

# A QMU- Led Review of the Healing Neighbourhoods Project: Final Report

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# Acknowledgements

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## Rationale

Recovery from complex trauma such as that experienced by torture survivors requires both psychological healing and the restoration of positive social relationships. Freedom from Torture (FFT), a leading UK third sector organisation supporting survivors of torture is trialling an innovative project, 'Healing Neighbourhoods', combining individual psychotherapy with community worker support to build social connections in Glasgow. The Healing Neighbourhoods Project (HNP) is working with torture survivors who are seeking asylum or have already been granted refugee status.

This review aimed to explore the characteristics of the HNP in depth, building up a 'rich picture' of outcomes and an understanding of how those outcomes are achieved from the perspectives of project members and stakeholders. We approached the study as a 'review' of the HNP rather than as a formal evaluation since there is limited baseline data to allow us to measure the impact of the project from its inception. The review explores the perceived outcomes from the perspectives of HNP members and external stakeholders, and the challenges and unexpected benefits of the project.

The lessons learned from the HNP aim to inform future development of this and other related interventions and contribute to the existing body of knowledge around the role of social connections in refugee wellbeing.

## Outline of the study approach

**Phase One:** The plan for how to conduct the review is based on a programme model which the research team developed in partnership with project staff and project members through a series of participatory workshops and discussions. A programme model articulates how a programme is intended to work, and the precise nature of the issues which it seeks to address. Such models provide a useful working theory for structuring the gathering of data on these relationships (Rogers, 2008), and can be used as a basis for better organising, monitoring and evaluating a programme.

The purpose of developing a programme model for the HNP was so that the perceived outcomes and mechanisms by which they were achieved could be clearly articulated by project staff and members, and so that the hypothesised outcomes and mechanisms could form the foundation of the second phase of the review. The programme model was co-produced in the following 3 stages:

1. Two participatory workshops were held with HNP staff to articulate the intended programme objectives from their perspectives and explore how the programme activities were intended to achieve these objectives. The discussion focused on the main ways the HNP was anticipated to impact positively on the lives of those involved. Objectives were specified, and each objective systematically discussed, exploring in particular how participation in the HNP would enable somebody to achieve these objectives.
2. Two 'participant ranking exercises' (PRE) were conducted with selected groups of HNP members to identify the ways in which they perceive people to benefit from the HNP. Groups were asked the following question: *"Tell me some of the most important ways the Healing Neighbourhood project helps the people who are part of it. You can think about yourself, and about other people"*. For each 'benefit' identified, the person was asked to explain it briefly and then select an object to represent that issue and explain why. The facilitator brought a selection of objects to choose from, and participants were also invited to choose objects from the room. The process continued until a maximum of

ten issues were identified. These issues were then ordered from 'more important' to 'less important' by the participants in one of the workshops.<sup>1</sup> Participants held their objects and positioned themselves in a line, putting forward their arguments and debating the relative importance of the issues their objects represented until a consensus on the ranking was reached. The QMU facilitator was supported by a staff member who took notes, such as verbatim comments, justifications given for proposed positioning of the various benefits, and disagreements.

The lists produced in the PRE workshops are replicated in the table below:

<b>PRE workshop 1: Ranked list of benefits (from most important)</b>	<b>PRE workshop 2: Free list of benefits (not ranked)</b>
1. Bringing light from darkness	Opportunity to tell your story
2. Building us up mentally and physically	Group helps to relieve stress
3. Safe and stable base	Opportunity for teamwork
4. Feel valued and respected	Organisation lifted a heavy weight from my head
5. Erasing negative thoughts (supporting mental health)	Difficult life stopped
6. Having our voices heard/ Having a platform to speak from (democracy, participation, empowerment)	Regain confidence
7. Supporting each other like one family	Feel supported by friends
8. Sharing skills	Support with emotional and physical health
9. Learning new things	Confidence and credibility to self-advocate - staff contributed to positive outcome of asylum decision (helped to build confidence to distil and deliver message consistently – self advocacy.
10. Integration – sharing two ways	

3. A draft programme model was developed based on the workshops with staff and HNP members and sense checked with project staff. The model was then refined based on their feedback. The final programme model is set out below, outlining the seven specific outcomes agreed under the three broad themes of social support, emotional wellbeing, and empowerment.

<sup>1</sup> Circumstances did not allow for the ranking element in the second workshop as participants arrived and left at different times.

<b>Outcome</b>
<b>SOCIAL SUPPORT</b>
1. Increased social support within the group/ solidarity
2. Greater connection with local networks
<b>EMOTIONAL WELLBEING</b>
3. Reduced feelings of stress
4. Increased sense of hope
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>
5. Greater sense of self-efficacy
6. Improved feeling of having voices heard/ advocacy
7. Other stakeholders have better understanding of experiences of torture survivors

**Phase Two:** Having identified and consolidated the key outcomes of the HNP as hypothesised by staff and members, the second phase of the review gathered systematic evidence to explore how the HNP has contributed towards the outcomes identified.

The critical importance of social connections to processes of migrant integration emerges through a substantial body of academic and practice literature. Ager and Strang’s (2008) framework for understanding integration situates three types of social relationships - those that provide bonding, bridging, and linking social capital - as the sites at which integration happens (see also Ndofo-Tah et al., 2019). For refugees who have left homes and social support structures behind in their flight to safety, building social connections is particularly critical to supporting wellbeing (Strang & Quinn, 2019), however, many refugees lack relationships providing social, practical, and material support (Scottish Government et al. 2018; Ager & Strang, 2008; Cheung & Phillimore, 2013). Ryan’s (2018) research on Polish migrants in London and Nunn et al.’s (2016) engagement with young refugees in Australia further demonstrate the important role trust and ‘strong’ or bonding relationships play towards integration. This study provides an opportunity to further explore the characteristics and role of bonding relationships in connecting torture survivors to other relationships, resources, and opportunities (i.e., bonding, bridging, and linking social capital) that may ultimately contribute to their settlement and integration in the UK.

## Methodology

We used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how the HNP has contributed towards the seven outcomes identified in phase one. The research team worked closely with HNP staff between March and May 2021 to support them in disseminating and gathering members responses to the Social Connections Survey (SCS). The SCS is an online digital tool developed by Queen Margaret University (QMU) to gather information on respondents' quantity and quality of connections with people and organisations available to them (see Annex A for a full list of SCS questions). The SCS was used primarily for monitoring purposes, to gauge the quantity and quality of connections HNP members said they have had with other individuals and organisations since attending the project. By building capacity within the project to use the SCS, there is also potential to embed this tool in the project's ongoing work to support members in identifying strengths and gaps in their personal social networks and developing their personal integration plans.

In summary, data was collected using the following methods:

### Quantitative methods:

- The online Social Connections Survey.

### Qualitative methods:

- Individual interviews with HNP members and
- Individual interviews with HNP's stakeholders

The table below outlines which methods have been used to assess HNP's contribution to each of the intended outcomes:

Outcome	Social Connections Survey	Member Interviews	Stakeholder Interviews
<b>SOCIAL SUPPORT</b>			
Increased social support within the group/ solidarity	X	X	
Greater connection with local networks	X	X	
<b>EMOTIONAL WELLBEING</b>			
Reduced feelings of stress		X	
Increased sense of hope		X	
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>			
Greater sense of self-efficacy		X	
Improved feeling of having voices heard/ advocacy		X	
Other stakeholders have better understanding of experiences of torture survivors			X

# Quantitative Monitoring Data

**Social Connections Mapping:** The Social Connections Mapping Tool (SCMT) is an established QMU tool comprising of participative workshops which are used to develop the aforementioned bespoke SCS.

The SCMT aims to measure how the HNP has contributed to two identified outcomes that are relevant to the broad themes of social support. These outcomes are:

1. HNP members experience increased social support within the group/ solidarity
2. HNP members experience a greater connection with local networks

We facilitated a participatory mapping workshop for the HNP with a selection of their members, to establish a list of relevant individuals and organisations that members may go to for support in Glasgow. An example social connections map produced from the workshops is in the figure below. This represents group answers to the question ‘if someone (like you) is lonely – who could they speak to about it, and where could they go for help?’ This question was designed to elicit particular people and organisations that members might go to for emotional support. The groups were also asked ‘if someone (like you) has a problems with their *mobile phone* – who could they speak to about it, and where could they go for help?’. This question aimed to elicit connections members might go to for practical support and to explore who they might go to for more systematic support, they were asked: ‘if someone (like you) has a problems with their *housing* – who could they speak to about it, and where could they go for help?’.



Figure 1: Example social connections map

The list of connections generated from these workshops was then refined in consultation with HNP staff to ensure relevance to the wider members groups, to sense-check the organisation’s

names, and to fill any obvious gaps. By asking specific questions about each of these identified connections, the SCS enabled us to gain an understanding of how connected clients are to wider local networks in Glasgow, and the level of their connection to the project and the groups they participate in at HNP. Example questions from the SCS are highlighted in the screenshots below. Specifically, the SCS was used to:

- a. Collect socio-demographic data on the participants
- b. Map the **contact** that clients have with the identified social connections
- c. Map the extent to which participants **trust** these specific social connections over time
- d. Map the extent to which these social relationships are **reciprocal** (i.e., the extent to which both sides of the relationship receive benefit from each other)
- e. Allow us to investigate patterns of participants' social relationships at the level of the individual and explore potential influencing factors such as gender, country of origin, how long they have lived in Glasgow and their refugee status.

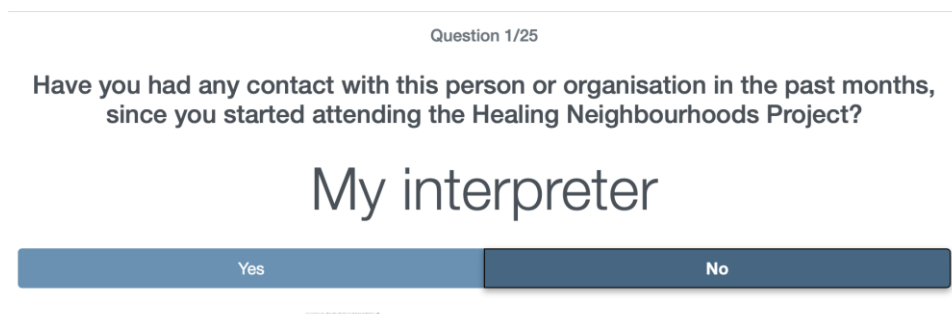


Figure 2: contact question from social connections survey



Figure 3: trust question from social connections survey

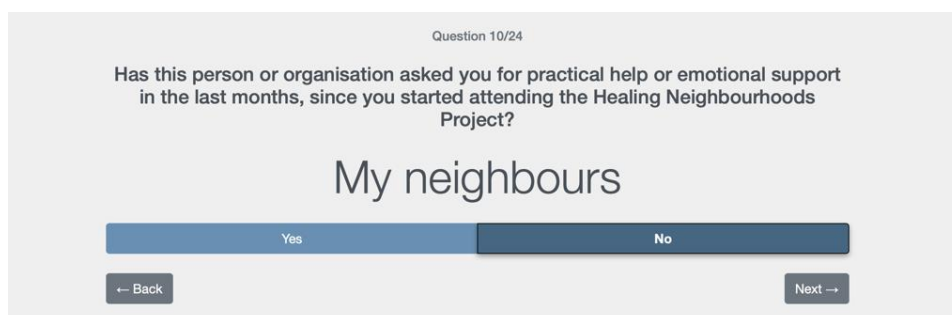


Figure 4: reciprocity question from social connections survey



It was agreed that the SCS should be disseminated by HNP staff who have an existing relationship with their clients, rather than by the research team. We were aware this may engender a sense of obligation amongst service users to answer and respond positively about their relationships with FFT and HNP staff in particular. To mitigate this, participants were reassured that their responses were anonymous and that they would fill out the SCS privately in their own homes, where their responses could not be seen. HNP staff explained the purpose of the SCS to members during regular group sessions online, with the help of interpreters where necessary. They sent out links to the remote survey via WhatsApp and SMS messages to members and offered support to those who needed it to complete the SCS. The remote link was sent to 52 members, of whom 21 responded: a relatively high response rate considering the general low average response rate to surveys, and the additional barriers for this cohort including language barriers, poor mental health and limited access to data and devices.

## Qualitative Data

### **Semi-structured interviews with HNP members**

Thirteen individual interviews were conducted, all remotely via video or telephone calls, due to physical distancing restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The interviewee sample was selected by the HNP staff team to, as far as possible, represent the range of involvement in the project (active, inactive, sometimes active) and, to also reflect the diverse characteristics and backgrounds of the members. Up to 26 HNP members were contacted to seek their consent to be interviewed; many did not respond or could not be reached. It was particularly difficult to engage members who were currently inactive in the project, which may have reflected some of the barriers to them engaging with HNP itself – namely poor mental health or being occupied with trying to progress their asylum claim. One of the thirteen interviews was stopped midway through as the participant had expressed that they were feeling distressed.

### **Stakeholder interviews**

Additionally, we conducted four interviews with key external stakeholders based in Glasgow, identified in discussion with HNP staff. These were individuals from: the Scottish Football Association, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS, Community InfoSource<sup>2</sup> and Mears Group (Mears).<sup>3</sup> The purpose of these interviews was to identify how their involvement with HNP has impacted on their understanding of the experiences of torture survivors.

## Analysis

The qualitative interviews with HNP members and stakeholders were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. We used a thematic approach to analyse the interviews (Creswell 2009) and, more specifically, used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (cf. Flaherty et al 2004; Noon 2018 and Matua & Van der Wal 2015) whereby we treat each interview as a case and aim to understand the dynamics and narrative for each case. By treating each individual as a case, we first built up as full a picture of each individual's emic perspective on how their lives have changed in each of the outcome domains over the course of their involvement in the project, the contributory factors and the impact on their lives. We then compared themes and findings across the individual cases once we had analysed each case independently. The stakeholder interviews were analysed collectively to identify the common themes which demonstrate how the project has influenced their understanding of client's experiences.

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<sup>2</sup> A third sector organisation working with refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>3</sup> The current contracted provider of accommodation and support for asylum seekers in Scotland, replacing the previous contractors SERCO in 2019.

The qualitative data from our telephone or video interviews with HNP members and stakeholders was analysed in conjunction with the quantitative data gathered remotely through the SCS to give a rich picture of the impact of the HNP on their members in line with the identified outcomes, and on stakeholder's understanding of the experiences of torture survivors. The SCS was distributed to all HNP members over 18; it should be noted that there may be overlap between members who were both interviewed and responded to the SCS.

Specifically:

- 1) the quantitative data from the SCS offers insight into the types of connections individuals have made, their levels of trust in each and the extent to which there have been opportunities for reciprocity in the relationship (i.e., the individual has been asked for help and support from their social connections).
- 2) The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews provides an account of the ways in which HNP members' lives have changed over the course of their involvement in the HNP, the factors they perceive have contributed to these changes and the overall impact on their social and psychological wellbeing. The stakeholder interviews further add to a rich picture of how the project has influenced outsider understanding of client's experiences.
- 3) Both quantitative and qualitative data have been disaggregated and contextualised according to gender and age as far as is meaningful (given the small sample sizes) in addition to other variables including how long members have been living in the UK and in Glasgow, and their involvement in the project.

# Findings

**Interviewees:** Of the thirteen people interviewed, eight were men and five were women. Eight people in total were identified as being active in the project (equally split between men and women), two were identified as sometimes active (one man and one woman) and three were identified as inactive in the project (all men).

At the time of interview, nine out of the thirteen interview participants had lived in the UK for five or more years, with four of those having lived in the UK for more than ten years. Of the nine participants who had lived in the UK for more than five years, seven were still seeking asylum and two had been granted refugee status. Two participants had been in the UK for 13-24 months and two had been here for 2-5 years. The majority of participants were asylum seekers (ten in total, six men and four women), three interviewees (two men and one woman) had been granted refugee status.

