



The Background to Refugee Week



The purpose of Refugee Week is to deliver positive educational messages that counter fear, ignorance and negative stereotypes of refugees, through arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and promote understanding about the reasons why people seek sanctuary.

Refugee Week was first held in 1998, and was created in response to the increasingly negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers held by the general public in Britain. It remains the only UK-wide event that promotes the importance of sanctuary and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

During Refugee Week 2009, between 500 and 550 events took place across the UK, organised by charities, local government, small refugee community organisations, schools, churches, arts organisations, day centres, refugee umbrella networks, regional and national consortiums amongst many others .

Refugee Week is a [multi-agency project](#), managed by the Refugee Week Team which consists of the UK Coordinator for Refugee Week, Welsh and Scottish Co-ordinators and a small number of volunteers with specific skills. Different regions, areas and towns have their own Refugee Week Steering and Operational Groups which manage and co-ordinate Refugee Week activities in their areas.
