



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



New Horizon

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CHAIR'S REMARKS

It is with great delight I present the annual general report for New Horizon Sunderland and feel privileged to be part of it. New Horizon has been providing a wide range of community services and activities to residents for over -years and particularly plays a very important role by providing services in the life of people from disadvantaged backgrounds. New Horizon Sunderland's work is inspiring, exciting and greatly needed. Their approach is fully rooted in the conviction that every person matters, is to be valued and treated with dignity.

I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who makes this important work possible. New Horizon is very grateful for the support of a dedicated team of hard-working, skilled and compassionate staff, volunteers, hosts, landlords, funders and many other partners and supporters. The following is a flavour of some of our key developments in the last year. As we all may be aware, New Horizon was set up in direct response to the needs of a section of black and minority ethnic community living in Sunderland in 2008 precisely. We make boast to mention that from then to this day, we have assisted

thousands of members, many of which are Black Africans from diverse nationalities, who have come to the city, mostly as refugees and asylum seekers within the last 5 to 15 years. Many of which have no relatives or friends to help or support them in any form and often have little knowledge of the English language.

This is and has continued to be a major barrier to their ability to access the services they need: Physical and health wellbeing, housing, immigration, education, universal credit, jobs etc to enable them settle into a new life here in Sunderland.

New Horizon Sunderland has therefore been to all her service users, a life-saving machine, not only addressing the immediate needs of these vulnerable persons but also supporting them to integrate and settle in Sunderland in the longer term, building positive lives and aiding them to contribute to the city in which they now live.

Rachidy Bikaya
Chair - New Horizon Sunderland

WELCOME TO

NEW HORIZON SUNDERLAND

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR:

- Optimum provision of quality activities and services for those most in need in the local community in a challenging economic and funding climate.
- Develop our community activities programme to improve health and wellbeing and life expectancy outcomes.
- Delivered over 1,500 individual support.
- Covid related food parcels - 755
- Immigration support - 273
- Welfare benefits and Universal Credit - 168
- Housing support - 126
- Mental health support - 69
- Employment support - 113
- General information & advice - 79

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

- Adapt our centre, activities and services to be as COVID-19 secure as possible and to best support and meet the needs of our local community.
- Monthly reviews of COVID-19 programme, risk assessments and action plan.
- Annual centre sustainability and fundraising strategy review to enable future provision of quality services and activities that reflect the diversity and meet the needs of the community.
- Sustain and develop activities and outreach services to improve outcomes for service users.
- Register New Horizon as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation within 26 weeks.
- Increase New Horizon capacity with qualified staff in order to deal with the unstoppable increased demand of our services which is continuing to outweigh our current capacity due to COVID-19 negative impact.
- Focus more support on our young Black people in order to either further their education or prepare those who wish to choose the employment route instead to be ready.
- Expand our African Women's group to provide much needed support due to Covid-19.

NEW HORIZON PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

DROP-IN

Building meaningful connections between people and organisations, reducing the stigma around loneliness and tailoring approaches to individuals and groups are all part of the Drop-in ethos. In

addition, it is hoped that the Drop-ins engender a sense of trust and a feeling of belonging in the local area which is equally important to the wellbeing and happiness of service users.

WELFARE SUPPORT SERVICE

New Horizon provides intensive support for welfare benefits applications for the vulnerable and those most in need. Individuals can access this service by making an appointment with a designated welfare support worker and the service is available to all, we can support with;

- Universal Credit
- Housing benefits
- Council tax support
- Employment support allowance
- Child benefit
- Pensions
- Carers and Disability allowance
- Job seekers allowance
- Benefits for families

Over the previous 12 months over 1000 individuals of 47 different nationalities benefited from our services when we provided one to one support services to them on matters ranging from health, housing, immigration and employment. We are delighted to report that on immigration 80% of people we assisted were financially granted leave to remain in the UK by the UK Border Agency.



