



Brighton TTC earn integration accolade

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Brighton Table Tennis Club has won the first national Community Integration Award for larger projects for doing something "simple and necessary with such flair and enthusiasm".

The award is made by the MigrationWork Trust and was set up to reward and support best practice in community integration and cohesion in the United Kingdom. It focuses on grassroots and local initiatives around integration of migrant communities.

It is the second major award won by the club in recent weeks having become the first UK sports club to win Club of Sanctuary status for its work with young refugees.

Sue Lukes, chair of the judging panel, said: "The Brighton Table Tennis Club is an outward facing and open project, involving a broad range of communities in Brighton and Hove and collaborating with social services and schools as well as refugee and migrant communities.

"The broad remit contributes to migrants and non-migrants becoming actively engaged in a range of different things in Brighton. Working with young people is very positive, especially unaccompanied minors who can find themselves very isolated. Everyone involved can take their learning back into their communities.

"The club works with everyone but reaches out to the most deprived and vulnerable in all communities and ensures that the positive experiences of the white British kids involved means they become ambassadors for tolerance and diversity in their communities.

"We heard about a day in April this year when a Brighton foster family brought their new 13-year old from Afghanistan to the club to play alongside his white British foster brother. Other boys joined in and a United Nations game of doubles, China and Afghanistan vs Coldean and London, followed."

Tim Holtam of Brighton Table Tennis Club said: "When we play 'Top Table' at the club you might find yourself playing with the UK Downs Syndrome Champion, a world over-80 competitor, two boys from Afghanistan's Helmand Province, a former UK Chinese champion and local kids from all over Brighton and Hove.

Community integration is at the heart of our work, and is particularly important at this time.

“We have ‘sons and daughters’ of our city forming incredible friendships with victims of trafficking from Vietnam and orphaned refugees from Mosul and Aleppo. As the incredible Helen Keller said ‘Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.’”

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