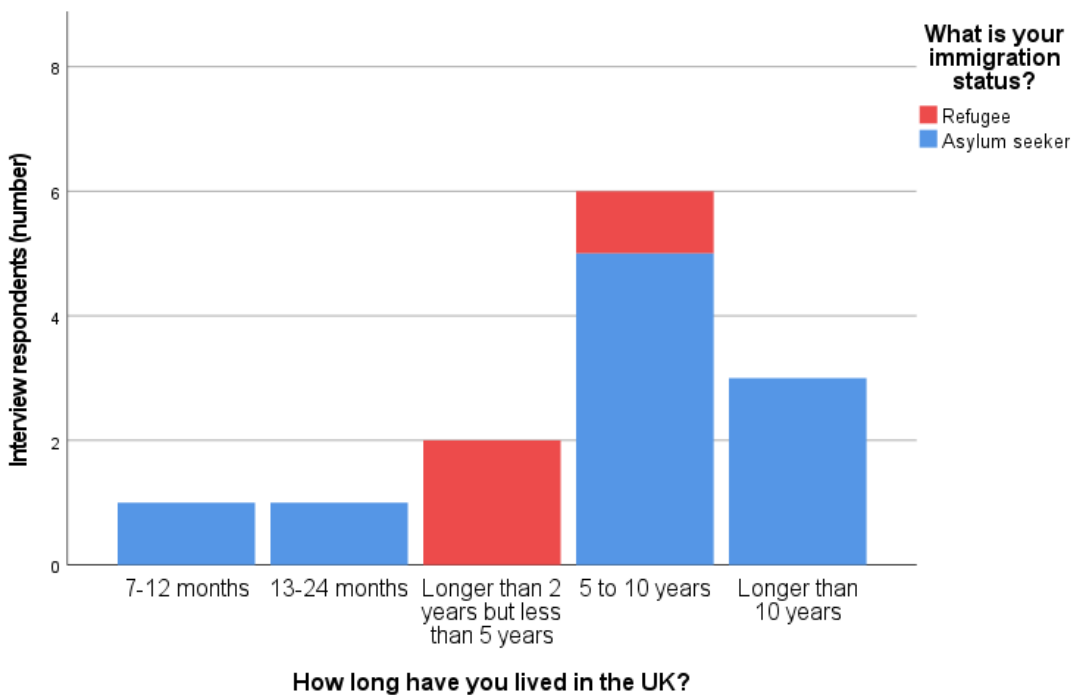


Figure 5: Length of time living in the UK by immigration status

**Social Connections Survey (SCS) Respondents:** Of the 21 SCS respondents: fifteen were men, and five were women, one respondent preferred not to say. Nine were refugees and twelve were asylum seekers. As can be seen in the graph below, over half of those with asylum seeker status had lived in the UK for five years or more. Twelve SCS respondents said they 'regularly' attended groups or events at HNP compared to six who 'sometimes' attend, and three who 'rarely' attend.

### Involvement with the Healing Neighbourhoods Project

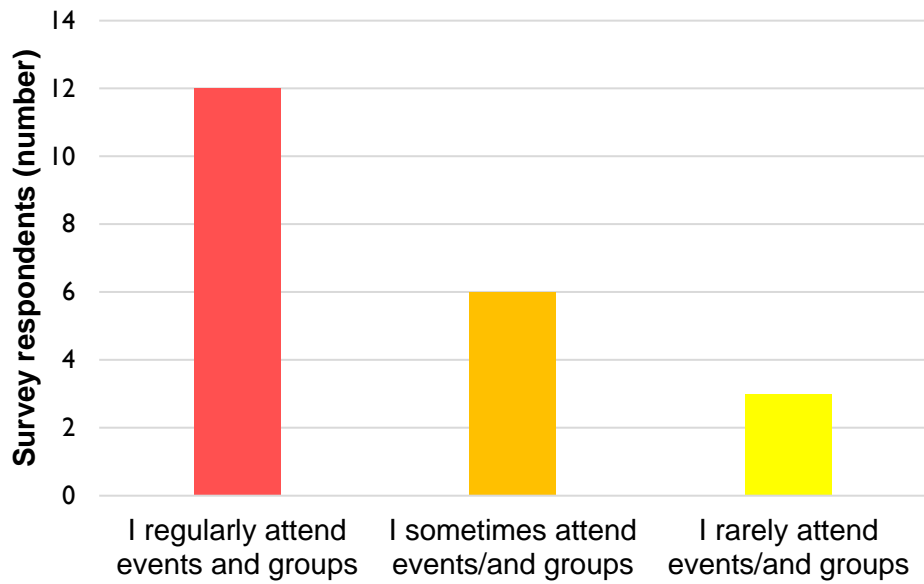


Figure 6: Level of involvement with the Healing Neighbourhoods Project

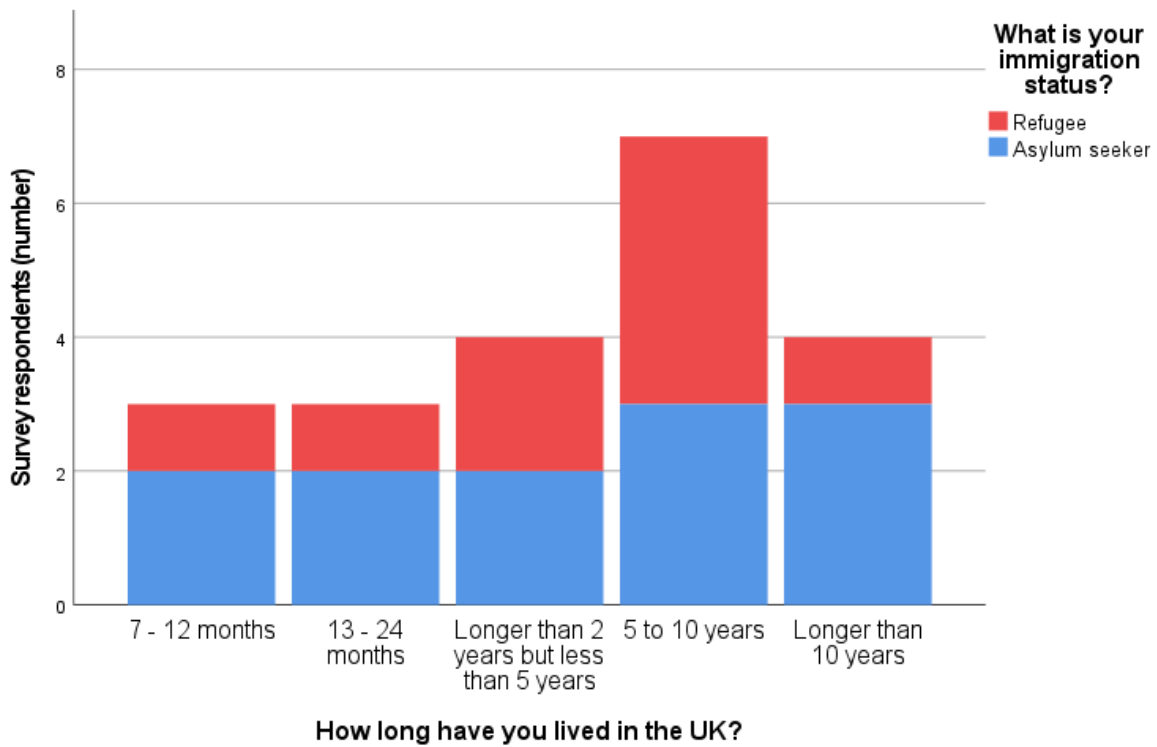


Figure 7: Length of time in the UK and immigration status

## Social Support

This section analyses data from both the qualitative interviews with HNP members and responses to the SCS to understand HNP members' perspectives on how their involvement in the project has impacted on the anticipated outcomes:

1. HNP members experience increased social support within the group/ solidarity
2. HNP members experience a greater connection with local networks

### Outcome 1. Increased social support within the group/ solidarity

Data from the interviews suggests that there was a strong sense of social support within the group (including from staff and shared between HNP members). The project was felt for many to act as a surrogate family. In the words of one participant *"it was like a second family for us"* (female refugee). At least three members described the HNP as playing the role of mother and the members as her children. *"They look after their clients like mother look after her child. The same way – like that much they care for us"* (male asylum seeker). Another member described the project as a *"tree holding all the flowers."*

*I'm going to describe Healing Neighbourhood like a tree, you know, a tree is always holding all the flowers. And the tree is a symbol of something beautiful, you know. Healing Neighbourhood is like a mother who is holding all the children, unite all the children, making the children together, to give them a warm welcome* (male asylum seeker).

The metaphor of a mother looking after or "holding" her children is suggestive of a safe, supportive, reliable bond. Indeed, special mention was made of the pivotal role particular staff members had played in supporting individuals to meet basic needs such as get clothes and food, and also to leave their house and engage with others in the HNP groups. Looked at in context, the relationship with the staff at HNP was described less as a relationship of dependency, and more as a relationship which empowered members to identify and pursue their aspirations for greater personal independence as far as possible. Data from the SCS further suggest that a third of respondents (fourteen people) said they had also had the opportunity to reciprocate the help given to them by staff at HNP. This was the highest level of reciprocity of all the 25 connections, followed by 'my therapist at FFT', 'God' and 'my lawyer': nine people said they had had the opportunity to offer reciprocal support to each of these connections. The following quote describes from one member's perspective on how members are not only passive beneficiaries of support, but also actively support one another. Extending the family metaphor, he articulates how the roles members play are relational, multidirectional and fluid; each person sometimes adopting the role of child, at other times playing the role of sibling and, at others, occupying the role of parent.

*I feel like it's like a family, you know. We meet different people from different backgrounds, from different ages as well, so it's not like your role in your family at all, whether you're mum or dad, it's like this or this, there is no any other part. But in this group, I feel like it's kind of a mixture, so sometimes you can be a brother to somebody or maybe a father to someone else or maybe a friend to another person. So, it can be, sometimes I feel like I am doing different roles, you know, so it can be a father or a friend or a brother* (male refugee).

The feeling of solidarity among members was often described as a feeling of being able to share your thoughts, a laugh or a hug if you wanted or, equally, choosing not to share in the group if you didn't feel like it. A few members mentioned that they felt cared for when other members noticed when they did not attend a group session and messaged or phoned them to check they

were ok. This was also a way in which members said they demonstrated their support for others. Being missed was clearly one indicator of feeling seen and valued.

*Definitely without a shadow of a doubt, my voice is heard, and I can feel that when sometimes I don't attend a certain session or something, for some reasons, people call me and they ask "Where are you? Why didn't you come today?" Or "Where have you been? Are you OK?" So, it just makes you feel good, you know, that someone is asking where are you, what's happened? (male refugee).*

Having varied ways of sharing, through different groups and activities which spoke to individual interests, was also highlighted as a particularly attractive aspect of the project. Additionally, the opportunity to mix with peoples from varied backgrounds and cultures, and to choose when and what groups to participate in, was felt to offer flexibility and freedom.

*Everybody is free, we do things and I like the cooking. When we also did the cooking it was, everyone was free, we learn from each other's culture and each other's background. So people were free, we play, we dance, we laugh, but it was not the people that I am seeing like as a friend now, just does this kind of funny. Like there are times that when we go there and then she does something and I laugh, laugh and I'm like "OK I have not laughed for a week, I've not laughed for a week, so it's good to have you here nearby, I'm laughing now" (female asylum seeker).*

While mixing with people from varied cultures and backgrounds seemed to afford a sense of freedom, closer bonds seemed to be made in the women-only group, their shared gender apparently transcending not only cultural differences, but also language barriers. Many of the women interviewed felt they were particularly able to develop special bonds with other women in the women's group, and really enjoyed sharing their skills with one another. Sharing in this women-only space was facilitated by shared activities (including online activities) which brought them together, even if they spoke different languages and came from different backgrounds.

**Respondent:** *At first when I started with FFT, I didn't really have any friend there, I just go there and do my thing and leave. But once I started the women's group that's where I started to pick up friends, yeah.*

**Interviewer:** *OK. So, can you tell me a little bit about how you came to be friends with those couple of people?*

**Respondent:** *[laughing] Because we meet in the women's group meetings and through there, we know each other's name and then we just kind of, we realise OK, we are talking about the same things, they have the same interest in life, habits and stuff like that, that's how it happened (female asylum seeker).*

*Yes, most of these women they wasn't from the same country coming from, they were just speaking some language and cooking so we're coming from different culture or countries, not even a language to communicate but we still make our own, you know, bonds or relationships and we become a friend because we all used to go to this place and we all get a benefit from there, so I feel they are my friends even if I can't speak their language and they can't speak my language, we still say hi to each other and understanding each other (female refugee).*

Similarly, the football group offered a space for men to come together and share a game, breaking down any language barriers. One male asylum seeker had lived in the UK for eleven years and in Glasgow for 1.5 years. He described how coming to FFT and the HNP had mitigated his loneliness and helped him to feel that he had people he knew in the city. When speaking about the football group, he said:

*There I found I think more than 20 people came together and there was a coach for us and people around us, that was fantastic, that was very good (male asylum seeker).*

There was a strong sense that for him, as for others, there was great comfort in being amongst people, particularly those who had been through similar experiences, and implicitly understood without even having to speak about it.

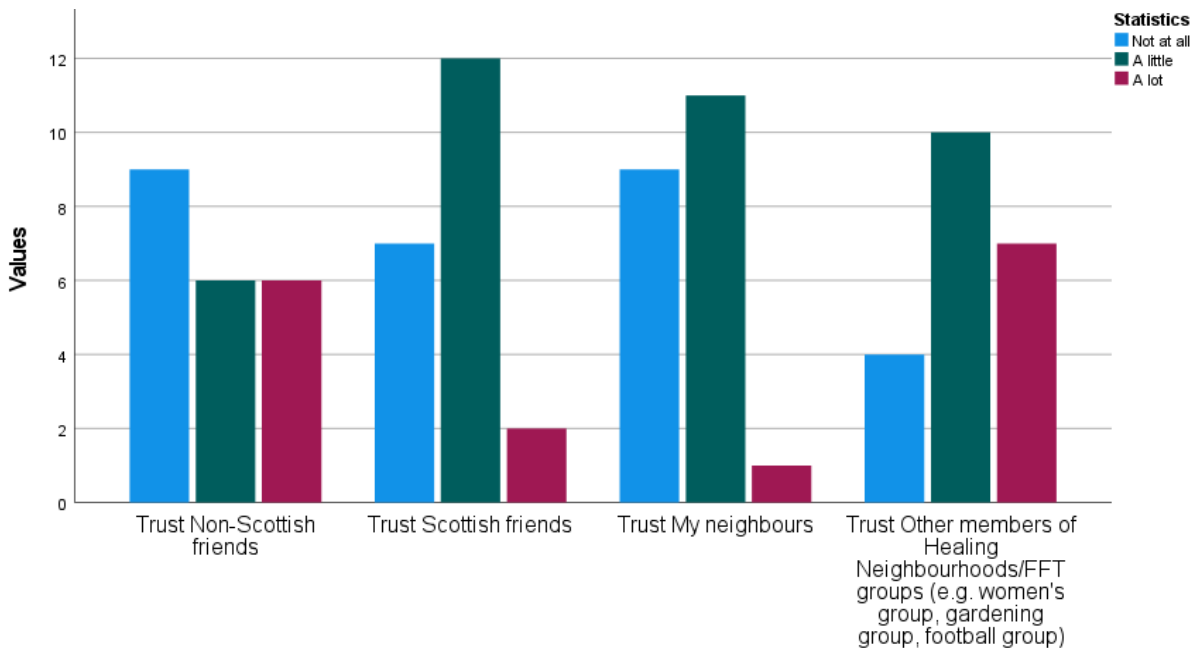
A few respondents appreciated that HNP offered space and flexibility for people to be “free” to develop relationships organically, without imposing too much structure. Some members identified that it was easier to develop friendships with people who spoke the same language as themselves and were most familiar with others who also spoke Tamil, English, Farsi or Arabic, for example.

