a response to the barriers that many women who were not born in the UK (including refugees and asylum seekers) faced in establishing fulfilling lives for themselves and their families in Brighton.

Our first priority is to provide a ‘safe space’ and the opportunity to speak confidentially, one to one, with a Caseworker if they wish. Through our inclusive approach, we run weekly drop-ins at the Jubilee Library as well as a city-wide programme of activities and projects throughout the year. These are open to all at no cost.

The Network acts as a ‘bridge’ to information and statutory services and advocates on behalf of women to access other services.

Our membership includes 726 individuals representing 84 nationalities and 73 languages. We are a registered charity: No 1191407

Our Values

We believe in:

- Respect for all;
- Being non-judgemental;
- Respecting women's privacy
- Being welcoming
- Transparency in decision-making
- Recognising that we are all equal
- Showing care and empathy
- Celebrating our cultures and stories

Trustees:

The Network is run largely by volunteers, and is governed by a trustee body, who meet 4-5 times a year.

Their responsibility is to provide oversight, leadership, governance and work towards the sustainability of the Network.



Linda



Fiona



Renu



Cathy



Synne



Lizzie



Kate



Laila

Elaine





Aicha

Steering Group:

The steering commitee plan and organise the programme of activities throughout the year for the Network. They meet once a month. We employ Siri, Rosie and Ghada as our caseworkers & Ruksar, as our Operations Manager.



Linda



Siri



Renu



Cathy



Ruksar



Aicha



Kate



Laila



Katia



Rosie



Silvia



Ghada

Activity Leads

Library Drop-in	Casework	Outdoor Living	Collective	Friday Sanctuary	
Cathy Maxwell	Siri Areelertworakul	Kate Howell	Aicha & Vanina	Linda, Kate & Fiona	
Art Group	**Food of the World**	**Singing**	**Cost of Living**	**Knitting & Crochet Group**	**Health Talks**
Cathy Maxwell	Laila Rashdan	Linda Beanlands	Ghada Ezzo	Katia Toy	Laila Rashdan
Increasing Economic Independence		**Governance, Strategy & Partnerships**		**Finance**	
Rosie Blunden		Linda Beanlands & Fiona Sharpe		Renuka Chandraker Steve Marshall - Independent Examiner	

Activities

- Drop-ins
- Sewing, Arts, Craft & Culture
- Outdoor Activities
- Food of the World
- Health Talks
- Casework/COL Support
- Singing

Usual Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	COL Support 10 - 12.30 (Once a month)	Jubilee Library Drop-In 10.00-12.00 Singing ad-hoc	Sewing Collective 10.00 - 16.00		Plot 22 10.30-13.00 (Once a month - Alternates Thurs/Sat)	
	Dancing (Once a month)	Walk 12.00 - 14.00 (Once a month)				
Art Classes 14.00-16.00				Friday Sanctuary @ All Saints 14.00 - 16.00		

For more information check our website

Annual Reports

Weekly Drop-Ins:

Wednesday mornings in the Jubilee library

This is our core weekly meeting, and is an open session. All women are welcome to come along, meet us, find out about our activities and make friends, even if we don't have a shared language. During the morning, many women sew or knit for different artisitic projects. It is also an opportunity for women to speak to our case workers.

Learn about our original large-scale Tapestry project, which started off our sewing activities.

Contact: Cathy Maxwell: cathy.maxwell@niwbh.org

Friday Sanctuary @ All Saints

Every Friday afternoon, this drop-in session aims to support new refugees and asylum seekers and their families who are arriving in the city. There are refreshments, games, the opportunity to chat with others and to get advice.

Sewing, Arts and Craft:

Art Class:

We have weekly art classes every Monday (term time) at Albion Hill.

If the weather is good these classes are held outside in parks around Brighton.

Contact:
info@niwbh.org

Sewing Collective:

Operating as a co-operative the Collective is made up of 15 women. Women develop their skills whilst creating beautiful items from waste fabric.

Creating a sustainable model whilst providing some financial independence.

Contact: collective@niwbh.org











Outdoor Activities:

Over the year we aim to run one walk a month. Sometimes during summer these are more frequent (weekly). The walks are a great way for women to get active whilst seeing the city and surrounding areas.

