

**b.friend**



“**b.friend** came into being out of a conviction that there was a human solution to loneliness that is actually quite straightforward. All that is required is time, a willingness to consistently show up, listen well and demonstrate compassion...”

*Sam Sayer*

“*Love your neighbour as yourself*” Galatians 5:14

## What is b.friend?

**b.friend** is a project of Bridges for Communities, enables volunteers to provide one to one social support to isolated asylum seekers and refugees in the Bristol area.

**b.friend** provides a thorough training programme and ongoing support to volunteers, who commit to meeting up with their befriender once a week for a year.

**b.friend** also runs the Craft Collective, a friendly and nurturing sewing-based group based at St. Stephen's Cafe in the city centre on Saturday afternoons. Our latest project has been for volunteers and women to work together on a patchwork quilt.

## How can I get involved?

**Become a befriender** - come to our next training sessions, being held on Saturday 29 June between 2.00 and 5.00pm and on Thursday 4 July, from 7.30 to 9.00pm (both sessions to be attended), at The Power House in Feeder Road, Bristol, BS2 0TH - see separate flyer or contact [sam@b-friend.org.uk](mailto:sam@b-friend.org.uk) for more details.

## Latest News for prayer and thanks...

**Craft Collective:** The Craft Collective moved to St. Stephens' Café in the city centre in October, which is working out very well. 6 women continue to come and enjoy expanding their sewing skills. It's been exciting to watch them form a little community.

**Stakeholders:** We recently asked some of our stakeholders for feedback as we seek continuous funding. It was encouraging to learn how valued we are as a service in the refugee sector in Bristol. Anne Gachango, Health Visitor for The Haven (NHS Service for newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees) said this: 'Having a befriender makes a huge positive difference in a person's life and over the years we have witnessed very successful partnerships between our patients and the brienders and the difference this has made to improve health and wellbeing. b.friend is a fantastic and a much-needed service and the Haven team find the support our patients get through this service amazing.'

**Partnership News:** 18 active partnerships at the moment. Sue is matched with N, from Bangladesh who has a little girl in infant school. N's immigration situation is complex and she has struggled with extreme stress and insomnia for some time. She is a bright, polite and lovely woman who loves being in company. Sue has been able to take N and her daughter out in Bristol which makes a big difference and gives N extra support. Please pray for good news from the Home Office soon.

**Difficult issues:** One of our briendees, J has been struggling with thoughts of suicide. She is extremely isolated in her community and her family situation is difficult. She worked as a journalist in her home country and was well respected. She had to flee after an attempt on her life. The loss of status has been so tough for her and she feels very hopeless. She shows incredible resilience and even has an allotment that she works on when she can. Sarah also loves to garden so they plan to do this together when J is well enough. Please pray for this partnership that it will thrive and that J's mental health will be protected.

## Thank you for praying!



More information from [www.bridgesforcommunities.com](http://www.bridgesforcommunities.com)

Or contact Sam Sayer: [sam@b-friend.org.uk](mailto:sam@b-friend.org.uk)

Chris Gane is the link person at St. Michaels.

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**Bridges**  
for Communities  
Connecting People Across Cultures