



Happy April from ICOS!



Hello and welcome to the mid April newsletter.

In this newsletter, we will share some exciting events coming up and some exciting events that have happened. We will also share an opportunity to be involved in our Project Steering Group (PSG).

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

What has been going on in our ICOS Community?

Since the last newsletter we have:

- We have dealt with 57 queries, ranging from support with council tax support, support with Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP), housing support and support surrounding employability (accessing employment and training).
- Our one to one activities have engaged with 3 new clients, from countries such as India, Ethiopia and Nigeria.
- We have organised a number of activities, improving social inclusion, wellbeing, intercultural understanding, and helping the environment in the local area. Including 4 environmental activities, including clean ups and maintenance activities, centered on Backhouse Park, Sunderland, and the wider St Michael's ward area.

- We have provided 5 families with material support or external referrals to access free clothing and food, and external grants, as well as energy and food vouchers and free sim card.



Upcoming Events:

🔥 PAINTBALL YARM – SPRING EDITION 🔥

🔥 FULL-ON ADRENALINE 🔥

26th April 2026 (Sunday)

Bring your mates, work team, or just a group of friends for an epic day of paintball battles in the woods!

Minimum Age: 12 (or 11 if in secondary school)

📍 Location:

Battlezone Paintball Yarm

Haggitt Hill Lane

Picton

TS15 0AA

🕒 Game hours:

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM (full day) – approx. 6–7 hours of play + breaks)
You don't have to stay all day!

All Packages include:

- Access to our full featured Game Maps (Capture the Flag, Last Man Standing, VIP Escort, Galleon, Castle, Helicopter crash site and more..)
- Semi Automatic Paintball Marker
- Brand new anti-fog paintball mask to keep
- Freshly Laundered Coveralls

Colonel Package: £51.50 per person - 800 Paintballs

Major Package: £61.80 per person - 1000 Paintballs

Ultimate Package: £103 per person - 1500 Paintballs

Extra paintballs available on-site, also flash and smoke grenades available

Free parking + changing facilities + toilets

Booking & Deposit

Secure your spot for **26th April 2026**

N O W with just a **£10 per person** deposit (non-refundable / deducted from final price).

Balance due by 17th April



📩 Get in touch now:

👤 LukaSz Szalinski

✉️ lukasz.szalinski@icos.org.uk

**Limited spaces –Don't miss out –
book early for your group !**

See you on the BATTLEFIELD!



Sport is our PASSION,

Join us 🎯 🏸

Tennis Session

Saturday 11 April 2026

15:30 - 17:30 @ Barley Mow Park,
65M Ryhope Road, Hendon,
Sunderland, SR2 9RQ



To book, please contact Luca on
WhatsApp 073851320522

Padel Tennis

Wednesday 22 April 2026

19:30-20:30 @ Thomsen Retail Park,
Unit 1 Wessington Way, Sunderland,
SR5 3FR

£5pp suggested donation

For booking, please contact
daniel@icos.org.uk



Previous Events:

ICOS Easter Party:

DEAR ALL!!!

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who took part in our Easter Event, which took place on 29 March at St. Michael's Community Centre. Thanks to you, the event was an unforgettable experience.

We would like to extend a special thank you to our partner, the Polish shop FoodLand in Wallsend, for their wonderful support. Thanks to their generosity, we were able to prepare homemade cakes, coffee and tea, and enjoy the delicious flavours. The children were delighted to receive their goody bags.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Pati from Paticake.Patisserie LTD, who prepared and gifted us with delicious cakes. This extraordinary support helped make our event even more special.

We would also like to thank AdrianaSag.Photographer who took beautiful photos in the photo booth and throughout the event. We hope that the moments captured will be a wonderful keepsake for you.

We mustn't forget Magdalena Sibinska, who prepared the colourful decorations, and our irreplaceable volunteers, who oversaw the games and activities. Thanks to their commitment, the event was full of joy and laughter.

It was colourful and fantastic, and the themed costumes added charm to the whole event.

Thank you once again for the time we spent together, and we look forward to seeing you again!

Please click on the image for more information



Helmsley Castle and Rievaulx Abbey:

Please click on the image for more information



Pieroginie Community Feast:

Please click on the image for more information



The Giving Lottery:

Go here: <https://www.givinglottery.org.uk/support/icos>

Or scan the QR code!

