



# **UN Human Rights Day 2024: Women's Empowerment Project**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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# Agenda



## **1) Background:**

- Refugee Council in Herts
- Our Work in Herts
- Refugee Council on Women's Empowerment
- Afghan Women

## **2) Women's Empowerment Index & Project:**

- Integration Stars
- Women's Empowerment Index
- Women's Empowerment Project
- WEP: ESOL
- WEP: Employment
- WEP: Empowerment

## **3) Progress, Challenges & Priorities:**

- WEP: Progress
- WEP: Challenges
- WEP: Priorities

# Background

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# Background: Refugee Council in Herts



## Refugee Council

- Opened In 1951
- We started working in Hertfordshire in 2016

## Schemes we have worked on:

- VPRS (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme)
- VCRS (Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme)
- UKRS (UK Resettlement Scheme)
- ARAP (Afghan Resettlement and Assistance Policy)
- ACRS (Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme)



# Background: Our Work in Herts



Our work in Hertfordshire:

- Helped hundreds of Refugees into Jobs through the EU WW4RI Fund
- Took clients to Glastonbury Festival in 2024
- Took clients to Arsenal Football Club & Watford Football Club in 2024



# Background: Refugee Council on Women's Empowerment



## Education:

- Guides on Maternity Care & Support
- Missed Out Campaign

## Employment:

- Nextgen Programme

## Empowerment:

- Mental Health Support for Refugee Women



# Background: Afghan Women



- When the Taliban took over in 2021, Women's Rights went back decades overnight.

In 2024, Afghan women cannot:

- Access education beyond sixth grade
- Work for NGOs
- Speak in public
- Travel more than 72km alone
- Work or attend a beauty salon



# **Women's Empowerment Index & Project**

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# Integration Star

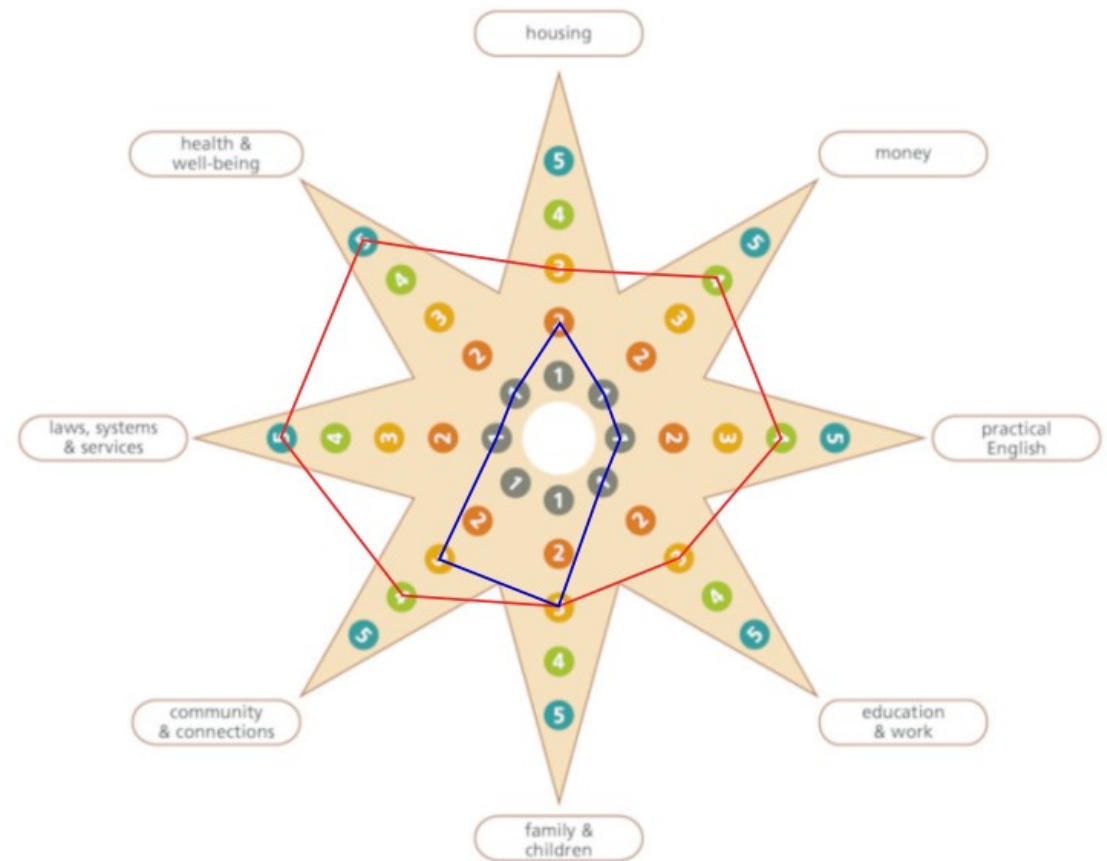


An Integration Star is a tool to measure the integration of refugees into their new lives.

It covers eight areas of life.

It is built on a five-stage journey of change:

1. Urgent Needs
2. Support with Urgent Needs
3. Taking Steps Yourself
4. Finding Your Way
5. Self-reliant



# Women's Empowerment Index



## 8 Categories:

Safeguarding, Phone Number, Email, Bank Account, Education Level, ESOL, Community & Pregnant, Post-Partum or Toddlers?

Working on it

No

Yes

Primary Education

No Education

Secondary & Higher ...