In the past we have also run monthly Ecotherapy sessions in partnership with Liz Ingram from the Centre for Ecotherapy. Women enjoy these sessions as it improves their wellbeing while connect with nature.

We are currently working with Plot 22 to spend time in nature, do gentle gardening, harvest fruit and vegetables, enjoy moments of calm and experience the changing seasons together.

We also signpost women to other outdoor activity groups.

Contact: outdooractivities@niwbh.org or Kate Howell kate.howell@niwbh.org

Support:

Casework:

Our Casework Service aims to address the need for holistic 1:1 support for women from ethnic minority backgrounds in our local area. Safeguarding is a priority, as is enabling women to access financial entitlements, health care and longer-term wellbeing support. Within the 1-1 support we signpost women to other support agencies, health talks, and mindfulness sessions. Capacity allowing, our Casework service is open to referrals from partner organisations.

Our caseworkers:
Siri Areelertworakul: siri@niwbh.org
Ghada Ezzo: rosie@niwbh.org
Rosie Blunden: ghada@niwbh.org

Support:

Increasing Economic Independence:

Economic Abuse is the control of a person's money, finances and things that money can buy. In partnership with SEA, our programme helps people recognise the signs of economic abuse, supports women to create personalised safety plans and signposts to services and guidance around wellbeing, financial and debt advice.

Many women only realise this form of abuse later, as they work to rebuild their lives. These intimate, small-group workshops run for eight hours over two days and include guest speakers from local organisations and interpreters to enhance learning and support.

Cost of Living Sessions:

The Network has been running a Cost of Living Programme since October 2022. We work with specialist agencies to ensure women and their families receive the help and essential services they need. We started the project, without dedicated funding, in response to concerns regarding fuel prices and poverty.

Since then we've been supported by Brighton and Hove City Council, SGN and Sussex Community Foundation (Rampion Community Benefit Fund). Our monthly support sessions and outreach session are face-to-face with interpreters if needed. Our partners are: Energy Works (Citizens Advice Bureau) & Brighton & Hove City Council Welfare Rights Team.

Wellbeing:

Food of the World:

Cooking together at the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership Community Kitchen has been enormously popular. In each session, women from a particular country show us how to cook some of their favourite dishes. We join in with chopping, stirring, mixing, and then eating the delicious food we have made together. So far, we have had Syrian, Moroccan, Italian, Spanish, Thai, Yemeni, Indian, Kuwaiti, French and Ukranian evenings. We also hold “Bring a Dish” events twice a year where we all take and dish and share food.

Contact: Laila - laila.rashdan@niwbh.org or cookingevents@niwbh.org

Health Talks:

We also run Health Talks throughout the year based off our members needs. For example we have had experts come talk to us about Mental Health and Cancer Awareness.
Contact: Laila - laila.rashdan@niwbh.org

Singing & Dance:

The Ceyda Tanc Dance Company, have provided sessions, in which they have taught us some dance sequences. These sessions are once a month. Ken Wakia, recipient of the Voice Achievers Award and founder of the Nairobi Chamber Chorus, leads our ‘One Voice Choir’ which opened Refugee Week celebrations

Contact: Cathy- cathy.maxwell@niwbh.org

Guidelines for volunteering with the Network

If you would like to volunteer with us, please contact one of the steering committee.

We usually suggest joining in with some of our activities, especially at the library, getting to know some of the women and learning how we work. Participating will help you see where you might fit, what you enjoy and where your skills are most useful. We can then discuss what you would like to be part of and how you can contribute.

Check our calendar of events

We look for enthusiasm, warmth, empathy, and interest in other cultures. It is especially important to listen to our members, without judgement. Be careful not to probe for more information than members are willing to give. Confidentiality is really important.

If you are concerned about the welfare of any of our members, please talk to our caseworkers or one of our steering committee members.

Next Steps

Why not take the next step and contact one of us to find out about how you could contribute?

info@niwbh.org

Instagram

Facebook

Please do look at our website for further information: www.niwbh.org

Other important documents:
Constitution including Charitable Objectives, Code of Conduct and Policies.

