

Destitution Project Impact Report Jan-March 2025

Food Support: parcels Asylum Seekers: 736 Destitute Asylum Seekers (DAS) incl unregistered DAS: 18 Destitute Refugees: 10	Food support financial: Vouchers: £90 Emergency funding: medical, essential travel, accommodation, cash support. £169.74 Food parcels: £8,786
Casework sessions Remote: 180 Face to face: 14 Walk-in: 87 New Service Users registered: 0 Files closed: 1 Active asylum cases: 173	Drop in Attendance Total: 996 Average: 83

Agencies that Destitution Project (DP) has connected with:

Cranfield Trust, Digital Candle NACCOM, Refugee Action, Red Cross, Migrant Help, Bolton SERCO Housing, Mental Help Support workers, Solicitors, GMCA (Gt Mc Combined Authority) Bolton Council Migrants Multi-agency Group, Probation and GP services; Rotary, local Faith groups and schools

Key learning to take forward

Casework

- The UKVI (UK Visa and Immigration) switch to e-visa from Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs expiring Dec 24) for refugees and consequent issues has placed a heavy demand on casework time.
- Increase in new refugees becoming destitute (can't find somewhere to live after eviction from asylum housing and delayed benefits etc) we have introduced Destitute Refugees as a new category of food support.

Drop-in

- Introduction of 1.30 last entry time for service users (SU's arriving before 1.30 still able to stay until 3pm for English classes etc. to reduce need for trustee oversight of main door (difficult to maintain due to work/personal commitments)
- More asylum seekers applying to become volunteers - a positive but the DBS check is more complex. With no primary ID (passport held by HO) they cannot access the on-line system so have to be fingerprinted, longer process with only one police HQ in Gtr M/c administering not easily accessible by public transport.
- Operations and Development Manager recruitment - a positive process with a good outcome but a big time pressure for trustees and key staff
- After issues with the Wesley kitchen we have introduced beginning and end of day monitoring
- 10th Anniversary birthday celebration in January marks a huge milestone
- Keeping up with demand for food parcels, both cost and carriage especially when we have few helpers. Volunteers, continues a challenge

- Review of General RA flagged manual handling issues -have to replace furniture /equipment (pool table. trolleys with brakes for food deliveries.

- Lead volunteers and staff now contribute directly to the Wed Briefing.

Cranfield Trust and Digital Candle helped DP undertake a data protection audit process and assess our needs in terms of digitising and enhancing security in how we store, transfer and create documentation and information.

Case study

R is from Afghanistan and has been accessing DP for a year.

He fled the Taliban, has lost family members and is trying to search for other family members still in Afghanistan. This has left him with trauma. He is trying to settle in Bolton within his community and at DP.

Whilst sitting in a local park he was stabbed; he has a deep scar on his left shoulder. This has left him anxious and fearful especially when he had to go for an interview at the Police station as the Police are still investigating the case.

Our caseworker has liaised with R's solicitor regarding his case and done a referral for him to have some counselling/therapy sessions. His GP has given him sleeping tablets.

R comes to our drop-in session; he says he feels safe at DP as everyone is friendly and welcoming.

A came from Sudan on a student visa then later requested asylum due to the ongoing conflict in Sudan. He was granted refugee status, got a job in security and was working full time and had house on rent.

His leave period expired and he didn't make an application for ILR(Indefinite Leave to Remain)/e-Visa in time because of his health, so he is currently destitute, has no status and can't access welfare benefits.

His application has now been submitted to the Home Office and is waiting for them to respond. In the meantime, he is receiving food parcels from another charity for refugees and is staying with a friend who also helps him out.

- Our caseworker has contacted the Home Office to respond to his application for an e-visa as soon as possible so that he can resume a normal life again and his health improves.