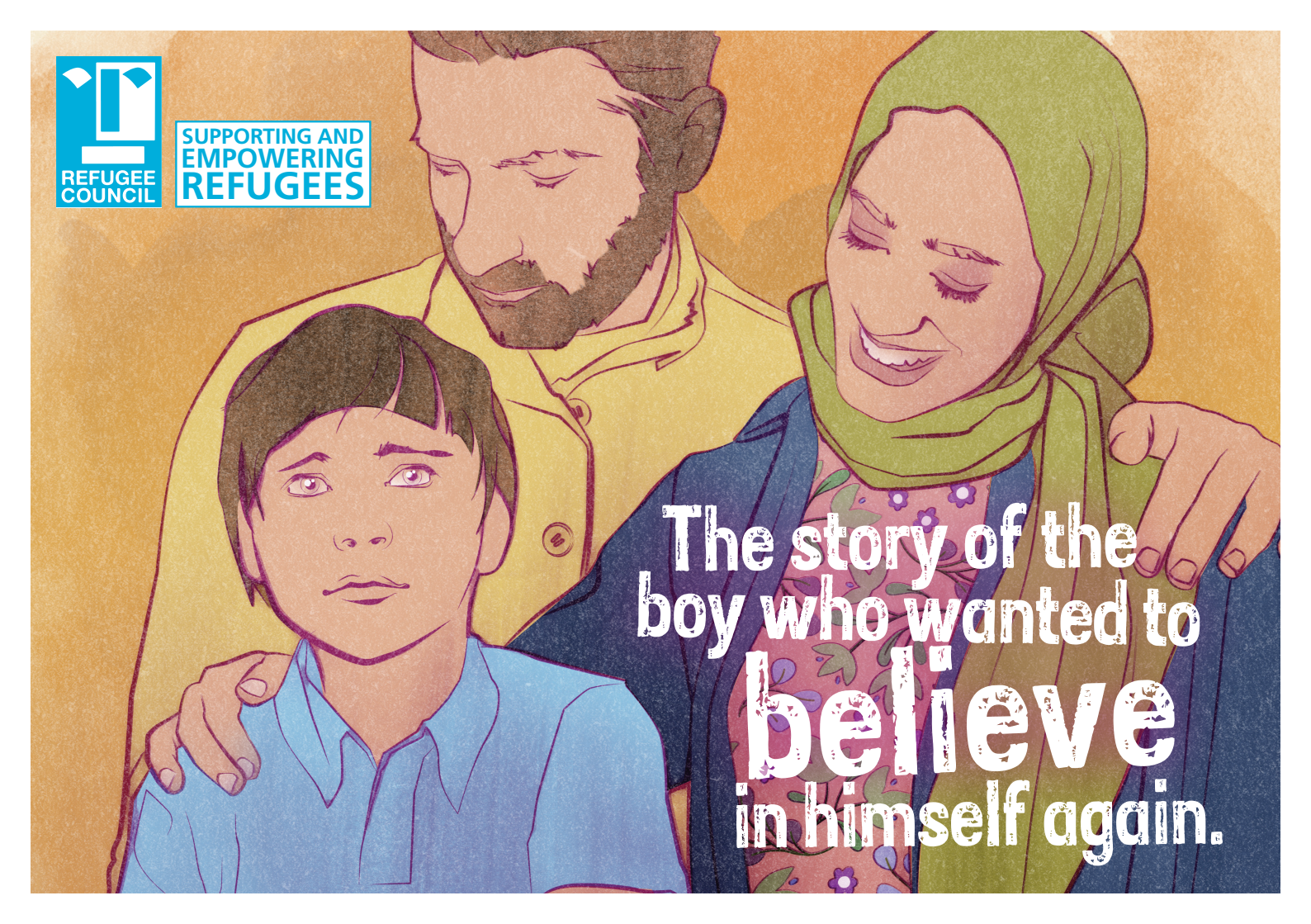




SUPPORTING AND  
EMPOWERING  
REFUGEES

A stylized illustration of a family. A man with a beard and a yellow shirt stands behind a young boy in a blue shirt, with his hand on the boy's shoulder. To the right, a woman wearing a green hijab and a blue jacket with a floral pattern is smiling, with her hand on the man's shoulder. The background is a warm, textured orange-brown color.

The story of the  
boy who wanted to  
**believe**  
in himself again.



Models have been used in the photos.

Many children are born with an unshakeable sense of self-belief. A strong belief they can reach out to grasp their dreams and be whatever they want in life.