**JOIN OUR
WEEKLY LOTTERY!**

Play for a chance to win up to £25,000
and support our fundraising every week

HELP & WIN

- Tickets cost just £1 a week
- Every entry helps support our community projects
- Win up to £25,000 in the weekly draw



Scan Me



INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY
ORGANISATION
OF SUNDERLAND



Volunteer for ICOS Women:

Hello lovely ladies!

We are currently looking for volunteers to support ICOS Women events and activities 😊

If you would like to help us create a welcoming space for women and children, support community sessions, or assist during workshops and events, we would love to hear from you 😊

Volunteering with us is a great way to meet new people, gain experience, and make a positive impact in the community.

If you're interested, please get in touch with us for more information. 🙋



ICOS
WOMEN

JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

ICOS WOMEN

We are looking for volunteers to support ICOS Women and help with our women's events and activities. This role is a great opportunity to gain experience, support the community, and be part of an inspiring team.

If you are organised, motivated, and passionate about supporting women, we would love to hear from you.
Please send your CV to apply to
agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk



JOIN US TODAY 📞 07563357064 @ agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk

ICOS Project Steering Group (PSG):

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF ICOS!



Have you been supported by the International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS) for at least 3 months? If you have an intermediate level of English and want to make a real difference, we want to hear from you!

We are looking for passionate clients to join our **Project Steering Group (PSG)**—an advisory group designed to help us run a **better service** for you and the community.

1 WHY JOIN THE PSG?

Your voice matters. As someone who has used our advice, volunteered, or joined our environmental and wellbeing activities, you are the expert on situation. By joining, you can:

1. **Shape our projects.**
2. **Get creative.**
3. **Access Free Training.**
4. **Build your CV.**
5. **Represent ICOS.**

2 WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT?

We value your time and want this to be a positive experience:




- **Meetings:** Currently meeting slightly more often as we start up; standard is 1 meeting every 3 months.
- **Support:** Reasonable expenses (travel/food) will be provided or refunded.
- **Flexibility:** You are a volunteer and can stop at any time.
- **Respect:** We follow simple ground rules regarding confidentiality and respect.

Ready to get involved?

If you want to help ICOS grow and better serve Sunderland, or if you have any questions, please contact Michal at:

 michal@icos.org.uk

Housing Support Project:

  New Beginnings in Sunderland! 

We are thrilled to share the impact of our Housing Support project, a vital initiative that has been transforming lives since January 2025. With the generous support of the Evan Cornish Foundation, ICOS has been on the front lines, ensuring that no one in our migrant community is left behind when it comes to finding a safe place to call home.

Why This Matters For many refugees, the joy of receiving status is quickly met with the stress of the "move-on" period—a very short window to find a home before leaving temporary accommodation. Our project stepped in to bridge that gap.

The Impact at a Glance:

- 15 New Homes Secured: We've helped 15 individuals move from crisis or temporary housing into long-term stability.
- Complex Advocacy: From fixing repairs to navigating housing priority lists, we resolved complex issues for 11 clients.
- Beyond Four Walls: We didn't just find houses; we helped build homes by assisting with furniture, appliances, and setting up essential infrastructure like bank accounts.
- Boosting Wellbeing: 63% of our clients reported a significant boost in their mental health and ability to "deal with problems well" after receiving support.

Real support for real people

The numbers tell a story of resilience. Our clients, primarily young men from countries like Sudan and Yemen, faced immense hurdles—from language barriers to rising levels of hostility in the media.

We are proud that 93% of our participants rated our support an 8/10 or higher. This project wasn't just about paperwork; it was about standing together against inequality and creating a level playing field for everyone in Sunderland.

What's Next?

The journey doesn't end here! We are continuing our mission to support our community, including plans to increase our legal capacity to handle even more complex cases in the future.

Thank you to our partners, our dedicated staff, and the Evan Cornish Foundation for making this possible. Together, we are building a more inclusive Sunderland. ❤️

#Sunderland #ICOS #HousingSupport #RefugeeSupport #CommunityImpact
#EvanCornishFoundation #SocialJustice #Equality

Blue Wings Fundraising Gig:

We are most grateful to Blue Wings for the fundraising gig on 20 March!

#CommunityImpact #trance #music #culture #sunderland #fundraising



Know Your Neighbourhood/Creative Lives (2025-2026) Project:

The project successfully created a welcoming, creative and supportive space for women and their children, particularly those from Eastern European backgrounds. Over six months we delivered 23 workshops and 3 family events, engaging 110 adults and 74 children. Activities such as ceramics, crochet, painting, textile design, upcycled crafts and creative cooking helped participants build skills, confidence and meaningful social connections.

