

Justice & Peace Refugee Project

Our Lady of Lourdes Deaf Centre

2 Summerhill Grove NE4 6EE

Opening times Monday, Wednesday and Friday

11.00am until 1.45pm



ASYLUM UPDATE June 2018

We have well over 550 active asylum seekers who come to us looking for help. The table below shows the 51 countries of origin. At the present time, the largest numbers are from Eritrea, Sudan and Iran. Although the number of asylum seekers in the UK is in decline, the numbers seeking assistance at the project are increasing all the time in response to Government policies to house refugees mainly in the less well off parts of the UK.

Clients by country of origin

Afghanistan	El Salvador	Kurdistan	Somalia
Albania	Eritrea	Kuwait	Sri Lanka
Algeria	Ethiopia	Lebanon	Sudan
Angola	Gambia	Liberia	Syria
Armenia	Georgia	Libya	Togo
Belarus	Guinea	Morocco	Tunisia
Botswana	India	Malawi	Uganda
Burundi	Iran	Nigeria	Ukraine
Congo	Iraq	Pakistan	Vietnam
Cameroon	Israel	Palestine	Western Sahara
Comoros	Ivory Coast	Russia	Yemen
DRC	Jordan	Senegal	Zimbabwe
Egypt	Kenya	Sierra Leone	

WHAT WE OFFER

All asylum seekers are welcome to visit us throughout the day during opening hours where they can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, snacks and meet with friends. They sign for and receive a bag of groceries once each week. Those who are destitute also receive £25/month.

FOOD COLLECTION

Food collections come to us from over 60 parishes across the Diocese - mostly every month. Some schools donate also, either regularly or at special times such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. The bulk comes in on the Monday following the first Sunday of the month but can be delivered on any opening day between 10.00am and 1.30pm. Most parishes collect a selection of commodities ranging from fish (tuna or sardines in oil are preferred) tomatoes, beans, meat (corned beef if possible) cooking oil, pasta, rice, tea, coffee, sugar, biscuits, toiletries (shampoo, shower gel, toothpaste, toilet rolls). We also get very generous donations of clothes. Most contributing parishes have volunteers who deliver their collection to the centre.

At the centre, volunteers stack shelves when food donations come in - they then make up grocery bags. Each bag contains:

- A tin of meat (corned beef is preferred)
- A tin of fish (tuna or sardines, where possible, in oil)
- A tin of tomatoes
- A tin of baked beans
- A bag of sugar
- A bag of rice
- A bag of tea
- A packet of biscuits

Commodities such as toilet rolls, cooking oil, tins of fruit, toothpaste, jam, shampoo, various types of beans and so on are also highly valued and are distributed mainly by swapping items from the grocery bag.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

It is now 17 years since project first opened on just one day a week; since then we have grown year-on-year, evolving as needs demand. The services we offer are currently under considerable pressure due to increased numbers. Until relatively recently, we were typically registering 20-25 new people every month. However, in December 2017 this jumped to 38 and in January 2018 it was 72. Nevertheless, thanks to the continued support of our donor parishes/schools, we continue to be able to support all of our clients. We urge our regular supporters to keep up their parish food collections and to increase them if this is at all possible. We would also ask that parishes or schools not already involved. Please get in touch with us to see if they are able to help us in any way.

THE ASYLUM PROCESS

After claiming asylum, claimants are "processed" - questioned, photographed and fingerprinted. They are then "dispersed" to various areas of the UK including the North East, where they are allocated accommodation - a room or a share of a room and are given benefits of £37.75 a week for a single person until their claim for asylum is decided. If they get a positive decision they become Refugees with the same rights as all UK citizens and move off our books. However, if they get a negative decision they lose all benefits including their accommodation - they are then destitute. Exceptions to this are families with children, who are protected by the Children Act.

VOLUNTEERS

JPRP is run entirely by volunteers. Currently 45 willing volunteers undertake to cover 1, 2 or 3 days each week, with a few "as and when". Their work is crucial to the running of the centre, where they undertake door duties, stacking shelves, unloading cars, making up bags of basic groceries, splitting bags of sugar, rice, pasta etc. into smaller bags, organising tea and coffee, registration and swapping food items among other things. In a typical week, we distribute over 200 bags of food, which equates to over 80000 food items per year. We also provide over a hundred items of clothing every week.

ENGLISH CLASSES

We offer regular English Classes every Monday, Wednesday and Friday operated by qualified ESOL teachers from 11.30am to 12.30pm. These are 'walk in' sessions where there is no need for clients to register for the class.

DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND

This is a special account which is dedicated to help our destitute clients. Currently 170 of our clients qualify for a payment of £25 each month. Cash to this fund comes as donations from parishes, clergy, individuals and J&P groups. Some of these take out standing orders, whilst events such as coffee mornings, cake or plant sales, raffles, sponsored walks, musical evenings etc. help raise valuable funds. This year we expect to pay out over £45000 from the Destitute Asylum Fund. Other costs, such as building rental and purchase of equipment come from the Diocesan Justice & Peace account. This is quite separate from the Destitute Asylum Fund.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND WHICH HELPS TO SUPPORT SOME OF THE POOREST PEOPLE IN OUR MIDST, CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO D.H&N DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND AND SENT TO:

Leah Stephenson, Our Lady of Lourdes Deaf Centre. 2 Summerhill Grove, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE4 6EE.