*I have got like another friend – I have got a friend, his name is [name], he’s a very friendly man, we always meet and chat and go out together. Also there’s another Kurdish family and they speak Arabic, we always say hi to each other, talk to each other, chat for a while [...]. But when it comes to, if somebody is close to me or not, the only trouble or problem I would have is that, as I said, the language barrier, otherwise I would feel so happy to communicate and, you know, get to know each other more and more (male refugee).*

However, only three out of the thirteen interviewees said that they had met up with other members from HNP groups independently, outside of the group meetings. In one members’ words:

*Yeah. Whenever we come together for this project purpose, we gladly enjoy each one’s presence, but apart from that we don’t have any individual or – any connection (male asylum seeker).*

Two of these were attendees of the women’s group who met up with other women to shop together or help others learn seamstress skills. The third was a man who said he met a few people from the groups outside of FFT and had kept in touch with another member who had moved to London. The SCS suggests that trust in other members of the HNP was nonetheless relatively high: Seventeen (80%) respondents trusted other members of HNP ‘a little’ (ten) or ‘a lot’ (seven). Four respondents did not trust other members at all. The number of respondents who trusted other members ‘a lot’ is relatively high when compared to trust in other individual connections the SCS asked respondents about. As shown in the bar chart below (figure 8), two members said they trusted Scottish friends ‘a lot’ compared to 6 who said the same of non-Scottish friends, and one who said they trusted their neighbours ‘a lot’. Additionally, twelve out of the 21 respondents to the SCS (57%) said that they had spoken to or asked other members of HNP/FFT groups for help since attending the HNP project. Six of those twelve respondents also said that other members of the HNP groups had also asked them for help (i.e., the relationship was reciprocal).



**Figure 8: Trust in selected connections**

This suggests that the quality of the connection between group members was considered relatively strong by many respondents, even though there was little contact outside of FFT’s physical offices and virtual meeting places. Some members described a desire to support and encourage one another, even if they may not remember their name. For example, one member explained how he was able to encourage and support other HNP members on their journey when he happened to encounter them in the shopping centre or other places. He could offer encouragement from a relatively stable position, having been granted refugee status and reunited with his own family.

*I know many people from this project, but I don’t remember their names whatsoever. However, whenever I meet them, see them – I would speak to them, I would encourage them (male refugee).*

One of the identified barriers to continuing the friendship independently of the project was the fact that members were geographically spread across Glasgow, making it difficult to meet up. Additionally, it may be difficult for members who do not speak the same language to develop their friendship outside of the groups, where they do not have interpreters on hand to help them converse. The Covid-19 restrictions also greatly limited the potential for face-to-face meetings since March 2020. This will have impacted on the potential to develop existing friendships and, for those who had joined the project since March 2020, on their potential to get to know other group members. While the project has continued to provide online group activities and support in creative ways, many described the familiar experience of it not being the same level of connection as “getting a hug” (female asylum seeker). The data also suggests that HNP members may be hesitant to place a lot of trust in others, and that this is a process that takes time. Data from the SCS indicates that, in terms of the *quality* of relationships, men tended to trust (‘a little’ or ‘a lot’) more of the identified connections than women, although women reported more reciprocal connections than men (i.e., had been asked for help by connections they had also contacted). There were also interesting gender differences emerging around the quantity and type of connections which will be discussed in the next section of the report.



There are many variables that could have an impact on who HNP members trust, and it is not possible to identify causal connections from the SCS data. However, analysis by level of engagement with HNP and by immigration status indicates that both those who said they had a higher level of engagement with the HNP groups, and those with refugee status were more likely to trust connections 'a little' or 'a lot' (figures 9, 10 and 11 below). More research with a bigger sample would be needed to consolidate this emerging pattern and to understand the causes.

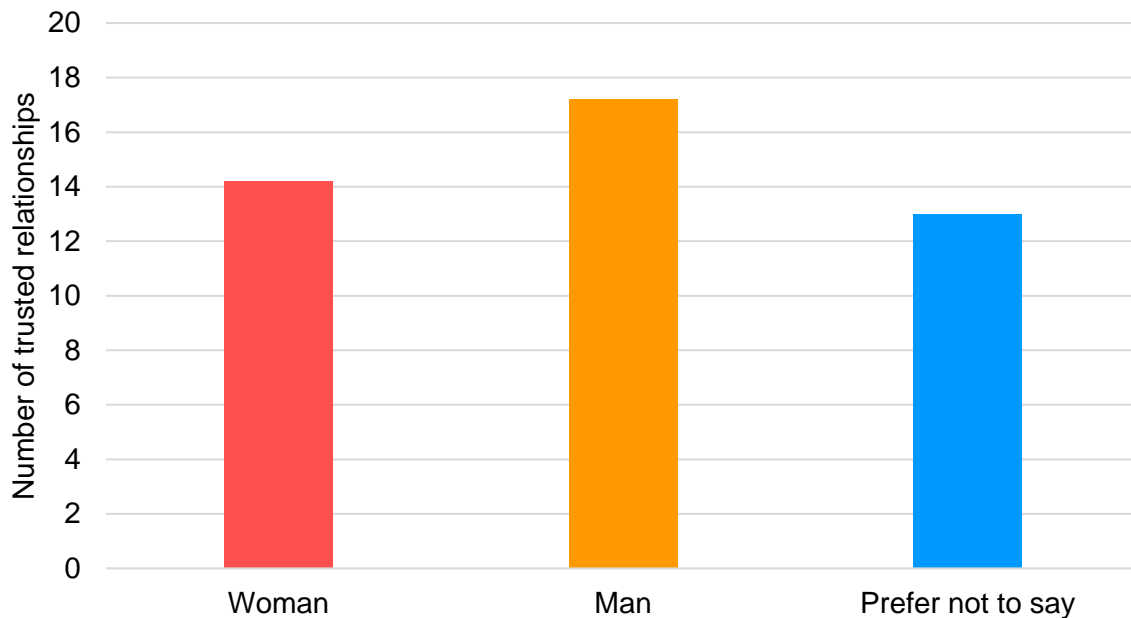


Figure 9: Mean number of trusted relationships by gender

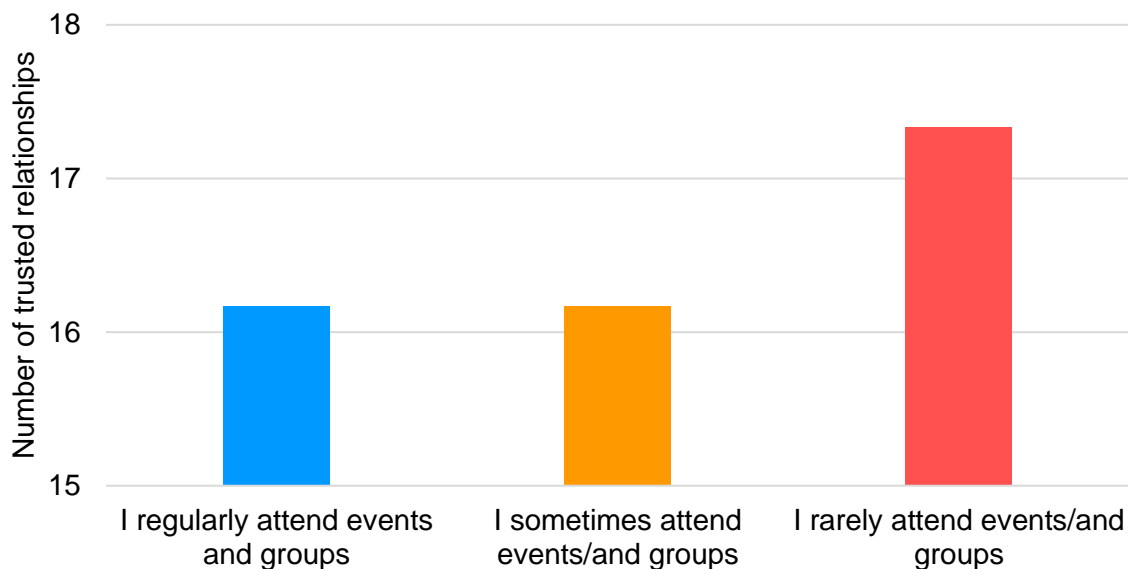
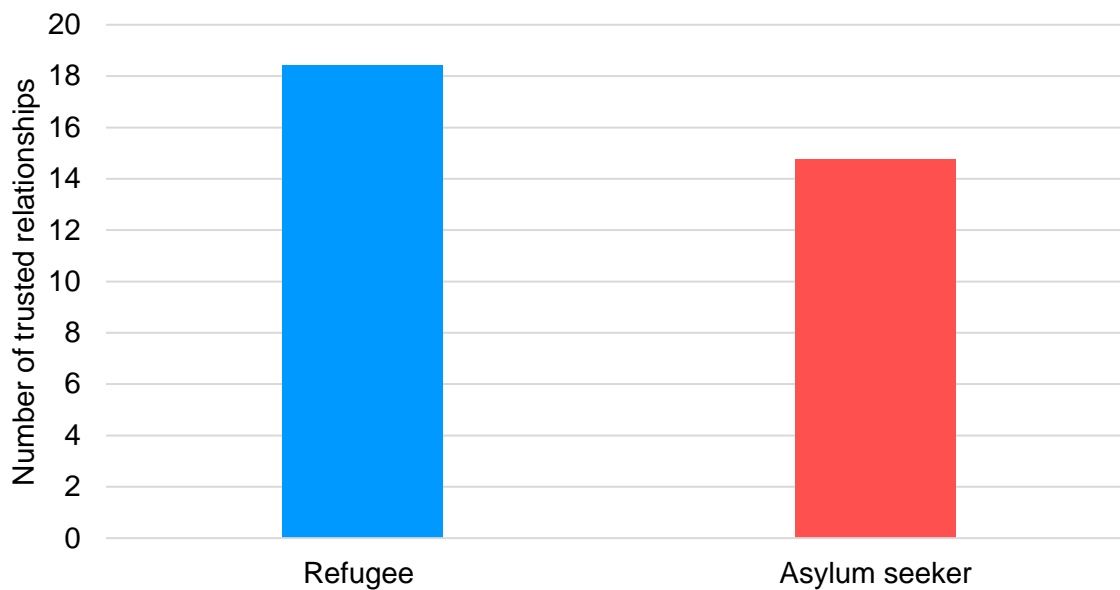


Figure 10: Mean number of trusted relationships by level of engagement with the project



**Figure 11: Mean number of trusted relationships by immigration status**

Trust in HNP staff was relatively high, with twelve people saying they trusted them ‘a lot’ and nine trusting HNP staff ‘a little’. This compared to eighteen trusting their FFT therapist ‘a lot’, and 3 trusting them ‘a little’. Out of the 25 connections, ‘members of staff at HNP’, ‘my therapist at FFT’ and ‘my lawyer/solicitor’ were the only individuals or organisations which *all* 21 respondents trusted either ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’. No respondents said they did not trust these connections at all.

*From that part of my life, they really, really was supporting, they really were helping me with other, anything I need to do, they also ensure me, tell me, “Be here with you, we are here for you, so don’t worry, you are not alone”. And I totally trust them because I feel like whatever they try to do with me, they try their best to do it. So I have like a high level of trust with the staff over the different culture (female refugee).*

This suggests that the very nurturing support from HNP staff, combined with the comfort and solidarity of being amongst others who were looking out for you, was felt to engender a very safe and supportive space for many HNP members. Safety and stability are identified in the Indicators of Integration framework (Ndofor-Tah et al. 2019) as key facilitators for integration and the framework places social ‘bonds’ at the very core of the integration process, alongside bridging and linking connections. The revised framework is reproduced in figure 12 below, demonstrating the fourteen key interconnected domains through which to analyse integration, with social connections as a central lens. Coleman’s (1988) and Putnam’s (1966; 2000, see also Putnam et al. 2009) work defines ‘bonds’ as a form of social capital derived from relationships with those in whom we trust, often because they are similar to us and inhabit our social worlds. These ‘strong ties,’ or tight-knit relationships with high levels of trust, are sources of bonding social capital: a social, emotional, and indeed material ‘safety net’ for the members of its social networks. Refugees’ prioritisation of reunification with their families (Connell et al. 2010; Strang et al. 2016; Scottish Government et al 2018), for instance, and consequent discussions around their social isolation (Beswick 2015), speak to the difficulties that present themselves when forging new (bridging) relationships in the absence of existing trusting (bonding) relationships.

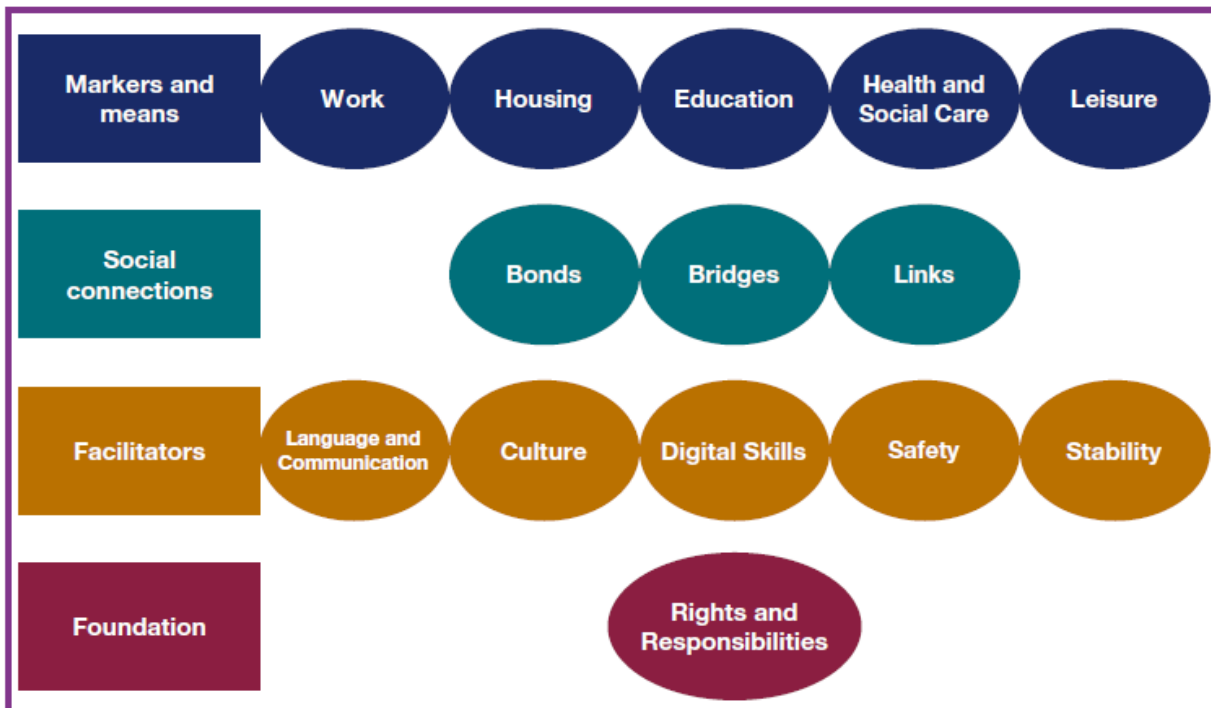


Figure 12: Indicators of Integration Framework (Ndofor-Tah et al. 2019)

Whether the emotionally supportive bonding relationships fostered by their involvement with HNP can be said to provide a foundation for forging new relationships with other individuals and organisations out-with the project will be explored in the following section of the report.