INFORMATION ADVICE & GUIDANCE

New Horizon provide information, advice and guidance available across a range of areas from benefits advice to combating health issues.

Our team of experts is always happy to give guidance on the following;

- Benefit advice
- Support with benefit application, appeals and tribunals
- Debt advice
- Housing application
- Support with budgeting
- Help preparing for universal credit
- Support to keep your home and make the most of your money
- Referrals to other organisations
- Immigration support



LIVING PRIDE

Vital transitional support for smooth integration of refugees and asylum seekers into communities whilst their dignity is maintained.

We offer a range of services tailored specifically to meet identified need:

- Information, advice and guidance.
- Fortnightly food parcels, fresh vegetables, hygiene packs, sanitary packs to anybody in hardship.
- Integration support bundle (all aspects of welfare support and other statutory support to facilitate smooth integration of new arrived member of BME community into community life).



28 DAYS' NOTICE PROJECT



The last two decades the Home Office has dispersed over 10,000 asylum seekers in Tyne and Wear (North East of England). Section 95 of the 1999 Act enables the provision of support to asylum-seekers or dependants of asylum-seekers who appear to the Secretary of State to be destitute or be likely to become destitute within 14 days. An asylum seeker is defined as a person who has made a claim for asylum which has been recorded by the Secretary of State, but which has not been determined yet.

It has been a great initiative trying to create a multicultural society, promoting social inclusion however, lack of practical support when asylum seekers have been granted leave to remain is the reason why most of them would move to Manchester, Birmingham, and London. This is the reason behind the 28 days transition project, it is a support package (Universal Credit claim, housing application, opening bank account) enabling asylum seekers who have been granted leave to remain to successfully start their integration journey on the right path, from living as asylum seekers in Home Office accommodation, to living independently in alternative accommodation and integrating successfully into local communities.



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



To enable New Horizon to continue provide a wide range of service we recruit a team of volunteers with a diverse range of talent, skills, experiences and knowledge that can help the centre help support the local communities needs on a daily basis.

If you are interested in volunteering with NEW HORIZON and believe you have the potential to cover a specific role which may be advertised, then please contact the centre for an application form or email us for further information – Alternatively you can always drop into our facility and enquire for

any voluntary position which may be available that may interest you.

Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre is seeking to develop a volunteer hub where individuals can search for and apply for volunteer opportunities. Voluntary organisations can publicise volunteering opportunities via the hub, we will then promote your roles to people and organisations who are actively looking for volunteers to fit the role.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

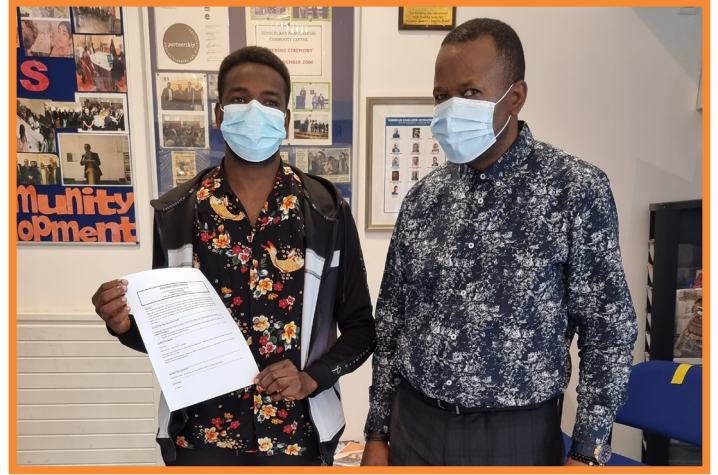
CV writing - We're a team of trained professional CV writers, carefully selected for our CV writing expertise and our ability to understand your skills, experience and achievements, pen them to paper in a professional manner and align them with your career aspirations. We take the time to consult with you personally, research your history, understand your goals, then present it in a professionally written CV encompassing a clean, modern design. If you require our CV writing service then contact the us and we will arrange our professional team to work with you and complete your CV to a high standard.

