

CRICKET AND CULTURE

Following the awareness event run by Kent Cricket Community Trust (KCCT) in January, which formed part of the refugee and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) programme currently being delivered by the trust, we have developed this guide in support of the event, for clubs and coaches supporting refugee and UASC young people.

To watch the recorded session, visit <https://youtu.be/DhOFXA2Hdc>

Understanding Asylum

The UK is home to approx. 1% of the 27.1 million refugees who were forcibly displaced across the world.

The Refugee Council can provide facts, bust myths, and provide a true picture of those seeking asylum.

Details can be found at <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/the-truth-about-asylum/>

Voice of a Foster Carer of a Afghanistan Asylum Seeker

“Afghanistan young people have often barely experienced playing sport, but the passion and dedication to cricket seems to have grown. It is one of the only pastimes known”.

“Usually played in a street format, with a tennis ball covered in tape and some makeshift kit, there is an understanding of the basic aims and rules of the game. But it tends to be a fast and furious game of swinging wildly for 6’s and not so much understanding of the ‘team’, or ability to read other players as they bat or bowl”.

“Arriving in the UK and often feeling displaced, disoriented, scared or lonely, sport is a major aid in mental and physical well-being as well as a place to practice language and interaction with others - in a time of confusion and worry. Cricket and sport are often one of the sole sources of normalising their life and providing a sense of achievement, pride, and a positive sense of self”

“Being a part of a cricket team and club provides a feeling of engagement and acceptance and enables Afghan young people to be seen by people other than in a ‘charitable or needy’ way. It promotes understanding of the different ways they can contribute to our society and merge their culture with ours”.

Afghanistan Young players' feedback:

“Many of the young people are wary of asking questions, asking for help, or admitting they don't understand something. They appreciate being welcomed into the team and people taking a little time to check understanding and that they know what they're doing”.

Key Considerations

When Coaching:

- Gain an understanding of how the young people/players have played previously.
- Direct them to the social media pages so they see messages, explaining when and where practice is, costs and transport.
- Check in that they understand where a match is and how to get to a match, coordinating lifts if possible.
- Include young people in planned matches, not as a last-minute sub for someone cancelling.
- Understanding language - when shouting at someone to run and they are not aware of the language this can feel very intimidating.

For clubs:

- Provide and offer vegetarian food, or halal if that is an option.
- Culturally young people will not ask for help, or to join in. Club members will need to pro-actively invite them to join in and offer support.
- Communal changing will be unfamiliar, which can be off-putting. Changing room banter can be intimidating.
- Any gifted equipment must be fit for purpose.
- When having a drink after a match, be sure to invite all members in to join other players for soft drinks.
- When taking pictures, this will need to be done without faces. This can be done by taking pictures from behind, or by blurring or obscuring the faces.

Further information can be found via: -

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/collegeofjournalism/entries/cf7bfe24-951e-3bab-aea5-e4387df5f17c>
- <https://kran.org.uk/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halal>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan_Cricket_Board

Kent Cricket Community Trust is developing the refugee and UASC programme and working to make cricket accessible. If you would like to get involved in this programme, please contact communitytrust@kentcricket.co.uk