

COVID-19 briefing;

An increasing number of people have been diagnosed with Covid19. We are providing these notes, which contain important information, as guidance for Asylum Welcome and Refugee Resource clients as well as the wider Oxfordshire refugee community.



[Asylum Welcome](#) provides information, advice, support and advocacy through a range of holistic integrated services for asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants. The aim of these services is to enable our clients to live in dignity with hope for the future, rebuild their confidence and empower them to thrive.

[Refugee Resource's](#) provides therapeutic services for refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants to heal from their experiences of trauma and integrate into the community as well as specialist support to other agencies who work with our client group.

Both [Asylum Welcome](#) and [Refugee Resource](#) are committed to providing accurate, accessible and timely information; to providing for immediate practical needs, including food, shelter and medication. We are also offering advice and advocacy and, where possible, facilitating communication and contact with relevant agencies about cases.

The two organisations recognise that many clients may have contact with both of us. We are committed to working closely together in the best interests of our clients,

We are working hard to keep everyone safe

The UK is currently experiencing a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand how important it is to work safely, support each other and look after our own health and wellbeing. It is critical that clients, volunteers, staff and anyone who may come in contact with our organisation takes steps to keep everyone safe so that we do not contribute to the spread of the virus.

In this period many agencies have closed, are running very limited services or are not having face to face services. This has meant that responses, from the Home Office, local authorities and benefit agencies, to non-urgent matters have been much slower than expected, causing stress and further concerns.

[Asylum Welcome's](#) Adult and Family Service and Youth Service (Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday), Education, Employment and Europa Welcome (Monday and Thursday) are all fully open and available. These services are delivered partly remotely and partly in the office. We are no longer able to have drop-in sessions so any client who requires a face to face service in the office needs to call and make an appointment with the service they require.

[Refugee Resource's](#) services – Counselling and Psychotherapy, Mentoring, Women's Service and Advice and Advocacy support including Citizens Advice - are available remotely via email, video conference and telephone. In specific cases we are able to carry out a small number of appointments face to face in the office.

[Asylum Welcome's](#) aim is to see all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, people who are isolated and lonely, have health conditions, are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and people in need of hardship support. We can also see clients who have been subject to crime and help people who have deadlines for submitting immigration applications.

COVID-19 has created confusion, uncertainty and barriers to accessing correct information, support and essential services. The most vulnerable, for instance, people who have been subjected to the crimes of domestic abuse or violence or to trafficking, have had difficulty accessing services from agencies usually providing support and information.

Asylum Welcome's Adult and Family Service can now provide expertise and advice on all these matters so please let us know if you require this service, or if you know of someone who does. If you are a **Refugee Resource** client, please talk to your support worker.

If you are an asylum seeker, refugee or a vulnerable migrant in need of advice and support please call us on working days between 9:30 and 4:30.

COVID-19 is still at large and causing trouble and risk

Unfortunately, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people infected by the virus in Oxford. Further restrictions have been put in place in order to control the spread of the virus. We are all required to comply fully with these in order to remain safe at home, in the street, in the workplace and in schools and colleges.

If you need to attend **Asylum Welcome** or **Refugee Resource** please call and talk to us. Please tell us if:

- You or anyone in your household are infected with COVID-19
- If you have flu, high temperature, a cough or have lost your sense of smell
- If you have any other illness or anxieties that we need to know before your visit

If you are offered a face to face appointment:

- Always wear a mask
- Use the hand sanitiser when you come in
- Keep your distance - stay a metre away from other people
- We are sorry there is no access to computers

At present there are two kinds of appointment at **Asylum Welcome** and **Refugee Resource**:

- In the centre with an advisor or counsellor
- Appointments with an advisor or counsellor by phone, video or email

To make either of these appointments:

First ring the Centre, you will decide, with the person you speak to, if you need an appointment in the centre or if a phone appointment would be better. If you have an appointment in the **Asylum Welcome** or **Refugee Resource** offices please arrive on time/ and leave after the appointment.

Also, let us know if you are bringing anyone else with you - family or an interpreter. We need to know exactly how many people will come with you because there is limited space in the centres.

To contact **Asylum Welcome** ring 01865 722082 or email advice@asylum-welcome.org

To contact **Refugee Resource** ring 01865 403280 or email info@refugeeresource.org