



Tales from the TSI Network

Supporting Volunteering For All

All across Scotland

supporting refugee integration – Volunteer Dundee



Rehomed to Dundee, members of the Syrian refugee community are trying to integrate into the city's communities, learning a new language and, crucial to their future, looking to get into employment to support their families. Volunteer Dundee is working closely with them to help their integration through volunteering.

Major challenges are the language barriers; finding suitable volunteer places; and ensuring full backing is available for VIOs who have limited capacity to offer the added support needed. On top of this, many refugees want paid employment and don't understand how volunteering can help. This is not something that they have experience of in their own country, so trying to explain volunteering is itself challenging. Some of the refugees are highly skilled, but their qualifications are non transferrable as they are not recognised in this country and they have to retrain.

How has Volunteer Dundee helped?

Volunteer Dundee has worked with interpreters to help the refugees understand volunteering as an option for them. Engagement events were set up with Dundee City Council plus one to one meetings with individual refugees. This helped identify placements where they could get help to volunteer and supportive VIOs - alleviating their fears as they settle in. Places like the recycling centre were also identified where they can put practical skills and experience to good use as volunteers while they are (currently) unable able to use them for paid employment. Five refugees have been supported to volunteer whilst they look for retraining that will lead to employment. Without Volunteer Dundee the VIOs - including Sense Scotland, the Reuse Centre and British Heart Foundation charity shop - are unlikely to have considered volunteers from the Syrian community.

Volunteer Dundee
volunteerdundee.org.uk

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Volunteer's Week
volunteersweek.org



Voluntary Action Scotland is the national network of Third Sector Interfaces
www.vascotland.org