Preparing for Interview -New Horizon has a team who specialises in helping individuals prepare for interview. A job interview can be a daunting experience whether on the phone, online or face to face. No matter how confident you are nerves can get the better of anyone once they're in a interview scenario but we are here to make you feel comfortable and prepare you to climb up your employment ladder.

We can carry out a session with our individual clients before they attend their interview and help them understand and practice some interview questions. Our professional team will give advice and tips on

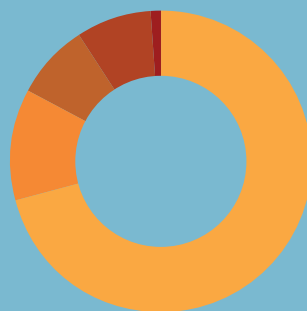
a well prepared successful interview no matter how you take them whether remotely or face to face

Job search - Our team of trained professional is available to help you give ideas and information and kick start your job search. We can discuss your interests and aspirations and help you up on your career ladder. We will find a match that's a great fit for you, and they will stick with you through the whole process. Our follow through and follow up are fantastic, very professional and organised.



COVID CHAMPION PROJECT

New Horizon has played a pivotal role in the successful delivery of the COVID Champions Project across the City of Sunderland. The project was so successful it has been extended until March 2022. The project was designed to ensure key messages relating to COVID safety and vaccinations reached the BAME population in the City, with New Horizon concentrating on the African community. In 6 months the project worked with 611 individuals (57% Male / 43% Female) and assisted 95 individuals take-up the COVID vaccine.



Ethnicity Breakdown

Black British - African	71%
Black British - Caribbean	12%
Black British - Other	8%
Arab	8%
Black - Mixed	1%

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

The ESOL program is another fantastic partnership work we are delivering with the Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre, the program offers bespoke ESOL tuition for learners at beginner level second language proficiency, running continuously throughout the year. The program runs classes for the audience of a ladies-only ESOL class once a week, and a mixed-gender ESOL class once a week, each lesson consists of two-hour tuition on a regular, weekly basis.

The program's ethos concerns developing the students' second language proficiency from their current level assessed to be between pre-A1- A2 beginner level, intermediate B1 - B2, and then advanced C1-C2 levels. These advancements enable the learner's functional capacity to adapt and progress not only socially but also on an academic and professional basis. Allowing the students to feel what is too many, a newfound sense of confidence, security, self-sufficiency, and fulfilment, through the verbal, written, reading and listening skills vital to progress their lives.

Sessions also include creative learning where individuals find ways they can express

themselves through creativity. Gaining an ESOL qualification demonstrates that you have good speaking, writing, listening and reading skills in English. Not only will it help improve your social interactions and everyday life - it's also a great way to show employers your language skills and add to your CV.

Two sessions of ESOL class running weekly:

Thursday: 1.00pm - 3.00pm - Mixed male and female class

Friday: 11.00am - 1.00pm - Female only class



HEALTH & WELLBEING

New Horizon were successful in securing funding through the COVID-19 Health & Wellbeing Support Fund (Addressing Health Inequalities). The aim of the project is to address health inequalities within the BAME community of Sunderland and provide a range of physical activities that will in turn improve both the physical and mental health of participants.

As part of the project New Horizon deliver weekly structured health & fitness sessions for both adults and children as well as ad-hoc cycling sessions for adults.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The black history month celebration is an annual event celebrated by Africans in diaspora. It is an event that remembers important people and events in the history of Africa and their contribution. This year's celebration was unique and quiet interesting, an occasion everyone within the community looked forward to because the covid-19 pandemic made it impossible for it to be celebrated in 2020, this resulted in a massive turn out and gave everyone the opportunity to hear and learn from black men and women who are making significant contributions and achievements in the society.

