

Walk of welcome for Bradford's refugees and asylum seekers

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A group photo of the walkers taken in Centenary Square (Image: UGC)

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A walk through little-known parts of [Bradford](#) saw people “open their hearts” to strangers and discovery along the way.

The ‘Walk of Welcome’ organised by BEACON - took in inspiring places that offer a warm welcome to refugees and asylum seekers across the city.

The gathering visited The Anchor Project at St Clements Church, Barkerend; The Al Mahdi Mosque off [Otley](#) Road; The Millside Centre on Grattan Road; Touchstone; The Landmark Centre at All Saints Church in Little Horton Green, and Bradford African Community, based at the Quaker Meeting House on Russell Street.



Dr Sofia Buncy MBE DL gives a speech in Centenary Square (Image: UGC)

One of those who joined for the walk was Melvyn Flecknoe from Baildon.

He said: "The BEACON walk, through little-known parts of central Bradford, was akin to turning over stones on a featureless beach and finding a jewel beneath each one.

"We received warm welcomes from people of all faiths and none, ready to open their hearts to us. A wonderful experience."



The walk, originally due to take place during Refugee Week in June, was postponed until the end of September due to illness.

But the walk carried this year's theme - Our Home - into a new season.

Walkers could sign up for the full route or just enjoy sections between stops.

BEACON, which follows the mantra of 'welcome the stranger', helps refugees and asylum seekers in different ways.



From English conversation clubs to legal advice and representation, the charity hopes to make people feel less isolated in their time of need.

Sarah Jemison, BEACON's chair of trustees, said: "Each year, during Refugee Week, we welcome and celebrate the skills and talents that those seeking sanctuary, and refugees, make in our communities. Their courage, creativity and resilience inspire us. I hope that our 'walk of welcome' proclaims loud and clear that refugees are welcome here."

The Anchor Project helps improve people's lives by boosting their wellbeing and bringing the community together.

It has worked in inner-city Bradford for almost two decades and brought joy to the elderly, those struggling to integrate due to language barriers plus people of different faiths and ages.

The Al Mahdi Mosque practices Ahmadiyya Muslim beliefs - a community whose motto is love for all and hatred for none.

The Millside Centre is a home away from home - offering anything from bread making classes for trauma victims to skill opportunities for aspiring restaurant and cafe owners.



Touchstone - where BEACON and Abigail Housing are based - uses creativity to help with wellbeing and the prevention of mental health issues.

The Landmark Centre is a place where people can access anything from support for disabled children, IT skills, and job hunting to helping young families and refugees.

Bradford African Community is made up of people who have all arrived in the UK in the last five years.

Members mainly come from a number of refugee camps across East Africa.

Just this summer, it organised a number of activities for families such as workshops on swimming, sign language and family cooking.