

## **DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS HUDDERSFIELD**

### **Welcome to DASH**

We are now six months into the DASH hosting project and are pleased to report that our service is being used regularly. Many thanks to our hosts, volunteers, staff at Clare House, staff at Refugee Council in Huddersfield, Patrice at HAAS, staff at the Womens Centre, and other people who have referred to us for their commitment and support.

### **An update**

Last February we reported that we had done 161 nights of hosting with 8 hosts and 13 guests. As of 23 May we have now done **265 nights** of hosting with **10** hosts and **24** guests. Very few people require one night only, and the longest stay so far has been 46 nights. We have spent £1194.01 so far, mostly on bus passes with a small amount going on food allowance for people during the day.

### **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, the Gambia, Iraq, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Some of our guests have been Christian, some Muslim.

### **The near future:**

A contract has been signed with G4S who are becoming the sole provider of services for asylum seekers in this area. The accommodation side of the services has been sub-contracted to United Property Management (upm) and the transition period is due to begin on 23 July. This means that the service currently operating at Clare House will close some time in the autumn, and that there will be a call centre provided to replace support workers and deal with any queries.

DASH is worried that the lack of face to face contact will prove very isolating for asylum seekers and particularly so for those facing destitution. Other organisations working in the town will continue – 611, REACH, Womens Centre, HAAS, Town of Sanctuary and others – but there will be no service which aims to provide for the destitute. Therefore DASH are currently looking into setting up a drop in centre which would offer informal signposting and opportunities for social contact, among other possible services, in the centre of town. There is a survey about the drop in, which is currently on our website and it would help us if you would complete this as an asylum seeker, refugee, organisation or other interested party, and come to a meeting at 4.30 on 20 June at Friends Meeting House, Church Lane, Paddock, Huddersfield to discuss the results.

### **Funding:**

No formal funding has as yet been received, but we have been shortlisted by one foundation and hope to hear next month whether we have been successful. We are waiting to hear from another grant giving body. No volunteer or host expenses have been paid to date.

A huge 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.

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