Feedback showed a strong positive impact: many participants met new people, felt more relaxed, reported improved wellbeing, and developed new creative abilities. Volunteers also played a key role, with 17 volunteers supporting activities, planning sessions and helping shape community events.

Partnerships with St Michael's Community Centre, local artists and community organisations strengthened local engagement, increased participation and created opportunities for ongoing collaboration. Several elements of the project will continue, including monthly creative sessions, use of materials purchased during the project, and the community relationships that were built.

Overall, the project fostered creativity, reduced isolation, encouraged volunteering and strengthened community ties through shared cultural and artistic experiences.

To see more about the project, click [here](#).

We Feel Safe Project:

More information can be found on:

<https://icos.org.uk/we-feel-safe-2/>

A vertical poster for the 'We Feel Safe Project'. At the top, it says 'INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATION OF SUNDERLAND'. Below that, on a dark blue background, is the title 'WE FEEL SAFE PROJECT' in large yellow and white letters, followed by the tagline 'YOU DESERVE SAFETY, STABILITY AND SUPPORT.' in white. To the right of this text is a circular graphic of colorful stylized human figures holding hands. Below the title, it says 'NOW OPEN FOR REGISTRATION' in yellow, followed by the email 'EWA.FILIPK@ICOS.ORG.UK' and the phone number '07729448159' in yellow. The bottom half of the poster is light blue and contains two columns of text. The left column is titled 'WHAT SUPPORT CAN YOU ACCESS?' and lists five types of support: Immigration Advice (IAA Level 1), Housing Support, Benefits & Entitlements, Employability Support, and Counselling & Wellbeing Support. The right column is titled 'THE WE FEEL SAFE PROJECT OFFERS PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MODERN SLAVERY AND WORK EXPLOITATION.' and 'WE UNDERSTAND THAT RECOVERY INVOLVES MANY PARTS OF LIFE, NOT JUST ONE ISSUE.' At the bottom left, there are logos for 'ICOS' (with a puzzle piece icon) and 'COMMUNITY FUND' (with a hand icon).

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
ORGANISATION OF SUNDERLAND

WE FEEL SAFE PROJECT

YOU DESERVE SAFETY,
STABILITY AND SUPPORT.

NOW OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

EWA.FILIPK@ICOS.ORG.UK
07729448159

WHAT SUPPORT CAN YOU ACCESS?

Immigration Advice (IAA Level 1)

Help to understand your immigration options and next steps.

Housing Support

Assistance with housing applications and finding safe accommodation.

Benefits & Entitlements

Support with benefit claims and understanding what help you are entitled to.

Employability Support

Tailored help to identify your strengths, access training, and move towards work.

Counselling & Wellbeing Support

Specialist one-to-one counselling and group wellbeing activities to support: trauma recovery, mental health, emotional resilience.

THE WE FEEL SAFE
PROJECT OFFERS
PRACTICAL AND
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO
PEOPLE AFFECTED BY
MODERN SLAVERY AND
WORK EXPLOITATION.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT
RECOVERY INVOLVES
MANY PARTS OF LIFE, NOT
JUST ONE ISSUE.



COMMUNITY
FUND

Volunteer at Backhouse Park:

BACKHOUSE PARK CLEAN-UP

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
HELP PROTECT OUR GREEN SPACE!**

EVERY MONDAY 10 AM - 12.20PM
EVERY FRIDAY 10 AM - 2.30PM

TASKS INCLUDE

Picking up litter | Keeping trails and paths clear
Clearing fallen leaves | Planting, trimming, pruning and weeding
Removing invasive weeds and vines | Clearing the stream



FOR MORE DETAILS EMAIL
DANIEL@ICOS.ORG.UK OR CALL 07783433674





JOIN US! VOLUNTEER WITH EAST RANGERS & ICOS

HELP TAKE CARE OF THE BACKHOUSE PARK
AND MAKE IT A WELCOMING PLACE FOR
EVERYONE

RYHOPE ROAD, SUNDERLAND, SR2 2EF

CONTACT SAM@ICOS.ORG.UK
OR CALL **0785617778**



Support ICOS:

Please consider donating to ICOS to support the work we do. Ways to donate can be accessed by the following link: <https://icos.org.uk/support-us/> or by clicking on the ICOS logo.





[View email in browser](#)

Copyright © 2025 International Community Organisation of Sunderland. All rights reserved.

Reg. Number: 1186618

Office Tel: 07596538482

Email address: office@icos.org.uk

Want to change how you receive these emails?
[update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