The event is not just for discussions about racism and slavery but also about black achievements. It showcased African traditional and cultural heritage, and everyone had the opportunity to share and celebrate the impact of black heritage and culture.

The event enabled everyone including adults and children to gain understanding of black histories, as we believe for us to understand where we are, we must understand our past and how we got here.

With the regional lockdown brought about by Covid-19 pandemic with resultant effect on the mental health and well-being of individuals in the community, this was an opportunity to loosen up with lots of fun filled activities such as music, dancing, art and craft including varieties of African delicacies.





SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Our summer activities project in partnership with SBIC supported by Wear Here 4 Summer, was aimed at improving the lives and experiences for BAME children, young people and their families, giving them an opportunity to create relationships, bond as well as have fun. It is at the core of our value to ensure that BAME children and their families get the support and access services that they need. While the summer activities project was designed to improve the social skills of BAME children, it equally created an opportunity for parents to discuss with the leaders at SBIC and New Horizon about difficulties and barriers they face when it comes to the wellbeing of their children.

Activities included cake decoration, physical exercise, craft workshops, cooking and drumming classes, cinema experience and a trip to light water valley. We had lots of feedback from the children and their parents saying that they enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to more fun activities next year summer.





FUTURE LEADERS ACADEMY PROJECT

The BAME future leaders' academy is a project designed to develop leaders from the BAME communities. The aim was to create equality in all walks of life for BAME individuals and their communities. Through our individual projects and also in partnership with SBIC we are aware that the BAME Refugee and Asylum Seekers live in the most disadvantaged areas, for instance 85% of the users of SBIC lived within the worst 10% areas of the city with the white UK (7.5%) and the rest being BAME Refugee or Asylum seekers (92.5%).

This project was created in response to the social, economic and health inequalities which were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The priorities of this project was to:

- Support and develop BAME leadership at all levels of an organization.
- Create new opportunities for BAME leaders and BAME led organizations to be central to any COVID-19 recovery.
- This project has enabled the BAME future leaders to gain access to services and entitlements become more informed about community organizing, finding solution to problems and taking action.



AFRICAN CULTURAL EVENING

With Covid-19 impacting greatly of the mental health of the BAME community and various studies which suggests that there is an increase in the mental health. The aim of this project was to show a rich cultural diversity of the African continent and an inclusion among the African Refugee and Asylum seekers among the BAME community. The project was created in response to the results of a survey conducted by our partner SBIC which suggests lack of social, peer and professional network as a potential barrier perceived by the

BAME community to be properly integrated into the community. According to the survey conducted by SBIC, the population and demographic of the African people are diverse and not having a representation of their origin posses some mental health issues among those who feel disconnected from their countries.

The event had colourful display of African culture and heritage in spectacular performances including traditional dance, poetry and music. People from various background but identified as black British or black African were there to connect, enjoy food from across the continent, make friends and experience different cultures. The aim of the event was to set a positive expectation for more vibrant activities, improve mental health and subsequent cultural events planned in the year ahead.

NETWORK

We believe that networking is key to New Horizon's success. Meeting and working with other organisations we can learn where there are sources of support and services, and we can also raise awareness about the needs of our community and feed into how services are planned and delivered, to take account of everyone's needs.

Networks - New Horizon is currently chairing the Sunderland Black Minority Ethnic Network, The SBMEN gives us a platform for BAME groups to operate in partnership level, we all complement each others to provide best services for our BAME communities of Sunderland. We are part of the

executive board member of Voluntary Community Action Sunderland (VCAS) and member of the East VCS. We have built strong relationships with officers from the local authorities and other appropriate organisations, such as Jessica May (Manager of Sunderland partnership) Helen Peverley, Area Arrangements Strategic Manager at Sunderland City Council, Jackie Nixon, Community Public Health Practitioner, Brenda Harvey, local manager Mears (contract with Home Office, housing provider for asylum seekers), the Medical Foundation, British Red Cross, Police, NHS and many more.



