

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN REFUGES

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Recognising the diverse linguistic backgrounds of service users, staff member Kossar launched a pioneering initiative aimed at bridging the language barrier through personalised audio translations.

The idea emerged from a deeply human insight: many women entering Solace services do not speak English as their first language.

Faced with overwhelming amounts of English-language information, many survivors found it difficult to orientate themselves and settle in. “Although we use interpreters,” “it’s not personalised enough. I thought, wouldn’t it be nice if there were a friendly voice, in their own language, saying ‘Welcome to Solace. We’re here to help you.’”

Inspired by this vision, Kossar aimed to create short audio messages in multiple languages, providing comfort and reassurance in a format that feels warm and relatable, far removed from the numerous formal processes services users go through on their journey which can have a robotic feel of formal translation.

To bring this idea to life, Kossar partnered with the volunteer services team to recruit native speakers. So far, nine volunteers have contributed recordings in Bengali, Turkish, Arabic, Punjabi, Gujarati, and other languages.



“These recordings are free of jargon to keep communication clear and comforting.”

Beyond the audio recordings, Kossar has been working to translate signage and other key documents around the refuge. “It’s like when you walk into a hotel and see ‘Welcome’ in different languages- it makes all the difference,” she said. “We want women to feel seen, valued, and reassured from the moment they arrive.”

The early response from volunteers and internal stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive. Volunteers expressed enthusiasm for being part of something meaningful, while staff recognised the potential to enhance inclusion and accessibility across the board.

“This is a practical example of our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion,” Kossar said. “We often talk about EDI, but this is something tangible we can do.”

Though still in its early stages, this multilingual audio initiative is already making waves. It stands as a model for what compassionate, service user-focused innovation can look like in the VAWG sector.

Through personalised, culturally aware communication, Solace is not just welcoming women into safety, they’re welcoming them with dignity.