## Outcome 2: Greater connection with local networks

This section explores whether HNP members experience a greater connection with local networks, which is the second outcome identified by members and staff in the programme model. This refers to any connections with individuals or organisation outside of the HNP and the wider FFT project. Data is drawn from the qualitative interviews primarily and triangulated with quantitative data from the SCS.

Interviewees were asked whether they had other people in Glasgow, who are not part of HNP whom they trust. They were also asked about any activities and groups they were involved in and about the effect of these on their lives. The SCS asks about respondents contact, trust in and reciprocal relationships with 22 connections in addition to HNP staff members, other members of HNP or FFT groups, and their therapist at FFT. In order to analyse emerging trends from the SCS data and compare these to the interview data, the 25 connections were divided into two broad groups 'interpersonal connections' and 'organisational connections' as set out in the table below. However, it should be noted that this categorisation makes implicit assumptions made about the likely function each connection represents. Interpersonal connections are considered to be more informal connections, mainly with individuals. Organisational connections are more formalised and are mainly with service providers.

Interpersonal Connections		Organisational Connections	
1.	Other members of Healing Neighbourhoods/FFT groups (e.g., women's group, gardening group, football group)	1.	Govan Community Project <sup>4</sup>
2.	Scottish friends	2.	Tramway
3.	My family who lives with me	3.	Library
4.	Non-Scottish friends	4.	Place of worship (e.g., Church, Mosque)
5.	God	5.	Mears Group (previously SERCO)
6.	My neighbours	6.	British Red Cross
7.	People I live with who are not related to me	7.	College (e.g., Glasgow Clyde College, City of Glasgow College)
8.	Community groups close to where I live (e.g. Kurdish Community Project, International Women's Group, Glasgow Tamil Sangam)	8.	Housing Association (e.g., Glasgow Housing Association, Loretto)
9.	People at the gym	9.	Turning Point
		10.	Migrant Help
		11.	Staff at Healing Neighbourhoods Project (e.g., Mohammed, Angie, Ahlam, Nahom)
		12.	My therapist at Freedom from Torture
		13.	Staff at my child's school or nursery
		14.	My GP
		15.	My interpreter
		16.	My lawyer/ solicitor

Interview data suggests that few members had what they would consider 'close' friends or relationships outside of the HNP. Possibly the closest tie described with somebody outside of the HNP groups was between one interviewee, his neighbour and his neighbour's family living in Glasgow. Three other interviewees said they had partners they had met since living in Glasgow – one woman had met her partner through HNP activities. In addition to the occasional meet-ups with other project members (outside of the group meetings), a few interviewees mentioned one or two friends or acquaintances they had met in Glasgow through their church group, community activist groups, at the shops, or through a partner. While most of these contacts did not seem to be close friends, some might be described as developing friendships.

One member said she had met friends who spoke the same language as her at shops locally, as well as meeting another friend through her partner:

*About the Syrian friends I have, actually that's because of the shopping. So they're local so we usually meet at a Tesco or an Asda, Lidl, you know, like your local Lidl so you've*

<sup>4</sup> In contrast to 'community groups close to where I live' (classified as an interpersonal connection), the decision was taken to classify Govan Community Group as an organisational connection. The rationale for this was that, although it is a 'community group' by name, it differs from the types of groups included as examples of 'community groups'. These are less formally organised, and their primary aim is to develop peer support and/or grassroots activism. Govan Community Group is a formally constituted organisation offering a range of services and groups for refugees, including (but not exclusively) peer support. In this way, it was considered more similar to other service delivery organisations listed under organisational connections, than to more informal interpersonal connections.

*got shopping there to do so you see another woman. So we just meet there and we became friends and we're helping each other a lot (female refugee).*

It was significant that this member was starting to build a supportive social network, having said she had initially lacked confidence to leave the house when she first joined HNP. She described how one staff member had helped her first to venture outside, and then to build up to joining HNP groups and speaking with others. This, she suggested, had helped alleviate her loneliness and depression, which will be explored further in the next section. Similarly, another woman described how she had gradually been connected to HNP through her FFT therapist and then had met other women through the women's group and had now developed the confidence to join an ESOL class at college. In context, the 'distance travelled' by some members from being completely isolated in some cases, to being socially connected to others in the groups, let alone individuals and groups outside of HNP, seemed to be a very significant journey.

Another woman, when probed about people she said she had met through church and asked what made her feel she could trust them, answered:

*I can't say I trust them like 100%. We talk but I don't tell them about my life. We just talk about other things (female asylum seeker).*

As suggested earlier, building trust in others is a process that takes time and is evidently not given lightly, particularly by torture survivors. This may explain why many members seemed reluctant to join other groups and activities outside of HNP or, if they did participate, did not readily identify friends from these groups or activities. For example, one member said that, despite volunteering regularly for another organisation, she didn't have friends outside of HNP. In her own words:

*Well, to begin with, I'm not someone who goes out very much, and I'm not somebody who makes friends easily. I mean, my children are my friends. So outside the Healing Neighbourhood group, no, not really. My friends are from the Healing Neighbourhood group (female refugee).*

Another member suggested that the only barrier to making friends for him, was the language barrier. He didn't speak much English and also said he liked being alone or "sitting with myself".

*No, to be honest [interviewer's name], I don't have any friends in, I mean outside this group. I remember one time I met some people in a cafe, we just said hi to each other, that was very quick and then everyone went on about their day. Apart from that, I cannot, I don't think, or I don't have any other friends away or apart from the Healing group, I mean friends that I can trust, and I know very well (male refugee).*

Another member described his hesitance to trust people outside of HNP in Glasgow, saying you couldn't rely on outside appearances:

*When you're talking about the trust, it's quite difficult to say so, you know. Trust is something complicated, you know, you can see someone from the face, but you don't know their heart, that is one of the problems. But we are trying ourselves to work together as honest people because without honesty we can't build a strong community (male asylum seeker).*

When members described people they had developed relationships with in Glasgow, they often mentioned particular acts of kindness, practical help given, and demonstrations of respect – suggesting that these acts and attitudes foment trust. For example, one member spoke of the kindness shown to him by first his neighbour, and then by his neighbour's mother, explaining

that the kindness and practical help were “*the reason I can trust him [my neighbour]*” and said of people at HNP:

*They give me a lot of respect and, you know, they just make you feel like that, that you're not hesitant to tell them anything if you want to approach them* (male asylum seeker).

When speaking of people she trusted in Glasgow, another member wanted to make special mention of her neighbours who had shown kindness by helping her to lift her pram and shopping up the stairs; she wanted to recognise they were “*nice*”, “*good*”, “*respectful people*”:

*I really want to make a special mention to my neighbours. My neighbours are really, really good neighbours and all from good [means]. They're all from Scotland actually and they're really, really so good to me, so nice to me, very respectful people. I'm pushing a pram because I have a baby in a pram and I'm living on the top floor and there's no lift. Almost every time when I'm coming home with lots of shopping in a bag, if somebody is there they are helping me, or they're helping me with baby, always offering to help* (female refugee).

Data from the interviews indicates that around half of those interviewed were involved in other activities or clubs outside HNP; seven out of thirteen interviewees mentioned other organisations they were connected to. One member said he had tried a club, but it was not suited to his disability. He said “*I only attend Freedom from Torture. I do not go anywhere else*” (male asylum seeker). One interviewee had attended a group for female entrepreneurs, two or three had attended groups or activities with refugee community groups, and three interviewees held active volunteer roles in third sector organisations (or had done before lockdown prevented them from volunteering). One interviewee was a very active member of a local football club, two people attended college (for ESOL in one case, and to study for an HND in another) and at least two people said they attended or had previously attended the gym through membership provided by HNP. One young member who had largely grown up in Glasgow attended a gym close to his home where the other, less connected member, attended the gym close to FFT offices. Discussions with HNP staff suggest that many HNP members who make use of the gym membership on offer attend the gym closest to the FFT offices - possibly attributable to members feeling a sense of security in being close to the project, and also to the opportunity to follow an appointment at the project with a trip to the gym, making use of the reimbursed travel expenses.

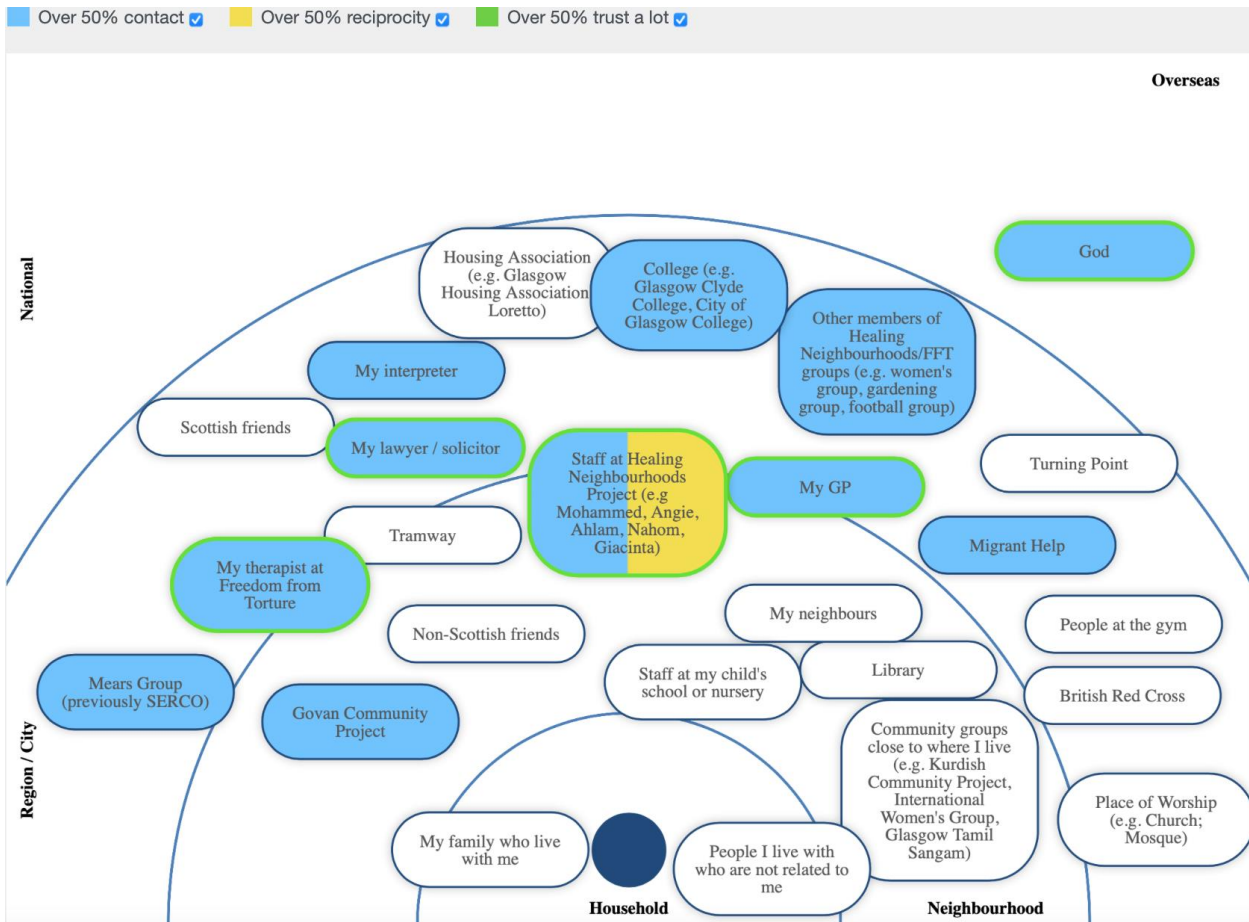


Figure 13: Map representing the overall connections of HNP members

Out of a possible 25 connections people were asked about in the SCS, the maximum number of connections participants had contacted since attending the HNP were 20 (two respondents) and the minimum number of connections were three (one respondent). All 21 respondents had (unsurprisingly) had contact with HNP, and eighteen said they had had contact with an FFT therapist. Beyond their connection with HNP and FFT, the organisations most SCS respondents had had contact with were: Migrant Help, Mears Group and their lawyer/solicitor (sixteen respondents each). Fourteen respondents had had contact with their GP since their involvement with HNP, and eleven had had contact with a college and with their interpreter.

In terms of interpersonal connections: seven people reported having contacted community groups close to where they live. Seven people said they had had contact with non-Scottish friends and five people reported having had contact with Scottish friends since attending HNP. Six people had had contact with neighbours. Of those who had had contact with their neighbours, all six have refugee status, four have lived in both the UK and in Glasgow for 5-10 years, and one has lived in Glasgow and UK for more than ten years. There is some indication from the data that those who have lived in the UK for over two years and up to ten years had had contact with both more interpersonal and organisational connections on average than those who had been in the country for up to 24 months. For those respondents who had been in the country for more than ten years, the mean numbers of both interpersonal and organisational connections dropped back down to around half that of respondents who had been in the country for 2-5 years. This suggests that the integration process is not linear and progress along a personal integration pathway “can be disrupted, halted or accelerated by the presence or absence of trusting relationships and life events along the way.” (Baillot et al 2020). Echoing Cheung and Phillimore, the integration process is “an active, on-going dynamic process which

can take years or may never be achieved” (Cheung and Phillimore 2013: 7). The three respondents who had lived in the UK for more than ten years were all still in the process of seeking asylum, hinting at the difficulties of progressing along an integration pathway when living for a prolonged time with insecure immigration status, presenting real structural barriers to full participation in society. The difficulties of navigating through this maze of systems and processes have been well-documented in previous work (Strang et al, 2015, 2016; Refugee Council 2018; Marsden and Harris, 2015). It must nonetheless be caveated that these numbers may be skewed by the small number of respondents in each category.

Those who said they ‘regularly’ attend or ‘sometimes’ attend HNP groups and events had had contact with more interpersonal connections than those who ‘rarely’ attended groups and events. Conversely, those who ‘rarely’ attend groups and events had contact with more organisational connections overall than those who said they ‘regularly’ or ‘sometimes’ attended. When analysed by immigration status, it appears that refugees had contact with both more interpersonal and organisational connections than those with asylum seeker status, as can be seen by the bar charts below (figures 14 and 15) There is also an indication that women had contacted marginally more interpersonal connections since attending the HNP than men, where men had contacted marginally more organisational connections than women. However, given the overall small number of respondents (21) and particularly low number of women respondents (five) compared to men (fifteen), more research would be needed to consolidate these emerging patterns and explore contributing factors.

The visual map above (generated by the SCS) clearly demonstrates the connections most SCS respondents (over 50%) were likely to have *both* had contact with and trust (represented by the blue shaded circles with a green rim) were staff at HNP, their therapist at FFT, their lawyer/solicitor, their GP and God. Staff at HNP are the only connection that over 50% of respondents said they had had contact with, trusted *and* had also been asked for reciprocal help from.

