

Action Asylum mentorship programme

The IMIX mentorship pilot, which was initiated by the team's North East Comms Co-ordinator in March 2023 in response to requests from City of Sanctuary Sheffield and the West End Refugee Service in Newcastle, focused on communications professionals in these organisations.

Since 2021, IMIX has also worked closely with Action Asylum, a volunteering initiative embedded in regional charities, including helping Action Asylum with local and national press, social media strategies, and interview practice. IMIX also supported a refugee journalist volunteering with Action Asylum to produce, film and edit multiple social media videos featuring the stories of refugees as part of the city's Our Liverpool campaign.

In August 2023, IMIX expanded the pilot to include other members of the IMIX team mentoring Action Asylum staff in Liverpool, Leeds, Stockton, Cardiff, Portsmouth and Wakefield.

Since then, IMIX's team have supported mentees to speak to create branding guidelines, speak to the *Guardian* and appear on BBC Radio 4's Open Country programme, which in turn has led to Action Asylum receiving multiple donations and volunteering offers.

Testimony from Emma Leaper, National Co-ordinator of Action Asylum:

This mentorship program was exactly what was needed at Action Asylum. Most of our Project Lead staff have come from backgrounds in Social Work and Community work, so have many relevant skills for delivering this project, but most of us were lacking those media skills. The National project's third aim is to 'Improve public perception of people seeking asylum' so having the confidence and skill to be able to engage local media, and tell those positive volunteering stories, is essential for us to deliver on that aim.

Thanks to IMIX and the mentoring program, our Project Leads have been given that confidence and expert support. The team have reported to me how well the sessions have been going, with professional, and well-matched mentors, in each of our six project delivery areas. The program has already been very effective.