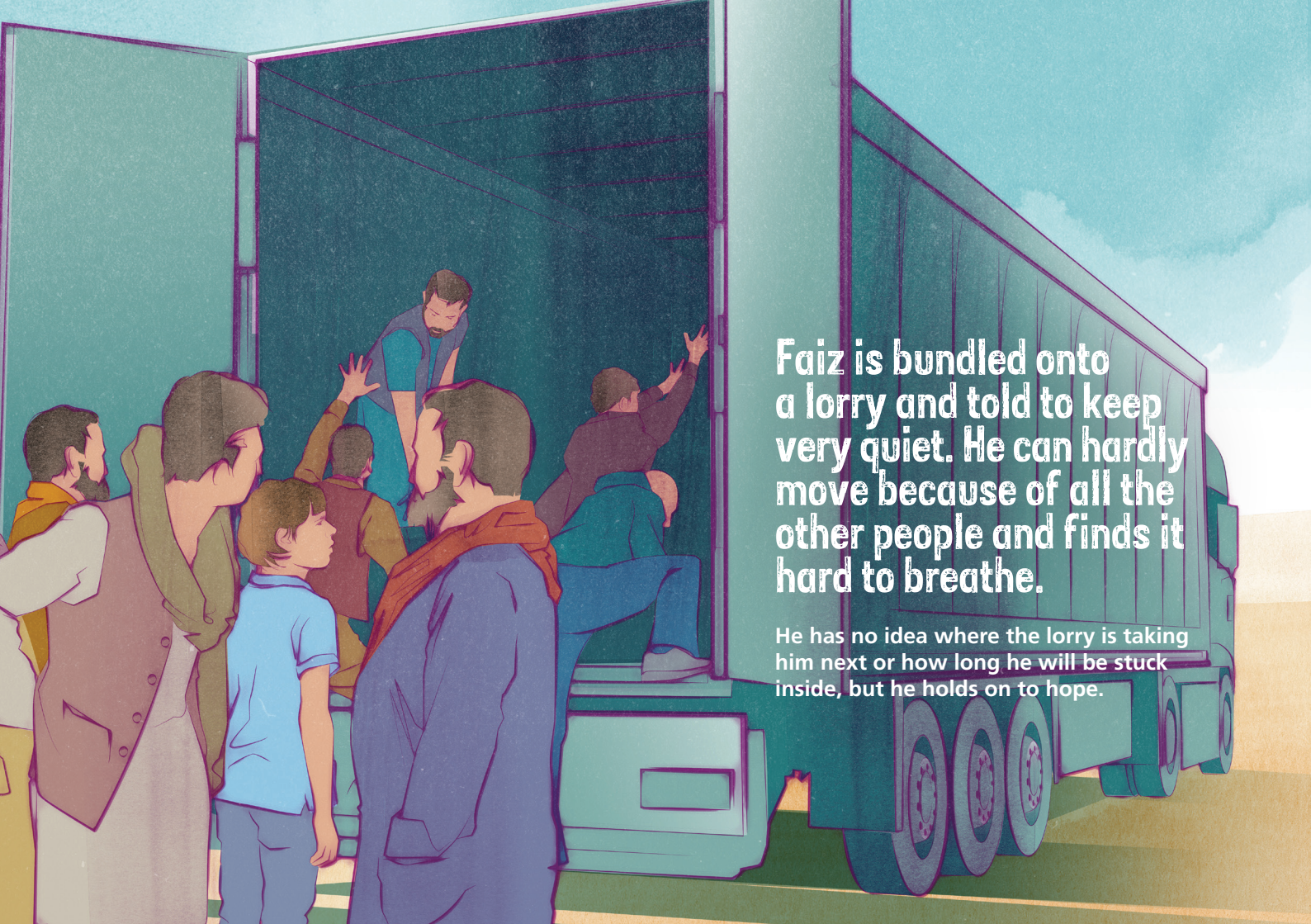
However, as they make their way through life, events and experiences can chip away at that belief – especially if that child is a refugee. This is one such story. Of a boy once filled with self-assurance, but who has had it taken away by war and conflict.

Yet, on the course of his journey, thanks to the support of people like you, he rediscovers his inner strength and begins the long path back to believing he can have a brighter future...

## Our story begins with a terrifying journey.

One that will forever change the life of 15-year-old Faiz\*. In the war-torn landscape of Afghanistan, the relentless conflict has already claimed the life of his brother. Now Faiz himself is being threatened. Desperation forces his family to make an agonising decision – to send Faiz on a perilous journey to Europe, their last hope for his safety.





