

## **Justice & Peace Refugee Project**

Our Lady of Lourdes Deaf Centre

2 Summerhill Grove NE4 6EE

Opening times for clients Monday, Wednesday and Friday

11.00am until 1.45pm



## **REFUGEE PROJECT Winter 2020**

In our last newsletter, we introduced our new Project Worker, Helen Woodland. We are pleased to say that Helen's initial six month contract has been extended.

A Management group has been set up to help run the project going forward and will put in place the structures to enable the project to continue to operate after the departure of the current Project Manager at the end of April.

### **News at a glance**

- For quite some time, we have been aware that meat is the least popular item in our food bag. During January we ran an experiment to see if chickpeas would be acceptable to our clients as an alternative. That was a success and we have now made the decision to replace meat with chickpeas in our bags. Can I ask everyone therefore to spread the news to our donors to replace meat in their shopping basket with chickpeas.
- The contract for providing accommodation for asylum seekers in the North East changed from Jomast to Mears in August. It now appears that Mears have been unable to rent enough accommodation and that people are being put up in local hotels and hostels. It is not known how long this will continue but it means that the flood of new clients that we have seen at the project over the past two years has slowed to a trickle. This has given us some much needed breathing space.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

JPRP is run by volunteers and one part-time member of staff. Their work is crucial to the running of the centre. New volunteers are always needed and welcomed at the Refugee Project. If you would like to volunteer please get in touch for information on how you can help.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Food donations

 Tinned chickpeas, tinned tomatoes, baked beans, plain rice, sugar, tinned fish, tea bags, biscuits (these items make up the food bag which we give to each client once a week).

 Tinned fruit, sweet corn, cooking oil, jam, cereal, tinned kidney beans, small jars of coffee, **plus** toothpaste, shampoo, body wash, hand wash, nappies, sanitary pads (no tampons). These can be swapped for items in the food bag.

 All food products must be '**In Date**' and ideally have a good shelf life.

 Out of date products or products already opened.

### Clothes and others items

We have very limited space for sorting and organising clothes. Therefore, and regrettably, we do not solicit general clothes donations. However, if clothes are donated, we will receive them. Having said that, we do have a constant need for the following items:

 Ladies' and gents' coats in good condition (18 years plus)

 Ladies and men's shoes in good condition (trainers preferred for men)

 Clean duvets and covers (double and single)

 Clean pillows and sheets

 Clean and good condition towels

 Kitchen crockery (including large clean pans)

 Suitcases and Backpacks

 Electrical goods or sharp utensils

 Children and baby clothes or toys

 Clothes other than those listed above

## Clients by country of origin

We currently have over 600 adult asylum seekers who come to us looking for help. The table below shows the countries of origin. Although the number of asylum seekers in the UK is well below the peak reached a decade ago, the numbers seeking assistance at the project are increasing, (albeit they have levelled off in recent months). This is in response to Government policies which have led to refugees being housed mainly in parts of the UK where accommodation is relatively cheap.

Afghanistan	Chad	Georgia	Libya	Syria
Albania	Congo	Guinea	Morocco	Togo
Algeria	Cameroon	India	Nigeria	Tunisia
Angola	Comoros	Iran	Pakistan	Uganda
Armenia	China	Iraq	Palestine	Ukraine
Azerbaijan	DRC	Israel	Rwanda	Western Sahara
Bangladesh	Egypt	Ivory Coast	Russia	Zimbabwe
Barbados	El Salvador	Kazakhstan	Senegal	
Belarus	Eritrea	Kurdistan	Sierra Leone	
Botswana	Ethiopia	Kuwait	Somalia	
Burundi	Gambia	Liberia	Sudan	

## WHAT WE OFFER

All asylum seekers are welcome to visit us throughout the day during opening hours (Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11am to 1.45pm) 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. We are a charity which supports adults only, registering people 18 years and over.

## FOOD COLLECTION

Food collections come to us from over 60 parishes across the Diocese – usually delivered once or twice a month. Some schools donate also, either regularly or at special times such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. In January this year, we received our largest ever donation from St. Marys Catholic School in Longbenton. For the last three years we have also received a large annual donation from The Youth Village. Donations can be delivered on any of our three open days between 10.00am and 1.30pm.

## OUR CURRENT SITUATION

It is now 19 years since the 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. Thanks to the continued support of our donor parishes/schools, we continue to be able to support all of our clients but we are struggling under the increasing weight of numbers. In 2016 we gave out about 160 bags of food a week on average. Throughout 2019, that figure was typically about 330. 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 think about doing so. Please get in touch with us to see if you are able to help us in any way.

## DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND

This is a special account which is dedicated to help our destitute clients. Currently 145 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 £35000 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, CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO **D.H&N DESTITUTE ASYLUM FUND** AND SENT TO:

**Helen Woodland**, Our Lady of Lourdes Deaf Centre. 2 Summerhill Grove, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE4 6EE. **07939971892**.

OR a **STANDING ORDER** can be set up using the following link [http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/social\\_concerns/justice\\_and\\_peace.php](http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/social_concerns/justice_and_peace.php) and follow the instructions in the Donation section towards the bottom of the page.