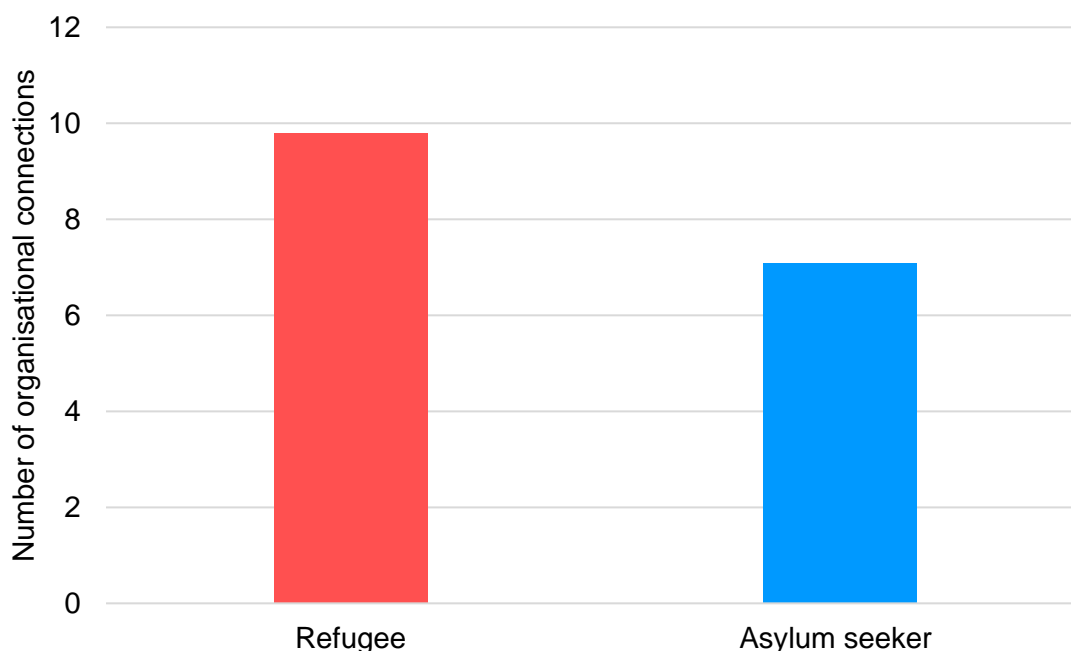
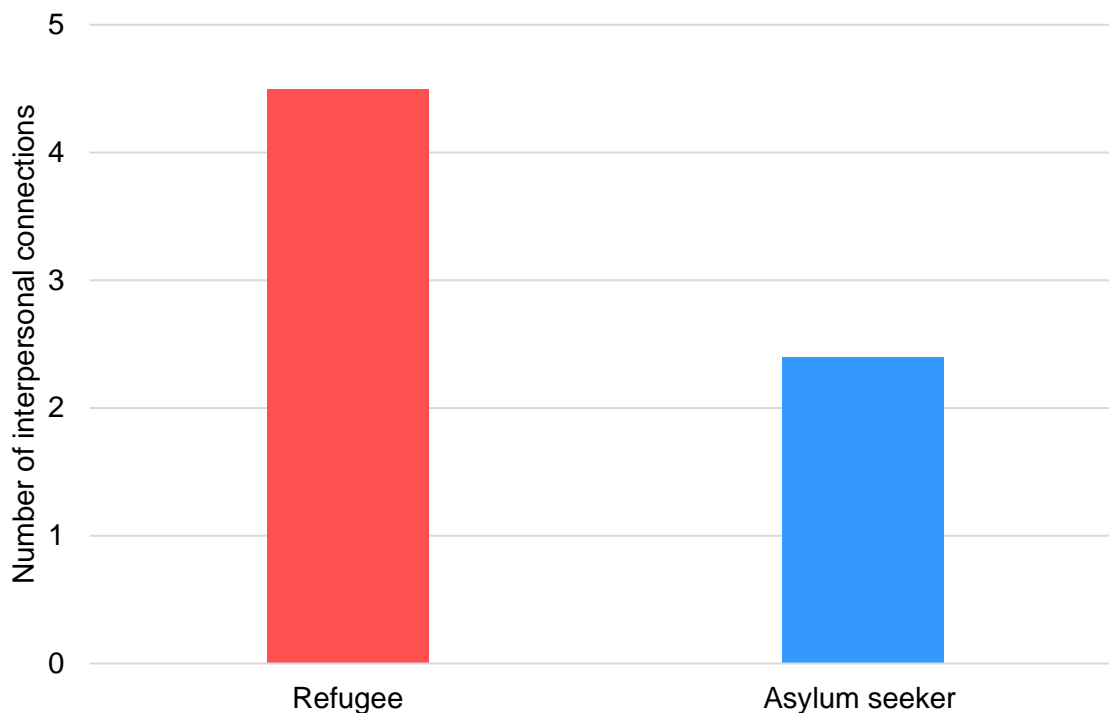


Figure 14: Mean number of ‘organisational’ connections by immigration status

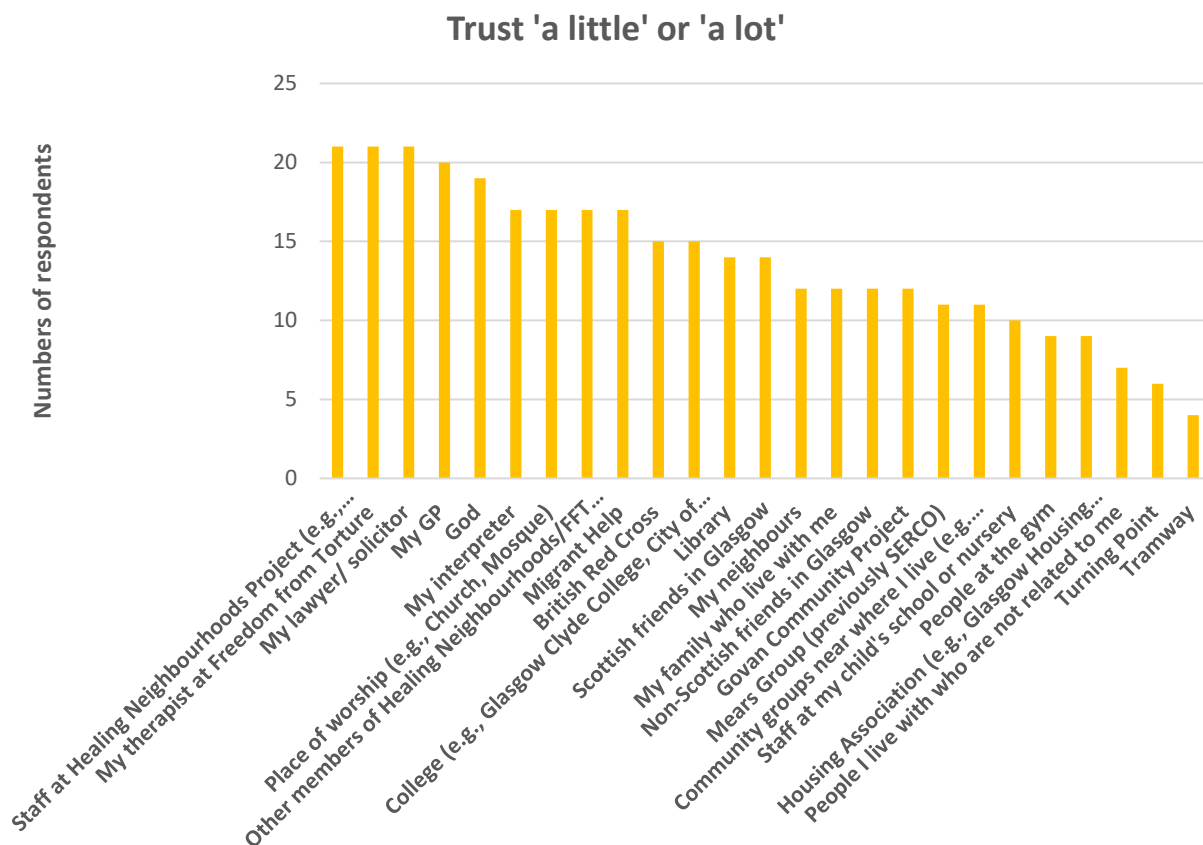




**Figure 15: Mean number of 'interpersonal' connections by immigration status**

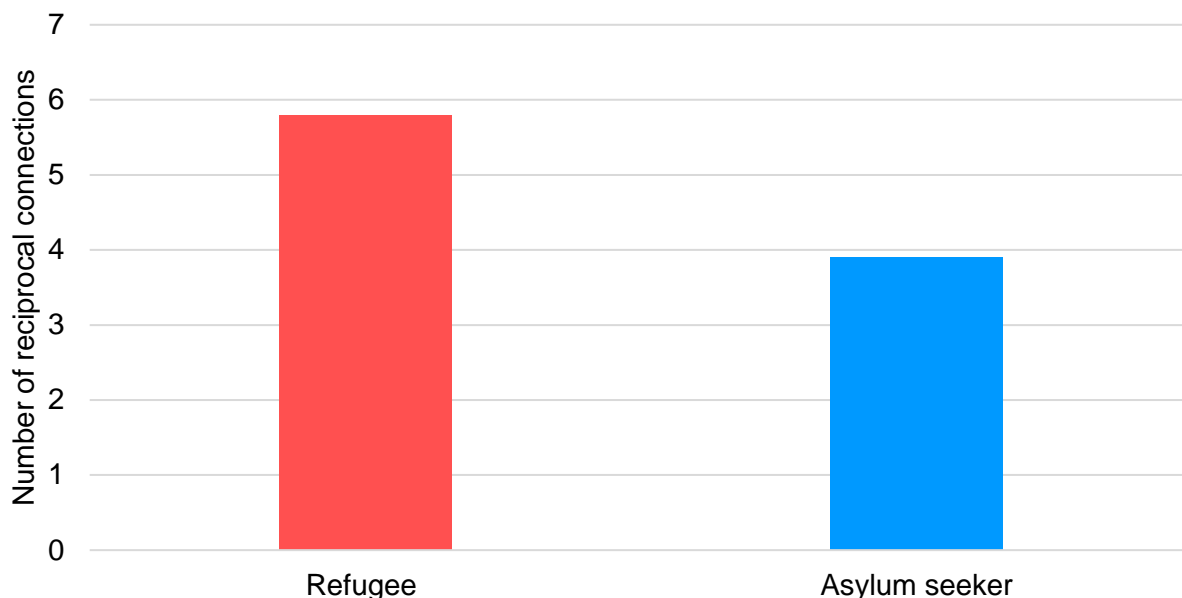
The previous section compared levels of trust in other members of HNP and selected other interpersonal connections including Scottish friends, non-Scottish friends and neighbours. It also looked at mean levels of trust in interpersonal and organisational connections and compared these by immigration status, level of engagement in HNP and also by gender. The chart below (figure 16) compares levels of trust across all 25 connections named in the SCS, highlighting that the 5 most trusted connections (in descending order) were: 'staff at HNP', 'my FFT therapist', 'my lawyer/ solicitor', 'my GP' and God. The 5 least trusted (also in descending order) were: 'people at the gym', 'housing association', 'people I live with who are not related to me', 'Turning Point' and 'Tramway'. Fourteen people reported that they did not trust 'at all' 'people I live with who are not related to me.' Six of these had lived in Glasgow for between 5 and 10 years. Although this specific issue did not come up in the interview data, the difficulties that arise from asylum seekers being housed in temporary accommodation with people they don't know and may not trust or indeed feel safe with, have been reported elsewhere, most recently in relation to the risks of shared accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic (see for example Netto and Fraser 2009; Vidal et al 2021). Twelve people indicated they did not trust 'people at the gym' at all, seven said they trusted them 'a little' and two trusted them 'a lot'. It is worth noting that respondents are asked whether how much they would trust each connection *regardless* of whether they say they have had contact with them since attending the HNP. This is to gauge levels of trust in organisations and individuals (also indicating likelihood of future

engagement) in the abstract, as well as from practical experience of engaging with them.

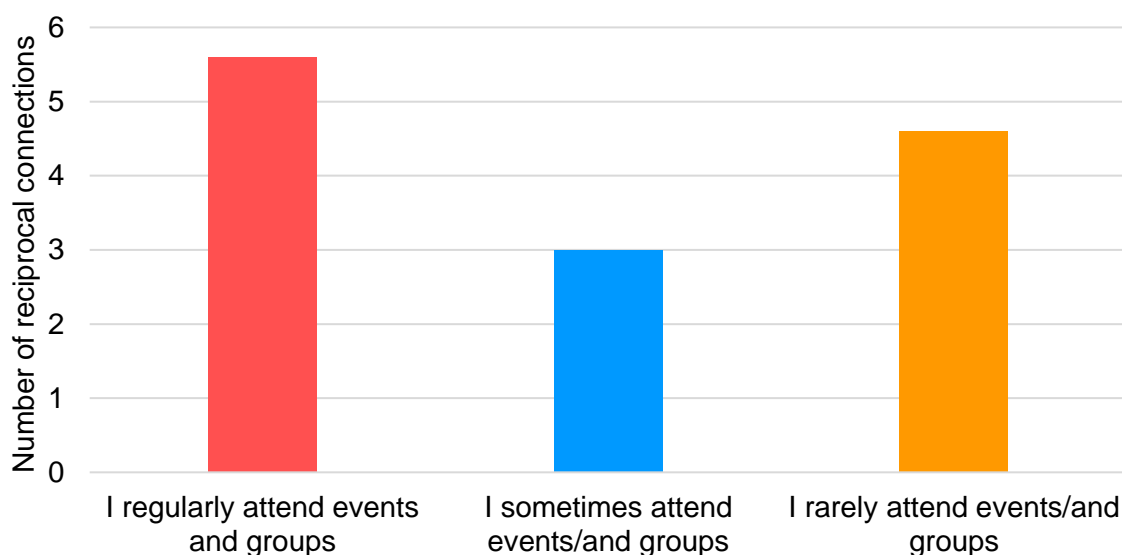


**Figure 16: Levels of trust (combined answers 'a little' and 'a lot') in all 25 connections**

With regard to reciprocity, data from the SCS again indicates that those with refugee status and those who said they 'regularly' attended HNP groups and events reported having been asked for help by more connections on average than those with asylum seeker status, or those who 'sometimes' or 'rarely' attended HNP groups and events. The mean number of reciprocal connections was also higher amongst women than men. This is illustrated by the charts below. The 5 reciprocal connections (i.e., most people said they had been asked for help by as well as had contacted since attending the HNP) were: 'HNP staff' (fourteen), 'FFT therapist' (nine), 'my lawyer/ solicitor' (nine), 'God' (nine), and 'my family who live with me' (eight). The connections least people had been asked for help from (in descending order) were: 'people at the gym', 'staff at my children's nursery', 'housing association' and 'library'.



**Figure 17: Mean number of reciprocal connections by immigration status**



**Figure 18: Mean number of reciprocal connections by level of engagement with the project**

Feedback from a few interviewees suggested that HNP could do more to refer members onto other support organisations in Glasgow. One active member said that although he had benefitted from the project himself, he had spoken to other members who felt their needs had not been addressed by the project and who had told him they did not see the point of engaging with HNP as a result. This member was saddened by hearing about these experiences and wanted to feedback that HNP could do more to refer these individuals on if they were unable to offer the support they needed. A few people wished that HNP and FFT could take on more referrals. Some felt that the HNP could do more to link members to other services which could offer support with homelessness, destitution, and mental health issues, particularly related to loneliness and isolation, when they lacked capacity to offer support themselves. In the words of two members:

*I think maybe the project, they need to find all the way, to come with assistance. Even themselves, they are not able, but they need to try to look for the different organisations that can bring help with the person (male asylum seeker).*

*I know there are people who not involved with FFT, are still feeling loneliness, so if I could help them, if I could get an opportunity, I would try to help them, that's what I'm trying to say here (male asylum seeker).*

Many interviewees said they would like to see more groups and activities at HNP, and increased capacity for the project to take on new referrals.