**Faiz is bundled onto a lorry and told to keep very quiet. He can hardly move because of all the other people and finds it hard to breathe.**

**He has no idea where the lorry is taking him next or how long he will be stuck inside, but he holds on to hope.**



**Faiz has to sleep rough in a forest, wearing a bin bag to keep dry. He has nothing to eat for several days, apart from a packet of biscuits.**

After several weeks, he's put on an inflatable raft, overloaded with frightened people. The waves look huge, and the boat begins taking in water. Everyone is crying and screaming. He clings to the boat for dear life and to his last dream of a safer future.



**“I am feeling so alone... and I cannot sleep. I am having negative ideas, due to the way I have lost my elder brother.”**

**Young refugees like Faiz face dangerous journeys filled with trauma from the exploitation and violence they are forced to endure.** Separated from their families, they flee conflict, persecution, and instability in their home countries – they are forced to make dangerous sea crossings and exhausting overland travel. Losing everything familiar and safe in their lives.

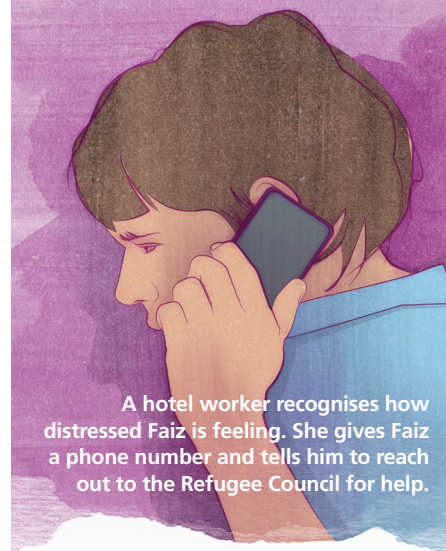
*For even the most resilient child, it can be hard to believe that a brighter future lies ahead.*

That’s why the Refugee Council is asking for your support this winter. **Please donate now to support our vital services, which are a lifeline for young refugees like Faiz. With your donation, we can reach more refugees who urgently need our support. Together, we can empower refugees to build their lives safely in the UK.**

**Let’s help refugee children to believe in themselves again.**

Now in the UK, Faiz thinks he has reached a place where he can feel safe again. But the people in charge don't even believe he is a child. They accuse him of lying about his age and he is wrongly sent to a hotel with grown men.

**“There are 10 beds in one room,  
I cried all night. There is one man,  
he threw my bag, and said get out!”**



A hotel worker recognises how distressed Faiz is feeling. She gives Faiz a phone number and tells him to reach out to the Refugee Council for help.

**It's only thanks to the support of kind people like you, that we are there to pick up the phone...**

To Faiz's relief, he is able to speak with a caseworker from the Refugee Council's Age Disputes Project and for the first time in a long time, he feels listened to. Faiz is glad to be put into accommodation with children his own age, where he feels much safer.



## Empowering Faiz to believe again.

Faiz is still struggling with his mental health, being away from his family and the flashbacks of his brother's death are taking their toll on him. Sarah, a therapist from My View, works with Faiz to reframe his trauma so he can feel lighter and learn ways to cope with grief.

*"My counsellor is a kind woman, who is supporting me so much. She makes me feel strong, she is teaching me how to manage my life, how to find my way. She is helping me attend college, to learn and speak English."*

## Building his resilience.

Faiz continues to struggle with the loss of his brother, and worries constantly about the rest of his family. But this time, he has his Refugee Council therapist by his side, who provides him with essential life skills to navigate the challenges of a new country and regain his sense of purpose.

*"I can say she helped me as a mum, as my mum used to do, and finally made me who I am."*

## Igniting his hope.

Youth Connect classes help Faiz to feel more at ease and express himself again. Group activities are helping him to feel more comfortable; he can practice his English and he is making friends. It all means he feels less isolated and is starting to believe in himself again.



*"My hope - in the future I want to be a psychologist or a paramedic, I really do my best with these things. It helps me to help other people. My message to all young people is never give up, fight for your rights."*



We were there for Faiz, but right now thousands of refugee children need your support. Refugee children who have been through so much.

**Please donate now and help us give them the vital support they urgently need.**

**“You’re giving more  
than a donation.**



**You’re giving a child the chance to believe  
they can be all they possibly can be.”**

**Zoe, Youth Worker  
The Refugee Council**

\*Faiz’s words are all real, but his story has been drawn from several real-life accounts from refugee children to safeguard their identities and families.

The British Refugee Council. (Commonly called the Refugee Council) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, [No 2727514] and a registered charity number 10145576. Registered office: 134-138 The Grove, Stratford, London, E15 1NS, United Kingdom. VAT registration no: 936519988.

