

DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS HUDDERSFIELD

Welcome to DASH.

It's been an amazing three months. We set up on 24th November 2011, and have gone from strength to strength, thanks to the commitment of everybody involved: hosts, volunteers, staff at Clare House, staff at Refugee Council in Huddersfield and other people who have referred to us and supported us.

First, some facts.

As at 21st February we have done **161 nights** of hosting with **8** hosts and **13** guests. As we thought, people need somewhere for more than one night. The shortest hosting period was 4 nights, and the longest was 29. We have spent £668.81 so far, mostly on bus fares so that guests could get to their accommodation. The rest has been spent on a supply of toiletries for people who come to Clare House, printing costs, a fax for a successful section 4 application, one night's B&B in the Cambridge Hotel and small amounts for personal items. We think this is great value for money!

Why do people need our help?

When a claim is refused, the asylum seeker is evicted from their accommodation and has no recourse to public funds whatsoever. This means that they are effectively destitute. Many manage to rely on friends for food and shelter, but this often lays a burden on those least able to offer financial support. We also work with refugees, people who have been given leave to stay, but who have a gap between being evicted from the accommodation provided by those catering for asylum seekers and being able to access other accommodation.

Where have people come from?

In the early days, most of our people were from Eritrea, but we have also worked with people from Kuwait, Iran, Zimbabwe and the Gambia. Some of our guests have been Christian, some Muslim.

The near future.

At the end of February, it is likely that a contract will be signed with G4S who will become the sole providers of services for asylum seekers in this area. They are going to sub-contract to United Property Management (upm), who are currently one of the providers of services. There are likely to be many changes, not least that the level of practical support offered by agencies such as Clare House will disappear. We need to make it clear to upm where asylum seekers should go when they have received a negative decision, so we can be sure to provide a safety net.

Anything else?

Oh, just that little item – funding. We don't have any. We have received generous support so far from friends and from faith communities, and currently have two applications being considered by grant giving bodies.

A big big thank you to all our supporters. You are providing people who are destitute with a safe, warm, dry place to stay, and something to eat. You are their lifeline. You. Thank you. All of you.

DASH

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