

What is HostNation?

HostNation is a service that connects Londoners with asylum seekers and refugees living in Greater London who want to see and do more in the city.

We call our volunteer befrienders London hosts.

They meet you once or twice every two weeks to spend time together, practice your English, visit new places and have new experiences. For example exploring London's parks, markets and museums and discovering new ways to enjoy London cheaply or for free.

London is a much friendlier city with a Londoner by your side.

HostNation Befrienders.

Our befrienders are people living and working in London – often young, mostly British, many female – who work as teachers or Doctors, work on projects or for charities or maybe still study. They are educated and well travelled, many have worked abroad and received great hospitality overseas. Some have been active helping refugees in the camps in the Middle East, Greece and Calais. They all want to support refugees and make you feel more welcome in London.

Most work full time so are more likely to be available to meet up at weekends and sometimes in the evenings after work.

They know that you may have very little money and they are happy to pay for your fares and expenses when you spend time together.

Who it is for?

It's for asylum seekers and refugees who are over 18.

Do you sometimes feel lonely? Or want to experience more of London but don't know how? Or spend most of your time with other migrants and refugees? Or want to practice your English in a friendly context?

Then maybe it's for you.

Especially if you're curious to discover and see more of the city and would like to connect more with London and Londoners.

It's not so good if you are currently in crisis -with your asylum case or your housing- or have high mental health needs. And you need to have an address where you are likely to be for the next 6 months.

How Does it Work?

You need to be referred by someone you know and someone who knows you – a caseworker, a lawyer, a social worker, a therapist, or a volunteer. You and your referrer need to fill in and submit our online form (make sure you have a good wifi connection) which asks for personal information, contact details, interests, why you would like a befriender and what you'd like to do together. The form can be found on our website: <https://www.hostnation.org.uk/refer>

Once we have your details we look for a good match and try to find someone for you who lives in the same part of London as you do.

We will then send you information about the befriender we have found for you. If you decide that you would like to meet, we ask you to commit to befriending for at least 3 months. We then set up the introduction meeting (often through the person who has referred you). Once introduced, it's up to you and your befriender to communicate with one another and make plans to do things together. After 3 months, if you're still enjoying meeting up, it doesn't have to stop. Some people have made friends for life!

We only ever match women with other women. As we have more female than male befrienders, we match some men with women befrienders. It is important to understand that we are NOT a dating site. We match you with a London host, NOT a possible girlfriend (or boyfriend).