PARTNERSHIP WORK

We have been working in partnership with The Bangladesh International Centre on numerous projects such as Healthy Steps, ESOL classes, Summer Activities, BAME Future Leaders to name some of them. This partnership has been extremely

beneficial to the African community of Sunderland. The Centre has opened its doors and welcomed the African community of Sunderland unconditional, we always use the Centre for celebrations, events, and meetings avenues.



TESTIMONIALS

UNIVERSAL CREDIT SUPPORT

“ In July after we were granted refugees status in Stockton on Tees, we moved to Sunderland and connected quickly with New Horizon, they were quick to support my family with claiming universal credit and assisted with helping my three children's school places, registered my family with GP practice. I am very grateful of their immense support without which we wouldn't settled in.

- *Zika, Refugee*

SPORT SESSIONS

“ Going to the gym is expensive for me and I was glad that there are sessions held at the centre. I am even allowed to take the bicycle out and ride for about 2 hrs which has helped me a lot with my mental issues as well as physical benefit.

- *Rob, Volunteer*

“ As an asylum seeker, I don't have access to many friends and going to the centre has helped a lot with my social life. I joined the exercise group to help my mind feel better and improve my social life which is helping my integration into Sunderland. - *Darian, Asylum seeker*

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

“ I am a full-time mom of five children and sometimes it can be difficult. I connected with a friend who goes to the wellbeing sessions organised by New Horizon. I joined the mental health champion training and learned about mindfulness and meditation. My mental health has really improved since I started going out. I look forward to going out there more often. - *Stacy, Volunteer*

EMPLOYMENT

“ New Horizon has helped me a lot with CV writing, interview preparation and even job search. With counselling from staff, I was able to secure a role in social care. - *Zainab, Refugee*

HOUSING SUPPORT

“ I became homeless with my 2 children for almost a month and a friend of mine referred me to New Horizon, the next day which was on Thursday I attended their Welfare Support Drop-In session, their staff helped me to speak with the city council so that my children can have a comfortable home to sleep in. The experience was reassuring as I saw that they can help with communication as I can't speak English well and the same day I was placed in the B&B within the next 3 weeks New Horizon helped me to get a Gentoo house and dealt with all my Universal Credit and Child Benefit entitlement. - *Mrs Port, Refugee*

“ It is so amazing the kind of support I receive each time I come to new horizon for help. Recently, I was granted asylum and needed help in applying for universal credit, opening bank account, email and lots more as I didn't know how to do these, the volunteers where on top of my case until everything was sorted.

- *Fakai, Refugee*

“ I have lived in a very uncomfortable apartment with my husband and 6 children, everyday life feels miserable as I can't afford a good place to live but now my story has changed, I have a house, I have hope, and I'm happy again all thanks to the staff of new horizon who left no stone unturned in ensuring this comes to me. - *Mrs Kapia, Refugee*

“ I am so excited, I got a job after lots of rejection emails, this was so depressing, I was feeling low most times due to lack of job. I dropped in new horizon who restructured my CV and prepared me for interview and now my confidence is back.

- *Zelka, Refugee*

“ I thought I would never be happy again, I lost my right to work, no food, no money, despite having all the necessary qualifications. Interestingly, a friend introduced me to new horizon who selflessly guided me on the right steps to take to secure my right to work, provided food support, clothing, books, toys for my toddler. The social support I receive whenever I pop in is top-notch.

- *Precious, Volunteer.*

THANK YOU

We are grateful to the wide range of partners, stakeholders and service providers.



FINANCE

This year's report reflects our achievements whilst the VCS is competing for the funding more than ever and we have all been affected by the pandemic, the demand of our services continues to increase with the uncertainties on the horizon from the new COVID-19 variant Omicron will aim to source funding to meet the expected additional demand on our services. In the meantime, we will continue to explore all other funding avenues open to us including income generation.

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