*I would create more activities for women (female asylum seeker).*

**Interviewer:** *What would you definitely not change about the Project?*

**Respondent:** *Meeting every week, the meetings, the projects, the cooking, the sewing and all those things that I would – I'd just like to get more and more of it (female asylum seeker).*

In summary, this section has shown a mixed picture of the number and quality of connections that individual HNP members have with a wider network of people and organisations outside of the HNP and FFT. While some members were starting to build supportive networks in Glasgow, few members said they had close contacts outside of the project. The maps below (figures 19 and 20) offer a clear visual representation of the stark contrast between one (female refugee) member who reported having many trusted and reciprocal connections and another (female asylum seeker) member who reported having very few connections at all, and not many trusted or reciprocal connections. The evidence suggests that, for many HNP members, it takes time for trusting relationships to develop. The lack of baseline data to compare to means it is not possible to attribute the presence or absence of relationships with individuals and organisations external to HNP/FFT to members' involvement with the HNP. However, the combined data from interviews and the SCS suggests that experiencing kind, respectful attitudes and actions from others are enabling factors to developing trusting relationships, in addition to a sense of safety and security. As the previous section showed, engagement with HNP staff and members has helped to engender a sense of safety and security for its members and has been shown for some to help build confidence to engage with other people, groups and organisations. Where the project has directly linked members to other activities and organisations (e.g. the gym, college), these connections could be said to support members in the 'facilitator' domains<sup>5</sup> of developing skills and confidence (e.g. in English language), and in supporting physical and mental wellbeing. This will be discussed later in the report. The impact of the project on supporting its member to connect with a greater number of local people, groups and organisations, and develop more bridging, bonding and linking social connections is less easy to assess. Factors including; not speaking a shared language, insecure immigration and housing status (for some, this also meant being housed with strangers whom they did not trust) and reduced social interaction due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions present real barriers to connecting with a wider social network. As outlined, the particular experiences of refugees and trauma survivors may pose additional challenges for HNP members in developing trusting relationships.

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<sup>5</sup> see Ndofor-Tah et al's (2019) revised Indicators of Integration Framework, represented at figure 12

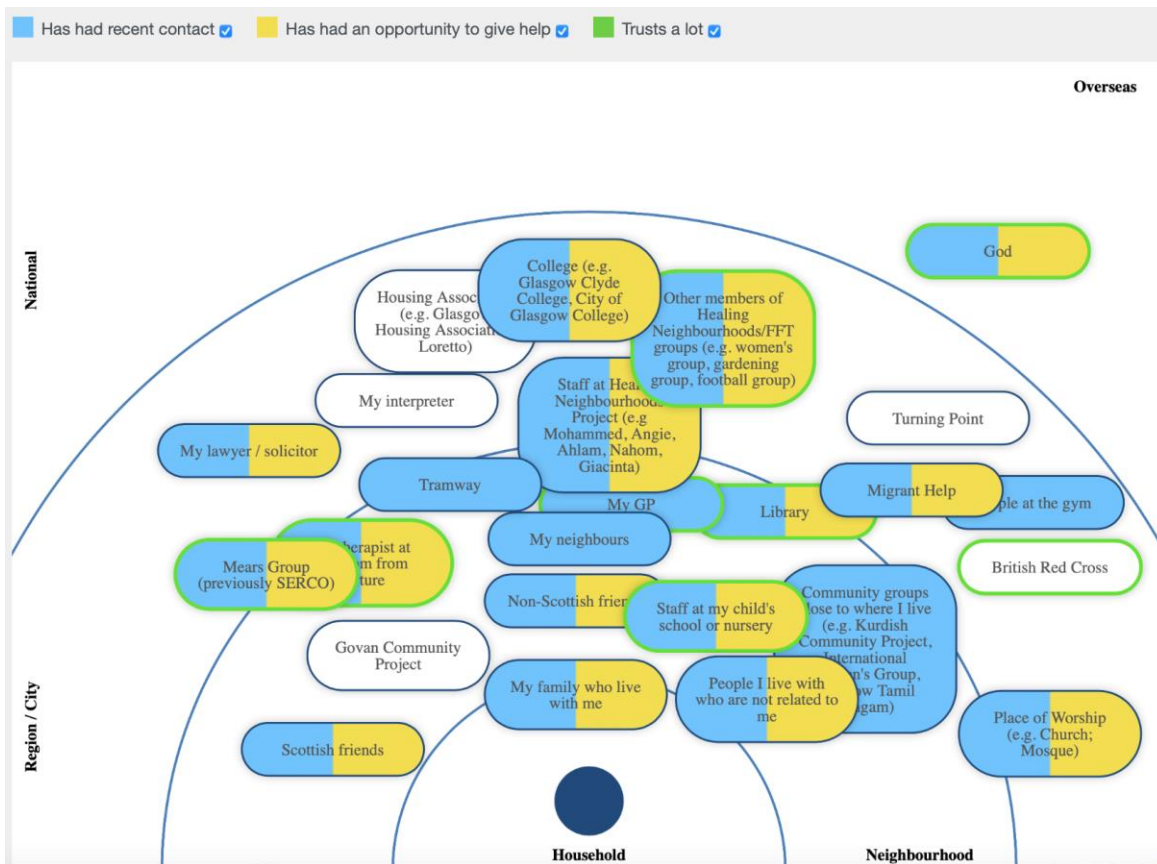


Figure 19: Map representing social connections of a member of HNP with many trusted and reciprocal connections (female refugee)

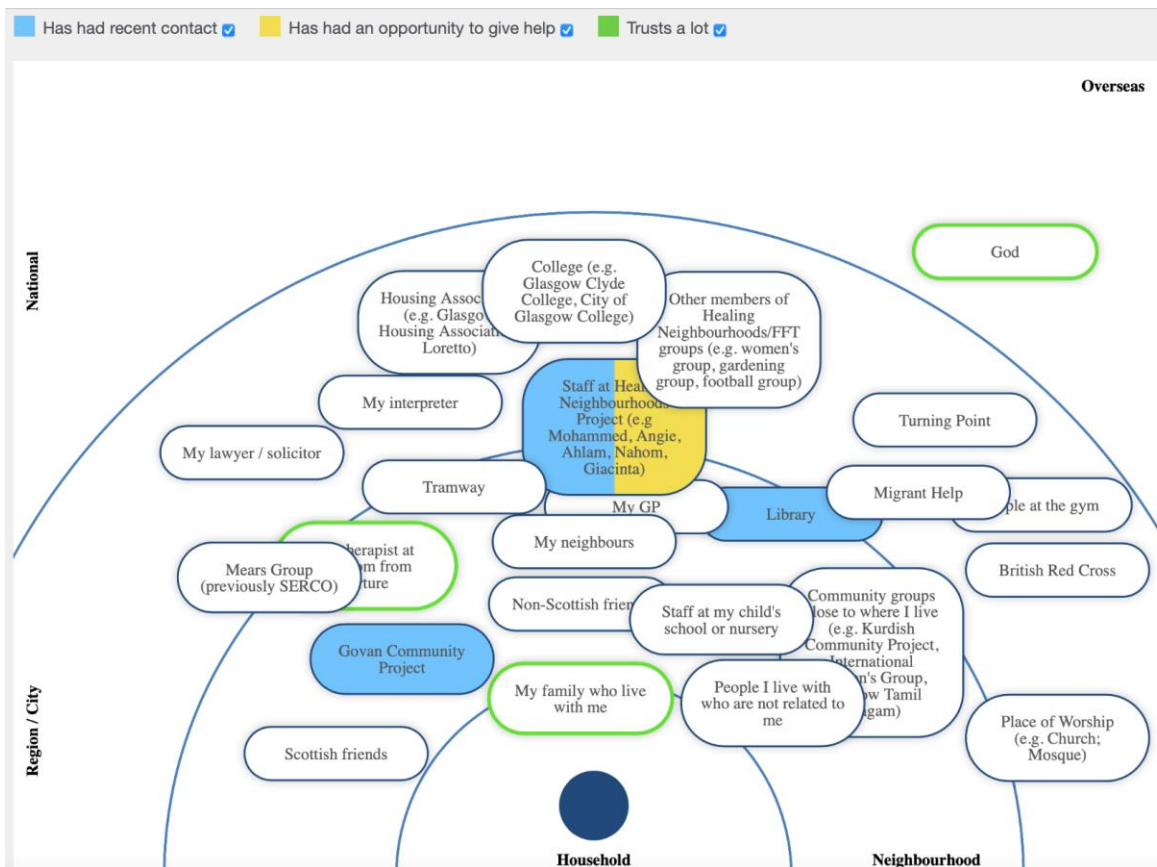


Figure 20: Map representing social connections of an HNP member with few connections (female asylum seeker)

# Emotional Wellbeing

## Outcome 3: Reduced feelings of stress

Many interviewees expressed a view that attending HNP groups and activities offered them some respite from feelings of anxiety, worry and loneliness. There was comfort in being amongst others, even if members did not feel able to contribute to discussions. Many described this as a temporary, albeit welcome, relief from negative feelings and memories. There is an indication that for others, the sense of aloneness and feelings of anxiety have lessened over time as a result of their involvement with the project. In particular, they had learned from the project and from their therapists at FFT to try and focus on the present rather than dwell on the past which they could not change, or the future which caused asylum seekers particular anxiety due to the uncertainty they face, as they await a decision on their asylum claim or appeal. Some of those who were still facing uncertainty over their asylum application described feeling less depressed and anxious than when they first joined the HNP.

*“Very helpful to divert from our focus” (male asylum seeker).*

*Yes, because when you talk with people, when they tell you their story and also you yourself, you’re not that good. You know, you’re thinking a lot about things. But kind of an exchange, because this person will tell you her story but also what she does to feel better. And it’s a kind of an exchange of therapies (female refugee).*

*I was very stressed, anxious before, but now, through this I have learned to do a lot of things on my own. For example, they taught us how to do a little garden in your home. And they told us about drawing, that could be a good activity as well. And I am so happy that I, in fact, get busy and do all this to keep myself occupied (female refugee).*

*Whenever I went to the Healing Neighbourhoods activities, there were friends like me, so it was good to know others who were on the same boat and were able to share with each other and feeling comfortable to share anything with them as they too were in the same situation (male refugee).*

Some people described a sense of solidarity in just being among others who had shared similar experiences, and either did not want to share their worries in the group or did not feel the need to say anything. In the words of one member referring to fellow HNP members: *“in a way you don’t even have to speak for them to understand”* (male asylum seeker). More than alleviating loneliness, connecting with other staff and members of HNP provided *“a light in the dark”* (female asylum seeker) for many. Members spoke of the isolation, depression and anxiety that they felt in their aloneness, and how the project had helped to address this by connecting them to others, complementing the therapy they also received. It was most eloquently described by one man, when probed about the metaphor he had used to describe how the project had changed how he feels *“a shut door opened”*:

*So, when I came here to Glasgow, I didn’t know anybody, I had no friends and being alone without friends makes you feel so lonely and feel so bored and very, very bad feeling, you know. Wherever you go it feels like the place is very tight, you know, although it’s very wide and green and full of people and busy, you know, but you feel like the place is dark and not nice at all.*

*When I said the shut door and opened, I refer to this group, or Healing group, as a door that I went through to the other, let’s say to the other world or maybe to another destination where I met other, people where I start chatting with people, maybe sharing jokes and things like that.*

*And sometimes we share our problems and questions and issues and also, they share with me their own as well, so that's how you fill your day, you feel like, now you feel like you are human. As I said, in Arabic, that's when you are a human because you are not detached from other humans. So that's the metaphor of using a shut door opened" (male refugee).*

Another member described how the project helped her take a series of steps to help her “build a life for herself” starting with encouraging her to leave the house. As described earlier in the report, this member then progressed to joining various groups and activities at HNP and even met her partner through one of the events. She indicated that her personal social network was growing to include friends she had met through her partner and through shopping locally.

*They [HNP] really give me much even confidence because I was very isolated. I was just myself at home. I was at home and very depressed and they really gave me a good, gave me help, encouraging me to go out and have a life, to build a life for myself. To go, if I'm really like terrible, just go, walk in a city centre, you know, just go there, you know, change of scene, go out (female refugee).*

One member, a female asylum seeker, says the groups have helped her psychologically, when her self-esteem has been very low and she has felt very lonely - to alleviate loneliness, and offer structure and purpose to her day, in lockdown particularly.

*The fact of knowing that I'm expecting such an activity on a such day – it helps me morally – even if I'm low. If I know that I'm waiting for something, I will make sure I wake up and I get ready (female asylum seeker).*

*Then I was placed in an accommodation which I had to share with somebody, and I was sitting a lot in there, being locked. No one was talking to me, and no one was calling me. [...] Then after that [therapist] called me. So [therapist] called me, I mean that turned out to be a light in the dark (female asylum seeker).*

The latter quote comes from another member, also a female asylum seeker, who had not long been in the country (less than a year at the time of interview) and had been afraid to leave the house. Her connection to her therapist was strong, offering her practical and emotional support and linking her to other organisations. She goes on to explain how her therapist at FFT encouraged her to overcome her fear of leaving the house and opened up her opportunities to connect to others: first to an interpreter, then referred her to the women's group at HNP, then another group and from there to attend ESOL classes at the college two days a week (online, currently). After only 11 months in the country, and from a place of trauma and fear, she illustrates how the very practical and emotional support from her therapist helped her to develop the confidence in taking gradual steps to participate more in groups and activities within HNP and in the ESOL college, and the potential to widen her social network.

*“And I had a fear of even of going out at the very beginning, so [therapist] encouraged me to go out as much as I want, and she got me an interpreter to communicate with her. [...] After that she helped me in joining a group with the likes of [name of HNP worker]*

*First she helped me to join the [name of HNP community worker] group. First [therapist] helped me to be myself at the very beginning, to be self-sufficient, to stand by myself. But first I joined the [name of HNP worker] group and then I joined another group and then after that I joined the college. And [name of therapist] also gave me English books, she gave me a phone and now at the moment actually I'm receiving data. (female asylum seeker).*

When asked about her role in the HNP, she echoes others in concluding: “well, I feel like I'm in a family now [laughs]” (female asylum seeker).

The interview data suggests that the HNP has significantly contributed to alleviating stress, depression, loneliness and anxiety amongst its membership and that the project complements the therapy work in supporting members to build confidence, self-esteem and resilience – a supportive basis for “building a life” in Glasgow. This trajectory is perhaps best illustrated by one member who, having been granted refugee status and now reunited with his wife and children, found he had less time and need to engage with HNP and FFT’s services. He describes how the support the project gave him helped him to progress along his own integration pathway thus far:

*Yeah, you know when I was on my own here, things were very different from now. I was so depressed. There was no one to help me. I had no connections with my relatives from London too. And so, this was a very good service which made me survive during my time when I was living on my own. Sessions with therapist, as was involvement with the Healing Neighbours – helped me a great deal. Having joined with my family, I’ve become a little bit OK in my mind and I have been discharged from the service I was receiving from [name] the therapist. So, slowly I dropped get involved, but I would say this is a great service that I received to survive during my time of loneliness (male refugee).*

#### **Outcome 4: Increased sense of hope**

As anticipated, asking directly about members’ hopes for the future was too traumatic for some and their feelings of powerlessness and despair were palpable. A common hope was for “peace which many described as an absence of anxiety, and freedom from trauma.

*Well to be honest I cannot say what my future would be or how my future will look like. But to be honest the bottom line is that I live in peace, this is like essential (male refugee).*

This outcome was more closely related to the previous outcome: reduced feelings of stress than anticipated. As described above, the sense was that hope meant moving from darkness into light, and expectations did not exceed a desire to live without fear. A few interviewees explained that they were employing tactics encouraged by their therapists to focus on the present.

Others could not begin to imagine peace and found the question about the future too painful. One member answered:

**Interviewer:** *[name] can I ask you about how you feel about tomorrow? Are there things you’re looking forward to?*

**Respondent:** *Nothing, I am alive. I am alive, I’m breathing. Nothing apart from the life.*

**Respondent:** *Yes. I give you one example, you know? You people have been in lockdown from last five to six months, and I can tell you these ten years I have spent like – immigration is keeping me like I’m living in a lockdown, for ten years now (male asylum seeker).*

Another participant needed to end the interview prematurely as he was distressed and unable to focus. He said “I’m dead. I’m not feeling that I’m alive” (male asylum seeker).

However, many interview respondents conveyed that they had learnt from their FFT therapists and their involvement in HNP, to try and focus on today rather than worrying about the future. Or one respondent cultivated a positive mindset of thinking about “the joy of tomorrow” despite the challenges of today.