2 or more Red: Immediate Action needed

4 or more Orange: Immediate Action Needed

Less than 2 Red: Action needed

Less than 4 Orange: Action needed

# WEP: ESOL & Education



## Women's ESOL

Previous options for ESOL:

- College (Many barriers)
- At-home tutoring (No one to care for the children, lack of funding)

What We Have Designed:

- A specific ESOL Coordinator
- Person-centered classes and groups

# WEP: Employment



## Women's Employment

- Employment-focus Project Worker
- Partnered with local organisations and charities to provide:

Volunteering Opportunities

Supplemental ESOL

Interview Practise

# WEP: Empowerment



## Women's Groups

Over the course of 2024, we established 5 different Women's Groups across Hertfordshire, with each serving a different purpose.

Watford Women's Coffee Mornings:

- Visits from local female PCSO

Stevenage Women's Group:

- Social drop-ins for women

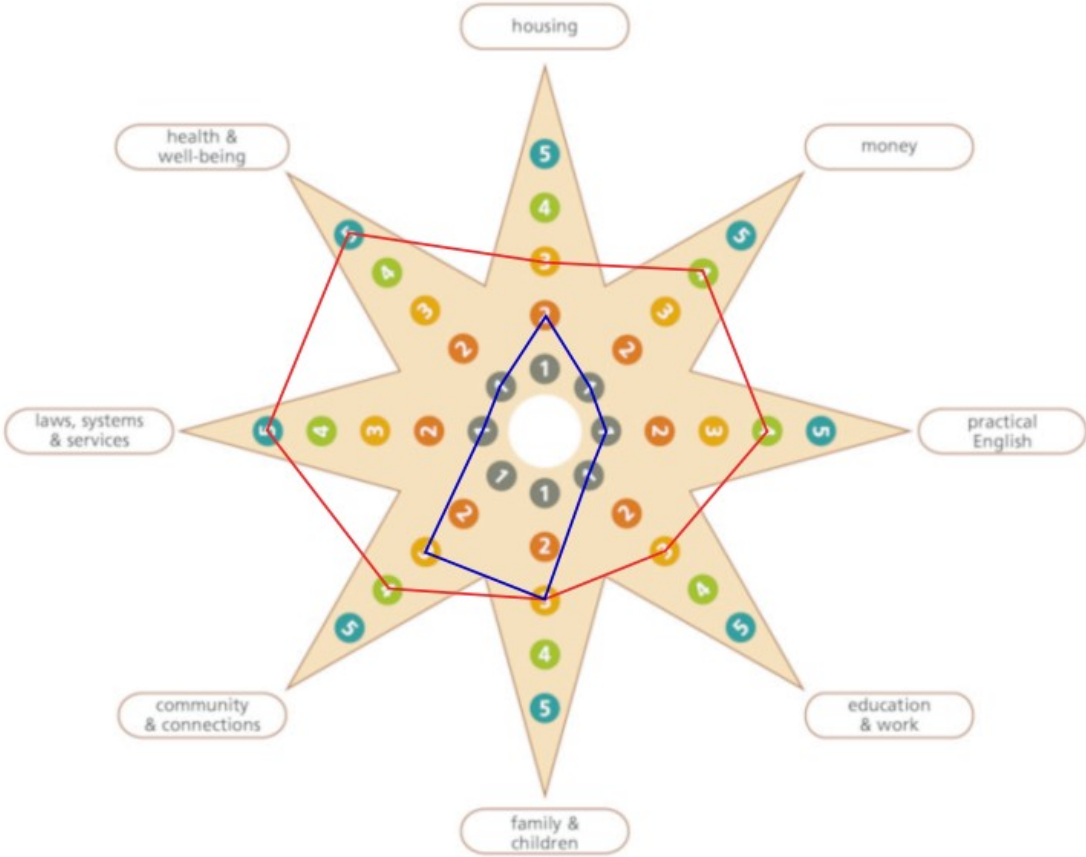
Hertsmere Women's Groups:

- Briefings on Rights & Responsibilities

East Herts Women's Group:

- Piloted in November 2024

# Integration Star



# **Progress, challenges and priorities**

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# WEP: Progress



***"Today, XXX had gone to the GP by herself to book an appointment for her daughter. She was asked if she required an interpreter, she declined the offer and attended the appointment without the need for an interpreter. Her English has improved rapidly and is in high confidence, she believes that our ESOL lessons are very useful and the tutor's teaching style and content is up to the point."***

***"The women are very happy with the ESOL classes. They enjoy learning English and socialising with each other. Every class, I see many smiley faces and occasional jokes going around. Additionally, I cannot think of anyone else who is more energetic or enthusiastic about teaching this group than the tutor. She is an excellent teacher. The RC team is also very supportive; it feels like we are a big family now."***



# WEP: Challenges



## ESOL & Education:

- Funding
- Childcare in colleges
- Lack of provision for 18-year-olds
- Different entry requirements
- Many courses do not have women studying
- Courses do not cater for disabilities

## Employment:

- Accessing women
- Anti-refugee sentiment

## Empowerment:

- Accessing women
- Self-confidence
- Mental health

# WEP: Priorities



## ESOL:

- Catering for the most vulnerable clients

## Employment:

- Ensuring women have access to tools & experience to help further employment opportunities

## Empowerment:

- Ensuring women have the tools to navigate their life independently

**2025-2026**

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