



Maryhill Integration Network

Maryhill Integration Network (MIN) is a grassroots community organisation established to bring together people in the asylum process, refugees, migrants and members of the wider community.

Since 2001, MIN has been developing projects which support positive social change, by investing in communities and providing a welcoming space with opportunities for collaboration and connection.

Themes and Goals

Human Rights

1. 'Imaging Alternatives' - developing a space which provides alternatives to hostile immigration policies

Wellbeing

2. 'Community as Resilience' - supporting healing and recovery from trauma in a safe and supportive environment

Arts and Culture

3. 'Creating Hope' - providing meaningful long-term opportunities for everyone to participate as part of a thriving and welcoming community



What we offer

Each week:

- 7 social groups
- 12 learning opportunities
- 2 advice surgeries
- 1 counselling service

Plus community events and outreach partnership projects.



How we work

MIN follows the principles of Community Development which asserts that all people should have access to “health, wellbeing, justice and opportunity”.

Based on the values of:

- Human rights
- Social justice
- Equality
- Respect for diversity

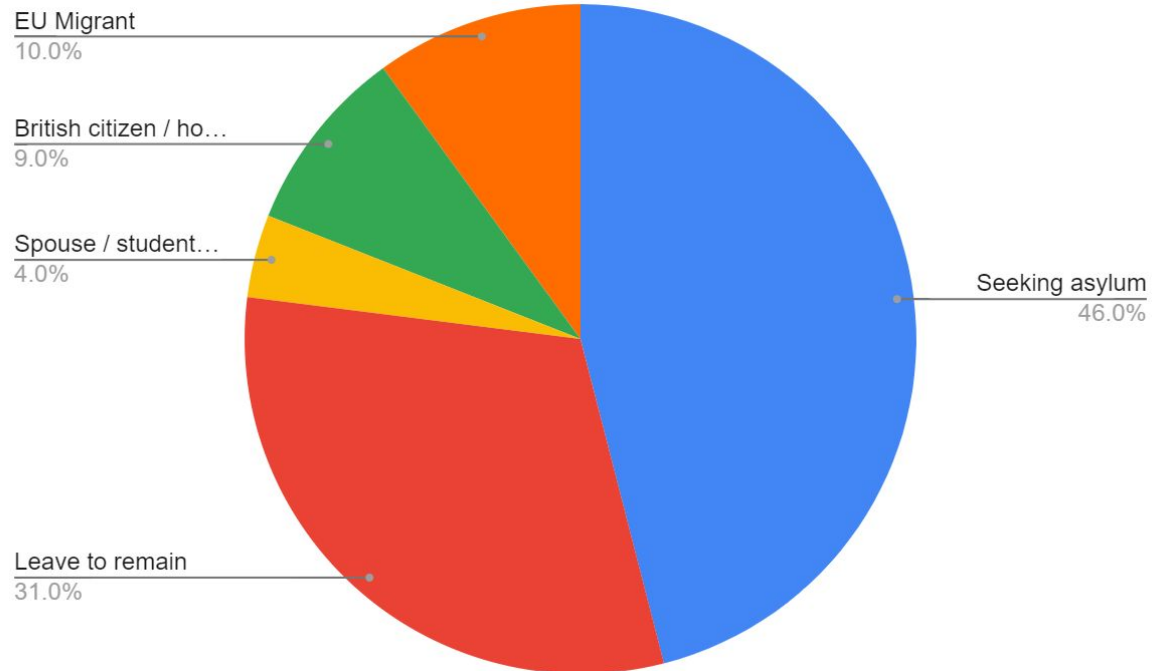


“Every city, every country, everywhere needs an organisation like MIN so that people can start a new life in the best possible way”

Participants

MIN works directly with around **550** people per year

Last year we recorded **46** different nationalities attending our groups and events.



Seeking asylum in the UK

Insecure accommodation: people seeking asylum are placed in temporary accommodation (managed by private companies), including shared houses, flats and hotels.

Poverty: weekly asylum support allowance is just under £50 (or £?? if in a hotel) which is below the poverty line, making it difficult to cover basic needs like food, clothing, toiletries and transportation. People in the asylum process are also banned from working.

Social barriers: many people in the asylum process face isolation and struggle to integrate due to language barriers, culture shock and also experiences of racism and discrimination.



Considerations when developing projects

They should be:

- Trauma-informed
- Strengths-based
- Co-produced
- Inclusive and accessible



Joyous Choir

Since 2013, MIN's Joyous Choir has used singing to support social inclusion, and improve wellbeing, in a welcoming and creative space. The choir welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds including women who are seeking asylum and refuge in Glasgow, as well as those born and raised in the city.



The group shares songs from different cultures, and often sing about themes such as friendship protest, sisterhood, dreams, freedom and hope.

Project Outcomes

1. Reduced isolation and loneliness

- increased **social connections**
- (i.e. more friendships)
- improved **social bonding**
- (i.e. deeper friendships and connections, esp across language and cultural differences)
- enhanced opportunities for **social interaction** (for e.g. more chances to leave the home)



Project Outcomes



2. Reducing the harm resulting from the effects of social isolation and loneliness

- reduced stress
(i.e. more regulated breathing as result of singing)
- improved immune function
(due to feeling more calm / less stressed)
- improved mental health
(for e.g. less reliance on prescription medication for depression and anxiety)

<https://www.singingforhealthnetwork.co.uk/research-overview>

Feedback

“When I start singing, I can forget everything, and I see something beautiful.

I can forget my problems and live in the moment.

I can forgive myself for everything in the past.

I feel that I'm really living. I feel that I'm alive.”



Joyous choir film



**JOYOUS
CHOIR**

Connect

@maryhill_in

www.maryhillintegration.org.uk

<https://linktr.ee/maryhillintegrationnetwork>