*I used to say tomorrow is a joy for me, not for today but tomorrow (male asylum seeker).*



The hopes of individuals depended very much on their personal circumstances; for example whether they had been granted refugee status or were still in the asylum application process, and whether they had been reunited with family or were still separated from family back home. For many, their focus was on trying to manage their daily anxiety about their insecure status and what the future may hold.

*So, I don't think of my future because that makes me feel very depressed. So what I do as I was suggested by the FFT therapist, they say "Don't think of your future, rather think now, right now in the moment". I'm trying to practice that, that makes me feel better rather than thinking of my future, my dreams and so on. So, I think the moment that I live in right now (male asylum seeker).*

This interviewee went on to explain how HNP was helping him to meet others, find fellowship and mitigate loneliness; he described their role in supporting him to live more of a "normal" life in this respect. He goes on to poignantly highlight how his life might have been without HNP's support.

*They are doing, ah, they have been very helpful, and they are helping us to get our difficult situation to a normal situation, it is helping us to go towards a normal situation as any other civilians. They are helping us to have fellowship with others from different cultures, different backgrounds, that's also a great help.*

*(...) If they were not here for me, I would have felt loneliness for years (male asylum seeker).*

Rather than asking how people felt about the future, which appeared painful for most, many interviewees were instead asked what they were looking forward to when we come out of lockdown. Again, depending on their situation, interviewees variously answered that they were looking forward to things like seeing people again, socialising and having a hug, or meeting people in the HNP group in person for the first time (for one woman who had joined the project at the start of lockdown), and attending college classes in person. Others had longer term aspirations to, for example, become a professional footballer, help others, be reunited with their family, and/ or get a job in order to provide better for their families, and improve their English. One member who had been recently reunited with his family particularly mentioned a desire for their children to be able to pursue their studies, and his whole family to be able to progress as their early integration into life in the UK had been halted by the lockdown. Pragmatically, he had a two-year plan to getting his family settled in Glasgow. He put it thus:

*So, hopefully, we will be fine, and, within two years' time, despite of pandemic and we will reach a level to a settle life here and things will be OK for us (male refugee).*

Another single mother living with her children described how she would like to be able to improve life for her children:

*I would like to find a job so that would mean that I would be able to look after my children better, and especially my younger one (female refugee).*

When asked whether her feelings about the future had changed in the last few years she said:

*Nothing has really changed, you know? The only big change for me was to obtain my status (female refugee).*

For those still in the asylum application process, some voiced their desire to get status and for others this was implicit through the whole interview as the main barrier to them being able to

contemplate a future. One young man was remaining optimistic about the future, despite his frustrations at being unable to be progress as a professional footballer while he was still seeking asylum and unable to take on paid work. When asked what he was looking forward to most, he said:

*Just to get that further reply from the Home Office and I can, you know, kind of live my life and start driving lessons, start driving, get my like licence and things like that, you know, just little things. Having a job and just being able to be financially stable, so yeah (male asylum seeker).*

While the HNP and FFT therapists were able to support their members to manage and alleviate anxiety about the future, it was evident from the interviews that the main barrier for those still in the asylum process to an increased sense of hope was receiving a positive decision on their asylum application. For those who had received refugee status, the key concerns were to be able to find work. For most, the aspiration was beyond gratitude for being alive, was to build a 'normal' life with all the mundane aspirations that entails; for example, learning to drive, getting a job and educating their children.

## Empowerment

### Outcome 5: Greater sense of self-efficacy

Interviewees were asked three core questions in relation to this outcome: how they would describe their role in the HNP; whether there were things they'd learned about themselves since they'd been with the project; and whether they had gained any new skills or knowledge since they'd been with HNP. A number of themes emerged from the interview data pertaining to self-efficacy including learning and sharing new skills and interests; feeling seen and having their skills recognised; increased confidence and improved wellbeing; and skills in self-management and in relating to others.

Interviewees said they enjoyed learning new skills and interests in the HNP groups – women particularly mentioned learning to sew, knit and cook.

*I actually learned how to knit, because one of the women there showed us how to knit. And we knitted a lot of things – a table cover, for example. And I also learn how to bake a cake and some galettes. And we also shared the recipes for some dishes (female refugee).*

Additionally, learning new skills had provided a much-needed distraction for many, helping to alleviate anxiety.

*Making stuff makes you forget about your past for the moment you are busy doing those things. They are teaching you. They are showing you how to do things which you didn't know you could do but doing that has really been helpful for me because it helped me to forget a bit about my past (female asylum seeker).*

A number of participants expressed pride at being able to not only learn new skills, but also have the opportunity to share their skills with other HNP members; for example their seamstress, cooking, singing, advocacy or leadership skills. Feeling valued and recognised for their contribution seemed to bolster members' confidence and self-esteem.

*Well, my role is like everybody else's role. I'm a client, but it's good to be able to share what you know with other people (female refugee).*

*I also was invited to another event and I was asked to sing and I did and people said "Yes, your voice is nice and you can sing as well" (male refugee).*

Many of the members of the women's group spoke with particular pride of their contribution to a recipe book that was printed in hard copy by the project and distributed to HNP members as well as the wider public. The recipe book made a big impression on the women who were involved – the whole process of contributing recipes, through to receiving a hardback copy of the book had contributed to the women's sense of being seen and had undoubtedly boosted their self-esteem.

**Interviewer:** *What did you enjoy about doing the recipe book?*

**Respondent:** *The fact of seeing my image in that book. My recipe. It made me feel good. I found that I was encouraged to do more.*

**Interviewer:** *So, it was good for your confidence to see it realised in a book like that? Is that right?*

**Respondent:** *I was lost. It lifted my confidence and I know that I can do something (female asylum seeker).*

*I was still have been excited when I saw it become really a book, like you know, like a recipe book, so I can go back, I see my own recipe there and I see other women's recipes there from other countries (female refugee).*

Indications were that members felt the combination of being in a safe and companionable environment, supported to learn new skills and offered respite from anxiety had knock on effects in other domains of their lives and learning, particularly English language. One HNP member described how he wasn't able to focus on formally learning English due to being "full of worries". However, when he started to interact with others in the project, he started to feel comfortable enough to practice speaking the English that he had learnt with others:

*I started to speak with other people which made me to feel ease to speak English and I think that was the turning point for me to speaking English (male refugee).*

Another participant described how she had been unable to take part in ESOL classes at the college due to a lack of childcare. However, the fact that HNP offered an English class which she could bring her toddler to, removed a very practical barrier to her attendance. When asked whether she had gained any skills or knowledge since attending HNP, she said:

*One of the major things I really make the progress and that is my English language, I went from zero in English. I even didn't know how to say "Hello you", or you know, the good and things. In English now I feel like I'm much, much better with comparing myself before that. Because I didn't attend a college or the ESOL to learn the English because I have a baby, because of my kids, I didn't have a chance (female refugee).*

In addition to feeling nurtured and cared for by HNP, a few respondents described how the project had "opened doors" for them, encouraging them to identify and pursue their personal integration goals. The project had not only offered emotional but practical support, for example by providing clothes and financial help, and helping members access English language and higher education courses. The following is worth quoting in length as it eloquently describes how this member felt supported and empowered to pursue his own goals:

*I think for the Healing Neighbourhoods Project, that is a wonderful project. It's helping people to showing up their vision, what they want to do. And then they open the doors for the people. Like myself, when I joined Healing Neighbourhoods Project, the first question they asked me, what do you think about yourself for tomorrow? That was the first question. And my answer straightaway was "I want to be the part of the community".*

*And they ask me again, "How are you going to be part of the community?" I said, "I need also to give my knowledge to the community". "How are you going to give your knowledge to the community?" "I need to educate myself". I need to educate myself because I cannot give knowledge to the communities if I'm not educated myself. So first give me opportunities, give me a chance to study. So, everything I'm going to get from my education, I'm going to give back to the community, exactly what I'm doing now (male asylum seeker).*

In addition to sharing skills, some members felt a sense of empowerment in being able to reciprocate and extend the support they had been given to others. Support that was given to others included encouraging others to seek help from HNP or FFT, being an advocate for other asylum seekers, and looking out for others. As one member put it *"We were all able to help each other, so it kinda went both ways"* and, linking back to the outcome relating to solidarity, he goes on to say:

*You just settle in and you just think, "OK, I'm not the only one in this kind of situation, there's other people there that's got your back" (male asylum seeker).*

As described in relation to the improved wellbeing outcomes (increased sense of hope and reduced stress), members also shared insights into their personal learning and growth in the sense of learning to manage their anxiety about the future and do things to alleviate loneliness and depression. Overall, this speaks to the skills in resilience to deal with the challenges of daily life, or in the words again of a member *"to be self-sufficient, to stand by myself"* (female asylum seeker).

## **Outcome 6: Improved feeling of having voices heard/ advocacy**

Interviewees were asked if they felt that their voices were heard both within and out with the HNP. They were also asked which organisations they had had contact with outside of HNP and whether they felt those organisations had responded to them.

Within the project, there was a general consensus that HNP members felt supported and encouraged to participate in the groups and activities, although not all felt that they wanted to take the opportunity to speak. One member indicated this was because he did not want to burden other members with his worries in addition their own and preferred to save his thoughts and worries for the trained professionals to support him with. As discussed earlier, a few others were more shy or reticent to speak in groups, but no-one attributed the fact they did not speak out to a fear of not being heard or of not having their opinions respected. As one member who preferred not to speak put it: *"Yes, yes. But I'm scared of talking but when I talk, yeah, they hear me"* (female asylum seeker). Another indicated he lacked confidence to speak or to take a leadership role because he felt he lacked the education to express himself.

Again, the supportive nature of the staff and the environment at HNP was felt to enable people to feel comfortable to speak and be heard. Additionally, some members appreciated the care and sensitivity for individual needs by, for example, structuring groups and activities at a later

time, to suit those who were on medication that meant they slept late and asking after people's families.

On a practical level, members also felt empowered to speak because they had been provided with interpreting support with a regular interpreter, or by the fact that some project staff spoke their language. As noted earlier, interpreters were considered an important connection for many SCS respondents too, with this connection ranking 6<sup>th</sup> most trusted.

**Interviewer:** *Can I ask, more generally, do you feel that your voice is heard within the "Healing Neighbourhoods Project?"*

**Respondent:** *Yes. Because [name of HNP community worker] speaks French (female asylum seeker).*

Conversely, however, one member suggested it could feel disempowering to have to communicate through an interpreter and this had put people they knew off from engaging with HNP groups.

The picture was more mixed when it came to being heard outside of HNP. While two male interviewees felt they had been heard on a public platform at a number of HNP events, at least three other interviewees (male and female) indicated that they felt not all HNP members were given equal opportunity to speak or perform at public events. There was a sense that the 'usual suspects' were given a platform to speak from, and a few examples were given of members feeling they were either not offered a voice at public events or had been lined up to speak and then replaced with someone else at last minute.

*I just want to give you an example. For example, we went to the parliament in Edinburgh and there was one of us was going to talk during the meeting and tell her story. But at the last moment it was a change of plan, and they choose somebody else, and this lady was very upset about it. When I talked to her, she told me that she was put aside and she was not happy about it, and she doesn't know why. So, I think she talked to a clinician and the clinician talked to the person who organised the group. But I don't think that resolved anything because it's still happening (female refugee).*

One interviewee felt he and others from his country had not been represented at an HNP event held at the Scottish Parliament, but he attributed this to poor management of the situation, rather than deliberate lack of consultation.

*I felt that that was a very good opportunity for us to explain to the MP's or whoever were there, to show how hard life is in [my country]. But we were denied that opportunity. That is why I was not happy with the way that we were treated on this occasion (male asylum seeker).*

It is worth adding the caveat that this interviewee also said that he found it difficult to follow through/ stay consistently engaged in pursuing issues and tracking outcomes due to his own memory issues:

*But for me, you know, I feel like I have memory problems because even though I suggest something to happen, I might forget that. I wouldn't be able to monitor whether that's going to happen, that is happening or whatever, because of my memory problem here, I have sort of trouble to see the outcome of that (male asylum seeker).*

The HNP had invited some external stakeholders to speak to its members including from Mears Group. A few interviewees felt there was a lack of feedback or follow up to let them know what action had been taken by these stakeholders in response to hearing their views and suggestions. This left the following interviewee feeling used and unheard.

*Like when we talk to people, and remember the project had invited a whole lot of people, I can't remember everyone, but I know the project had invited a whole lot of people and they come, ask us questions, they talk to us and then we never hear any feedback or hear anything about it anymore. So for me, our voices are not heard, they come and use us and then that's it (female asylum seeker).*

In conclusion, all interviewees felt they were heard within HNP, or were confident they would be if they chose to speak. While some members lacked confidence or a desire to speak out in groups or in public forums, there was a sense that some other members who wanted to speak in public events felt they had not been given an equal opportunity to do so. It is also worth reiterating the very real barrier to feeling heard by those who are still in the asylum application process. In the words of this resolutely optimistic asylum seeker, advocate and campaigner when asked whether he feels his voice is heard by decision makers, he replies:

*It's not yet heard but we are keep on trying our best. It's not been heard yet because can you imagine like I give my case, I been living in the country for almost 15 years, but I am still an asylum seeker, I'm not allowed to work, I'm not allowed to do anything, but I'm keep on trying my best to move on with my life (male asylum seeker).*

## **Outcome 7. Other stakeholders have better understanding of experiences of torture survivors**

This section is based on interviews with 5 individuals from 4 external stakeholder organisations. These were: the Scottish Football Association (SFA), Mears Group (Mears), Community InfoSource (CIS) and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGCC). They were asked about their role and connection with HNP, about what they had learned from that connection, and how it had influenced their work.

In contrast to those members of HNP who felt that they had not been heard by visiting external stakeholders or had feedback on the impact of their discussions, the 4 external stakeholder organisations interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their own learning from partnering with the HNP. The learning they gained from their interaction with HNP staff and members, and the impact of that learning will be discussed here.

All stakeholders (except CIS) said they had learnt about the information needs and experiences of HNP members from their interactions with them and with HNP staff. The CIS works with people who have suffered trauma and persecution, including asylum seekers, so was less on a 'fact finding' mission than the SFA who were new to developing refugee programs at the start of their partnership, and Mears Group who were also new to working with asylum seekers in particular, as opposed to other homeless people. NHSGCC were specifically working with HNP to better understand the information needs of their members relating to Covid-19.

*And to be honest, it was totally invaluable, because at that time we were like a deer caught in the headlights, you know? We didn't have a great knowledge of the area or of even the landscape. So, they've really kind of educated us in a lot of the kind of issues that go along with having that status in the UK (SFA).*

*To be honest, back then it was a fact-finding, learning for me, to look and see what the service users had experienced. For them to share some of, as I say, their journeys with me and what they'd experienced from either their home country coming over to Scotland or the UK (Mears).*

In particular, NHSGCC learnt about where HNP members were getting their information from regarding Covid-19 restrictions and were able to dispel some misinformation and direct members towards information channels more appropriate to the Scottish context. NHSGCC also learnt useful information that they could take back to their organisation, such as which languages people from BAME communities needed NHS information printed in, how to challenge misinformation and open up communication channels to more effectively meet their needs.

*So that's learning for me or for my organisation, because that's – like I said, we wanted to get the baseline study and find out what the issues are before we start giving them information which is not tuned to their needs, you know? (NHSGCC).*

Both the SFA and NHSGCC said their partnership with HNP had led them to change their model of working with HNP members to be more collaborative and 'peer-led'. The SFA commented on the very person-centred approach employed by HNP and how the staff helped them to see they needed to co-produce their football coaching programme with refugees themselves, leading to their redesigning their national programme and incorporating a peer coaching element. The SFA also took expert advice to help target the national roll-out of their refugee program to dispersal areas including Glasgow and Dundee.

