

Destitution Project Impact Report Jan - March 2022

Food Support: parcels Destitute Asylum Seekers (DAS) 73 Asylum Seekers 281	Food support financial: £7080 Emergency funding: medical, essential travel, accommodation £30.00
Casework sessions Face to face: 66 Remote: 275 New Service Users registered: 4 "Walk in": 53	Drop in Attendance Total: 517 Average: 40 (for March 53)

Agencies that Destitution Project (DP) has connected with:

Red Cross are now working with 'Eagle's Wing' to provide a service in Bury. SUs from Bury (whom we previously accommodated) are now signposted. Bolton University donated duvets. Mount St Joseph's (who we continue to have long standing connections with) made a very generous donation of tinned goods.

Key learning to take forward

Due to increase in demand for information and support we have had to introduce the category of 'Walk ins' for clients whose queries do not require in-depth casework support or because we do not have the capacity to register them at the moment. This at least provides interim help. However, we have also had to place limits on "walk ins" in order not to deflect casework time and attention from appointments. All of this flags up the need for more casework capacity. Changes in the way Migrant Help manage queries such as section 4 / 95 / housing / new evidence by requiring them to be sent to different email addresses slows work down, this has to be factored into Casework capacity. In reviewing our pause status we realise that new cases have to be prioritised in terms of urgency as well as capacity. This period has seen a significant rise in Drop in attendance alongside a growing number of Service Users deemed as needing Secure Support. This is increasingly challenging to oversee at Drop in and may well require more volunteers to undergo conflict resolution training. As attendance has risen so too has attendance from outside Bolton. The fact that place of residence is not given on ID can make this difficult to ascertain. We continue to monitor the situation.

A Pakistani family (husband, wife and daughter) fleeing tribal conflict in the Kashmiri disputed area of Northern Pakistan have been registered with DP and in receipt of casework assistance since 2018.

In that 4 year period, after their case had been refused several times, our Casework Department assisted them with contacting a new solicitor. They also intervened on the several occasions when, due to Home Office error, the family's support money was stopped, also providing the family with food parcels and supermarket vouchers.

Their Home Office housing was unfit for habitation; severe damp to walls and carpets affected the health of both husband and wife with the wife eventually suffering an allergic reaction and asthma. The Casework Department made several complaints to SERCO (the housing provider), as a result of which they were eventually rehoused. In January they received leave to remain in the UK and have now moved on to the refugee way of life.

M came to the UK from Afghanistan as a minor. In 2017 when he reached the age of 18, the Home Office, now treating him as an adult, placed him in a SERCO house in Bolton. He was passionate about boxing but because of his status he was not allowed to work and was unable to get the proper training to pursue a career.

His asylum case was refused on the basis of the Home Office's judgement that it was safe for him to return to Kabul. M, supported by a faith group, submitted a fresh claim and was able to provide new evidence to prove that neither Kabul nor any part of Afghanistan was safe for him, especially as he had lost all his family members. The Casework Department obtained a report on Afghanistan which added weight to his claim and also mentored him, liaised with his solicitor and provided a supporting letter to the Home Office.

In February M received leave to remain and is starting to build his life as a refugee. Although there are other organisations that support refugees DP has signed posted him for help with job centre interviews, college applications and accommodation. Single refugees often struggle to get housing as housing associations do not consider them a priority but he is now in rented accommodation, attends college and has signed up for training as a boxer and wants to represent the UK.