

The Regional Refugee Forum North East has commissioned MVDA to give community groups and activities led by refugees and asylum seekers the support provided by our Community Action Programme (CAP) alongside their expert Community Development Work offer.

If you know any refugees or asylum seekers who have an idea to support their community and would like help to turn that idea into practical action, you can now put them in contact with John Atkinson at MVDA.

The support is free and without any other expectations or agendas — just the help RCO's and RAS community mobilisers want, when they want it and where they



Hello. My name is John Atkinson. I have been supporting people across Northeast England to turn ideas into action for over 30 years.

I am an experienced community development worker who help with many things such as constitutions, CIC and Charity registrations, policy development and funding.

Whatever will help you to get your group started or enable you to take the next step, just ask me: phone 07852 269486 or email john.atkinson@mvdauk.org.uk

John will come to see someone wherever they prefer across the region, from Northumberland to Redcar

Or he can talk on the phone or zoom
1 to 1 and Group Learning too



People are also welcome to contact us at
info@refugeevoices.org.uk

www.refugeevoices.org.uk

info@refugeevoices.org.uk

[RRF Youtube channel](#)

[RRF Facebook](#)

The Regional Refugee Forum North East is an independent membership organisation created by and for RCOs that:

- empowers refugees and asylum seekers to take action to support their communities.
- uses its Collective Voice to influence change



The Millfield House Foundation

Registered office: Design Works, William Street, Felling, Gateshead,
Tyne & Wear NE10 0JP. Registered Charity Number 1109815



Support available to RCOs and RAS community mobilisers includes:

- Choosing the right constitution
- Developing activities e.g.: finding a venue
- Creating budgets and keeping financial records. Opening a bank account
- Developing a longer-term vision and strategy for growing an organisation
- Applying for funding
- Monitoring and evaluating
- Developing Governance and support for Trustees
- Developing policies e.g.: safeguarding
- Registering with the charity commission
- Increasing advocacy skills
- Using evidence and voice to get better support for one's community
- Building networks and relations with local services and support
- Using the Welcome to the UK guides to help one's community adapt to UK systems, laws and expectations
- Visiting another RCO to learn from their journey and explore mutual support
- Visiting another organisation to learn from their experience
- Anything someone needs help with to get them started

Why MVDA?

<https://mvda.info/our-work>

Our commitment

At our AGM 2022 we promised to ensure access to support that had been provided by our [Community Action Programme \(CAP\)](#) which completed in 2023. Our new partnership with MVDA delivers on that commitment.

The support on offer

In June 2023 we surveyed RRF members asking them: *What type of support do you most want? How do you want it delivered to you?* MVDA will provide the support identified and in the way preferred, focused on the agenda of the RCO or RAS community mobiliser.

What our research told us

Members helped identify MVDA as the best partner to provide this support.

We asked members the question: *What works in empowering RAS to turn their ideas to support their communities into action?* Their responses led us to MVDA.

The RRF uses its Collective Voice to help mainstream support and services achieve equal outcomes for RAS, so we want our research findings to influence best practice community development work support for RCOs across the North East. MVDA are keen to share learning from this partnership to promote a conversation about what works for RAS-led community action across the region.

For more details see

www.refugeevoices.org.uk/index.php/turning-ideas-into-action/

Peer support plays a unique and important role in promoting integration of refugees and asylum seekers. It also promotes resilience, self-reliance and leadership amongst the region's RAS community and helps build the Voice of the community which is so important for ensuring evidence based policy and practice.

The Home Office recognises the importance of *"access of refugees and migrants to emotional and practical support from one's own community when needed"* and the *'adequate capacity of refugee community organisations'* in building social connections for integration. (Theory of Change for Achieving Integration. Home Office 2019)

Many refugees and asylum seekers want to take the lead in bringing change to their communities. They have reach into their communities, insight into the particular challenges they face, and ideas for what would solve them. They want to be active agents in this change. With this support from MVDA they can become mobilisers, activists and advocates for their community.

RAS-led community action helps build social bonds within communities and social bridges with others. Refugee-led community groups bring together people with who share lived experience of fleeing their countries and face the challenge of rebuilding lives in the UK, who share a language, culture, ethnicity, nationality or perhaps gender or shared locality. Shared experience and co-community help RAS recover from the impact of trauma and stress, avoid social isolation, and understand and adapt to new systems, laws, social norms and expectations. These groups create links for their communities to services, support and opportunities and they advocate for their community and build networks of influence and leverage.

By helping would be community mobilisers access the support they need to turn their ideas into action, organisations can help empower the RAS community to build resilience, self-reliance and leadership.

See examples RAS-led support across the North East region via our website's [Members Page](https://www.refugeevoices.org.uk/index.php/default-user-group/) at <https://www.refugeevoices.org.uk/index.php/default-user-group/>



Key drivers of refugee-led community support gather at the Regional Refugee Forum North East AGM 2022