

Hello!!

Another newsletter from DASH, after a long interval..

We now have charitable status, have received and spent a grant of £9,625 from the lottery and are just about to receive two further grants of £10,000 each, from the lottery and Kirklees Council. Many thanks to Richard Howitt (treasurer) and Mary Blacka for their work in reporting on the last grant and preparing this one.

We have a development worker – the fabulous Natja Thorbjornsen, Viking wonder woman – and will be appointing a volunteer co-ordinator shortly (to keep our 50 volunteers in order!)

We also have new premises at 30 New North Road, Huddersfield HD1 5JY, courtesy of St Patrick's Church, to whom we are very grateful. The new place is on the other side of the ring road, the first house on the A629.

The new premises house our weekly drop in, the TOMORROW Centre, which operates on Tuesdays 12.30 to 4, alongside the ESOL classes expertly run by Ian Fillingham and John Atherton.

There is a proper kitchen so we hope to provide lunch on a regular basis. DASH boasts three clients who are chefs – Kofi (African cuisine), Reza (Japanese cuisine) and Sakineh (Iranian cuisine) – plus Lucy who is good at putting pizzas in the oven.

Around 30 clients visit us each week, of whom a substantial number are now people with leave to

remain and we are doing our best to support new refugees as well as helping clients to pursue asylum claims.

We now have a partnership with the Red Cross which means we can give out vouchers to clients who are destitute. The Red Cross has also provided free volunteer management courses, a course on the asylum process and first aid courses, for which we are most grateful.

Last year Kirklees Council provided a grant which enabled us to give out monthly food parcels for four months, and sleeping bags and hot water bottles to refugee families.

We are very grateful to the St Vincent de Paul Society, who provided a coach for the trip to York and have supplied winter warmer packs for our clients this week. We are also grateful to York City of Sanctuary and York Minster who hosted the trip to York and introduced clients to Archbishop John Sentamu. It was the first time many of our clients had been in a Christian building and they were very impressed with the Minster, not to mention the Railway Museum, which they also visited.

We are also grateful to the private donor who paid the transport costs of our annual trip to Dewsbury on Sea this year, on the Bank Holiday weekend in August.

The figures for hosting have come down this year, mostly due to the fact that we were performing a mopping up operation during our first two years in operation and because there has not been much of a turnover of clients dispersed to Huddersfield. Many

thanks to all our hosts, but especially to Phil and Sue Brew and Jan and Richard Steel who have taken the lion's share.

Countless people rallied to support DASH during the five months when we had no secure funding and we would like to thank them for their help. Cllr Peter O'Neill has been particularly generous and has been a tower of strength in difficult times. He was instrumental in proposing the motion against the use of destitution as a policy tool to force asylum seekers to return to their countries, which was passed with a substantial majority by Kirklees Council last January.

There will be a party on Tuesday 30 December to celebrate the New Year, and all are welcome. The food will be Iranian and the entertainment whatever you wish to bring.