*And I think where we went wrong initially in embarking on this area of work, we thought that we could design a programme and roll it out nationally. But we very quickly realised that we have to be able to react to the needs within the local community. So yeah, they basically kind of helped us design the entire project and we've just really been the vehicle to allow activity to happen, I would say (SFA).*

Similarly, NHSGCC adapted their Covid-19 education programme for third sector organisations to incorporate a 'peer model,' based on their experience of working with HNP to provide information and education to their staff and members. NHSGCC trained HNP community workers as peer educators to deliver their education programs to their members.

All the external stakeholders interviewed commented on the success of the partnership between themselves and HNP, particularly attributing this to the relationship that had developed between themselves, the senior community development worker and centre manager at HNP as key 'links'.

*I think the success of the programme has really been down to the partnership. That's been key in driving it forward (SFA).*

*Yeah, we learned a lot from this Healing Neighbourhoods project, because first of all, it gave us a good – working in partnership, you know, it has very promising outcome (NHSGCC).*

While the SFA and NHSGCC found the partnership helped to better tailor their services to the needs of asylum seekers in particular and BAME communities more widely, CIS described how the partnership linked them to other organisations and funding to support and strengthen their work.

*So, our connection with them connected us to the Scottish Football Association, connected us to the Jimmy Johnstone Academy. It connected us to the police, which is far more important now (CIS).*

The project manager at CIS described how the partnership had opened up opportunities for members from both CIS and HNP to play football with the police and share a meal with them in the clubhouse afterwards, thereby breaking down fear and suspicion based on their members' experiences with the police in their home countries.

*So, we encouraged people and at the end there is a meal, and they are sitting with the people and chatting. So, it is really amazing. Playing football with them, sitting with them and sharing a meal with them. And this is quite amazing, and people got – changed their sentiment about everything (CIS).*

It also meant the two organisations could share costs and resulted in the police covering the cost of the football pitch hire. The partnership had also strengthened a two-way referral system between HNP and CIS, increasing trust of members in the organisation and, in some cases, encouraging male members of HNP to overcome taboos around discussing gender-based violence and get involved with CIS workshops tackling the subject. This was in addition to crossover between HNP membership and CIS's Scottish Asylum Seekers Residents Association.

*Well, I think these are the main things that have happened. I mean, it's ongoing, which means it's a two-way process of signposting to each other. And it has given us opportunity when we tell our clients that we can refer you to this organisation or to this – you know? This is an added value for us. So you know, having this kind of relationship, it breaks the barrier as well as, you know, it is the approach of the other people to our project, which, as I said, it is a taboo type (CIS).*

Finally, NHSGCC, the SFA and Mears all attributed the success of their partnership with HNP to the strength of the relationships HNP had built with their members and the holistic, person-centred nature of their work. Mears were particularly keen to convey the need for more funding to increase HNP's capacity for referrals to be able to fulfil demand:

*And how they [HNP] do it, and I think for me it is quite unique in my experience. And I think that's absolutely to their credit. And I just wish there was more funding, that we could have more of it because they do a fantastic job (Mears).*



## Conclusion

The overall emergent picture from the interview and SCS data is that, the practical and emotional support offered through being connected to others has helped HNP members to develop confidence and self-esteem. The supportive environment at HNP could be said to offer a base (a “family” even) from which some have started to foster connections with others that extend beyond the safety of FFT offices. This has resonance with the socio-ecological model; the ‘connections continuum’ (see figure 5 below) developed from previous research with recently reunited refugee families (Baillot et al. 2020). There is evidence to suggest that HNP, in complement to the therapy work, has supported some members travel a relative distance along the integration pathway in terms of developing and consolidating trusted relationships. However, travel along the pathway is slow for many given their experience of trauma, their evident reticence to trust others, and their insecure immigration status. Progress along this pathway is not linear and is dependent on personal circumstances. Progress can be halted or disrupted by life events and, not least, by the insecure nature of living as an asylum seeker in the UK which presents a major structural barrier to integration.

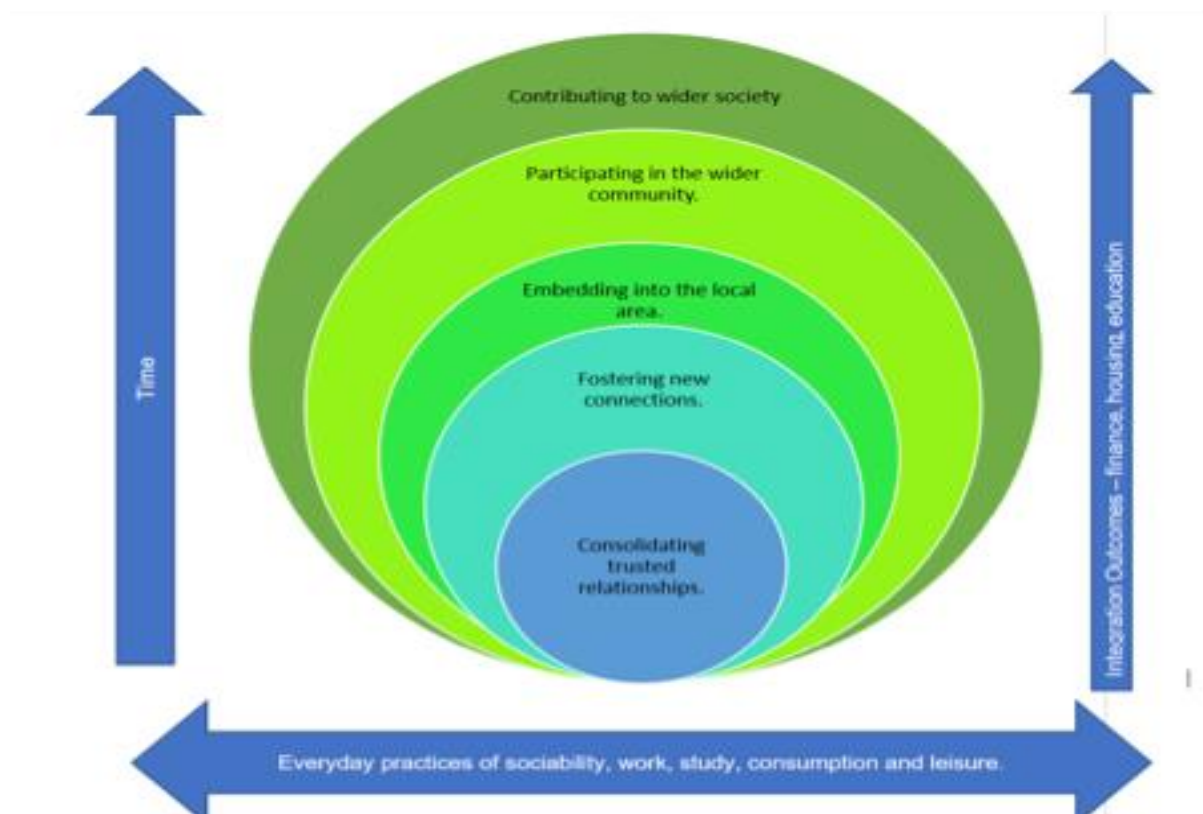


Figure 21: The Connections Continuum – the role of connections in integration

Specific learnings from the review are highlighted under the seven intended outcomes, below:

### Outcome 1: Increased social support within the group/ solidarity

There is strong evidence to suggest that involvement with the HNP has played a key role in helping members to establish emotionally supportive ('bonding') relationships with both staff and other members. The groups and activities offered an opportunity for many to develop trusting relationships with others in a safe and nurturing environment.

### **Outcome 2: Greater connection with local networks**

There is limited evidence of the project's impact on increasing the breadth and depth of member's connection with a wider network of individuals, groups and organisations beyond HNP and FFT. The emerging picture of members' social connectedness is mixed, and it is not possible to directly attribute established connections to engagement with the project. The data suggests that HNP members may be more hesitant, and take longer to develop trusting relationships, given their particular experiences as trauma survivors. Other barriers to connecting with a wider social network included: not speaking a shared language; insecure immigration and housing status (for some, this also meant being housed with strangers whom they did not trust); and reduced social interaction due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Demonstrations of kindness and respect from others, particularly neighbours had facilitated relationships for a small number of interviewees.

### **Outcome 3: Reduced feelings of stress**

The interview data suggests that HNP has significantly contributed to alleviating feelings of stress, depression, loneliness and anxiety among its members. Engagement with staff and other project members complements the work with FFT's therapists by offering structured activities, purpose, and the opportunity for connection with others.

### **Outcome 4: Increased sense of hope**

For those members of HNP who were still in the asylum application process, the most they could hope for was to find "peace" and, at best, the project offered them some respite from anxiety about their future. Others felt supported by staff members to identify and pursue their aspirations for leading a 'normal' life.

### **Outcome 5: Greater sense of self-efficacy**

Indications from the data are that the opportunities to learn and share skills helped members to feel valued and recognised for their contributions. For some, this led to increased confidence and self-esteem, which also had knock on effects in other domains of their lives, particularly in feeling more confident to practice speaking English with others. Additionally, some members felt empowered by having opportunities to reciprocate and extend the support they had been given to other HNP members.

### **Outcome 6: Improved feeling of having voices heard/ advocacy**

There was an emerging consensus that HNP members felt supported and encouraged to speak within the project, and felt they were heard. The picture is more mixed in relation to being heard by others outside of HNP; at least three members expressed the view that not all HNP members were given equal opportunity to speak or perform at public events organised by the project. There was also a suggestion that more could be done to feedback to members on the outcome of discussions with external stakeholders.

### **Outcome 7: Other stakeholders have a better understanding of experiences of torture survivors**

Interviews with the four external organisations were overwhelmingly positive about their learning from their connection with HNP. The learning they had gained about the needs and experiences of HNP members had helped organisations to provide more targeted information and interventions where needed. Two organisations had also changed their model of working to be more collaborative and peer-led, as a result of their interaction with the project and its members.

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## Annex A: HNP Social Connections Survey Questions

The purpose of using the social connections survey in this particular project is as part of a review of the Healing Neighbourhoods Project (a project run by Freedom from Torture in Glasgow). The review will explore how the project is envisaged to work; perceived outcomes; and the challenges and unexpected benefits of the project. The study will further explore the perceived value of friendships made either in the HNP group, or within local networks in Glasgow as the basis for an academic publication.

The social connections survey in particular aims to measure how the Healing Neighbourhoods Project has contributed to two identified outcomes that are relevant to the broad themes of social support. These outcomes are:

3. HNP clients experience increased social support within the group/ solidarity
4. HNP clients experience a greater connection with local networks
5. It additionally aims to explore the commonalities and differences (in experience or background) that might form the basis for a trusting connection (friendship) with other individuals living in Glasgow

This quantitative data will be triangulated with qualitative data from in-depth individual interviews with a small sample of HNP clients. We also plan to conduct a few stakeholder interviews to understand a complimentary intended outcome: Other stakeholders have better understanding of experiences of torture survivors.

### **A. Interview intro text**

This online survey is part of a research study conducted by Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh with the Healing Neighbourhoods Project/ Freedom from Torture (FFT). As part of our study, we are inviting you to take part in the survey, to help us understand more about your connections with people and organisations in Glasgow.

It should only take approximately 20 minutes to fill out and is entirely voluntary. We hope that our research will help Freedom from Torture and their funders understand more about the difference the Healing Neighbourhoods Project is making to their clients, and how they might develop their services.

### **B. Consent Question**

I understand that my participation in this survey is entirely voluntary; that only the Queen Margaret University research team and the FFT will have access to my answers; that my answers will be analysed only for the purpose of research on refugee integration and to develop FFT's services; and that I can choose to withdraw my participation in this survey at any point.

- Agree - please continue to the next page
- Disagree - please close the browser tab

### **C. Demographic Intro Text**

The next page of the survey asks you a series of questions about you. This information is confidential and anonymous. It will have no effect upon the services you receive from Freedom from Torture or any other organisation. It will have no effect whatsoever on your asylum claim. We ask these questions so that we can understand the ways that people's personal circumstances affect their social connections.

<b>1. How old are you?</b>
<b>18-24</b>
<b>26-35</b>
<b>36-45</b>
<b>46 +</b>
<b>2. What is your gender?</b>
<b>Man</b>
<b>Woman</b>
<b>Non-binary</b>
<b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>3. What is your immigration status?</b>
<b>Asylum Seeker</b>
<b>Refugee</b>
<b>4. How would you describe your household where you live now?</b>
<b>I live alone</b>
<b>I live with my spouse/ partner</b>
I live with one or more of my children.
<b>I live with my spouse/ partner and one or more of my children</b>
<b>I live with other adults who are not related to me</b>
<b>5. How long have you lived in the UK?</b>

<b><i>0-6 months</i></b>
<b><i>7-12 months</i></b>
<b><i>13 months - 24 months</i></b>
<b><i>Longer than 2 years but less than 5 years</i></b>
<b><i>5- 10 years</i></b>
<b><i>More than 10 years</i></b>
<b><i>6. How long have you lived in Glasgow?</i></b>
<b><i>0-6 months</i></b>
<b><i>7-12 months</i></b>
<b><i>13 months - 24 months</i></b>
<b><i>Longer than 2 years but less than 5 years</i></b>
<b><i>5 to 10 years</i></b>
<b><i>More than 10 years</i></b>
<b><i>7. How confident do you feel to start a conversation in English with someone you have not met before?</i></b>
<b><i>I almost always feel confident</i></b>
<b><i>I feel confident in some situations</i></b>
<b><i>I rarely feel confident</i></b>
<b><i>8. How would you describe your involvement in the Healing Neighbourhoods Project?</i></b>
<b><i>I regularly attend groups and events</i></b>
<b><i>I sometimes attend groups and/or events</i></b>
<b><i>I rarely attend groups and/or events</i></b>

#### **D. Contact, Trust and Reciprocity Questions:**

##### **Recent contact intro text**

The next set of questions asks you about which people and organisations you've had contact with in since you first started attending the Healing Neighbourhoods Project. If you do not know the person or organisation, then you can just select 'no'.

##### **Trust intro text**

The next set of questions are about how much you trust these people and organisations. If you do not know of the person or organisation, you can select 'not applicable'.

##### **Reciprocity Intro text**

The next set of questions are about whether you have had an opportunity to provide practical or emotional help to any of these people or organisations since you first started attending the Healing Neighbourhoods Project.



**The following three questions will be asked about each of the 29 preliminary connections identified below**

- Have you spoken to, or asked this person or organisation for help since you started attending the HNP?
- How much do you trust this person or organisation?
- Has this person or organisation asked you for help since you started attending the HNP?

<b>1. Other members of Healing Neighbourhoods/FFT groups (e.g. women's group, gardening group, football group)</b>
<b>2. Scottish friends</b>
<b>3. My family who live with me</b>
<b>4. Non-Scottish friends</b>
<b>5. Govan Community Project</b>
<b>6. Tramway</b>
<b>7. Library</b>
<b>8. God</b>
<b>9. Place of worship (e.g. Church, Mosque)</b>
<b>10. Mears Group (previously SERCO)</b>
<b>11. British Red Cross</b>
<b>12. College (e.g. Glasgow Clyde College, City of Glasgow College)</b>
<b>13. Housing Association (e.g. Glasgow Housing Association, Loretto)</b>
<b>14. Turning Point</b>
<b>15. Migrant Help</b>
<b>16. Staff at Healing Neighbourhoods Project (e.g. Mohammed, Angie, Ahlam, Nahom)</b>
<b>17. My therapist at Freedom from Torture</b>
<b>18. My neighbours</b>
<b>19. Staff at my child's school or nursery</b>
<b>20. My GP</b>
<b>21. My interpreter</b>
<b>22. People I live with who are not related to me</b>
<b>23. My lawyer/ solicitor</b>
<b>24. Community groups close to where I live (e.g. Kurdish Community Project, International Women's Group, Glasgow Tamil Sangam)</b>

## 25. People at the gym

### **Thank you text**

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey, we really appreciate your help! Below is a list of your responses. Please remember to click 'save interview' at the bottom of this page.