



Dignity and hope for asylum seekers and refugees



Registered Charity No 1194734

Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2021/22

Lockdown News

Welcome to our Winter 2021/22 Quarterly Newsletter.

Christmas break

Having made sure that all our destitute Service Users were supplied with food vouchers to see them through the period between Christmas and New Year, we closed our operations on 23 December, and re-opened on 4 January .

Mount St Joseph's

Over the years, the Pupils and Staff of Mount St Joseph's School, Farnworth, where our former friend and colleague, the late Sister Barbara Sexton CP was once Headteacher, have contributed supplies for our Food Room. And this year was no exception! At the beginning of January, we got off to 'a bumper start' when we gratefully received from the Pupils and Staff a donation of over two thousand tins and other non-perishable food items. A group of Volunteers assembled in the Wesley Suite to begin the task of unloading, sorting and storing the goods. Three hours later, the task was finished, a real team effort! Once again, we express our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to the Pupils and Staff for their generous donation.

Sharples School

On 3 February, David Tomlinson, our Vice Chair, Paul Barnes, our 'Drop-in' Coordinator and one of our Service Users, were invited to Sharples School in Astley Bridge to receive a cheque for £310 raised by a group of Year 10 students who are members of 'Interact', a Junior version of the world-wide Rotary Club. Having done their research, the students had decided to raise funds for the Destitution Project by selling refreshments and tuck shop items at a School 6-a-side Football match.

Over a lovely, shared, sandwich lunch, our representatives explained how the Destitution Project was started, the current provision for Asylum seekers and Refugees and what the Project means to our Service Users and invited the pupils, when they can do so, to visit our Wednesday 'Drop-in' Centre. A big 'Well Done' and 'Thank you' to the Year 10 pupils!

Volunteers

As we move into 2022, we are delighted to be receiving more enquiries about volunteering and we look forward to welcoming new members to the Team. However, in the face of the continuing risk from Covid-19 and keeping the welfare of our Team members and Service Users at the forefront of our minds, we continue to implement cautionary measures. To all those who have been affected, directly or indirectly, by Covid-19, we wish a speedy and lasting recovery.

Status Report

On 1 November 2021, the Charity Commission gave the Destitution Project permission to convert from an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This status will help us to meet the opportunities and challenges of the future and we will, of course, will continue to provide the same type and scope of work for our Service Users as we have done in the past. All our assets and records, including our employees, volunteers, funds, furniture and equipment were transferred to the new organisation and the Trustees will now ask the Charity Commission to remove the old Destitution Project from the Charity Register. A 'special word of thanks' to all who have worked so hard to make the Destitution Project what it is today and to all, both inside and outside of our organisation, who helped with our conversion to a CIO.

Casework Services

Presently, due to our heavy caseload, our Casework Team is unable to take on any new clients. We hope that this will be a short-term problem and that, before too long, we will be able to announce the date that 'normal service' will be resumed. In the meantime, we shall make referrals and sign-post new Asylum Seekers and Refugees to other agencies, the details of which can be found on our website.

Our Mission

Through our Volunteers and three part-time Staff, we aim to continue to provide a safe environment for Asylum Seekers and Refugees where they will be treated with dignity and can find hope, friendship, food and practical help.

**Our Wednesday 'Drop-in' Centre in the Victoria Hall has now re-opened
for Asylum Seekers and Refugees living in Bolton or Bury.
Doors open at 10am and close at 3pm.**

Our 'Drop in' Centre Services

To give our readers an insight into the help we offer our Service Users, for the next few editions of the Newsletter we will include a feature on each of our service provision areas. We start with 'Our Clothes Room'.

The return to stricter Covid-19 measures in January 2021 gave us the opportunity to spend time improving our Clothes Room. We moved to a larger room, bought more shelving and spent a lot of time scrubbing the room and sorting the clothes. As ever, a group of Volunteers, wearing PPE and following Government guidance, helped at all stages, moving the furniture, sorting large quantities of clothes and giving lots of encouragement

We now have a room which is bright, welcoming and really fit for purpose. As part of part of our Covid-19 precautions, donations of clothing are first stored in a separate holding place before being sorted into categories and kept in crates or hung on clothing rails. All our clothes are checked before being offered to our Service Users. All the time, we are reminded that clothes are very personal and we always endeavour to treat the clothes we receive and the people who need them with care and dignity.

Our Clothes Room now looks like a shop and it is a real thrill when someone finds something they need and we can send them away satisfied and smiling. This is why we enjoy the work we do and what gives us the motivation to improve the service we provide.



One of the highlights of our job is to set up two large tables at the weekly 'Drop-in' and fill them with clothing for women, men and children and with colourful scarves, hats and gloves, many of which are hand knitted for us by kind people in the community. Having the feel of a market, the stalls are very popular with our Service Users.

As we announced in our Autumn Newsletter, we have presently taken the decision to have a 'temporary pause' on donations to our stock of clothing and household goods. However, as the 'Drop-in' Centre attendance grows, we expect our stock to start reducing and, hopefully, we will soon be able to accept, once more, donations of clothing and household goods. We are, however, always in need of men's clothes and our greatest need is 'good shoes in small sizes' for our young men and donations of these items continue to be welcome, along with single and double bedding items, in good condition.

Case Study

For over 2 years, a family from Afghanistan has been receiving support from our Senior Caseworker. Despite the Family having suffered the loss of a child in a Taliban attack and, thereafter, receiving months of counselling and therapy sessions, the Home Office initially refused then 'Leave to remain in the UK'. However, after our Senior Caseworker had spent many hours liaising with their solicitor and submitting an appeal, based on a medical report under 'Freedom from Torture', the Court of Appeal granted their appeal. Not only did our Senior Caseworker manage the complexity of their case but, as a speaker of their Mother tongue, she was also able to act as their interpreter.

Financial donations

Once again, many thanks to all who have responded so generously to our Appeal to 'Sponsor a Destitute Asylum Seeker'. Although we are currently able to provide weekly food parcel support, we sometimes also need to provide vouchers and meet other emergencies, such as medical expenses and essential travel; your financial support is, therefore, still needed.

If you would like to support our Service Users financially during this exceptionally difficult period, please choose one of the following options for 'one-off' or continuing payments:

Payments - You can make a financial donation to our new CIO Bank Account:

- Co-operative Bank (Credit: The Destitution Project)
- Bank Account: 67325161 (Sort code: 08-92-29)

Cheques - Please post your cheque to the address below.

Standing Orders

- Please download and complete the Standing Order form at: [dp-standing-order.pdf \(boltondp.org\)](https://www.boltondp.org/dp-standing-order.pdf) or we can send you this form if you contact us at the email address below;
- Set up the Standing Order up with your own bank.
- Then, send us a copy of your completed form by:
 - **Email:** dropindp@gmail.com or by
 - **Post:** Destitution Project, Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton, BL1 2AF.

Card payments - Please complete the on-line form at: [The Destitution Project - Donate now \(cafonline.org\)](https://www.boltondp.org/donate-now)

Gift Aid - In addition, if you are a regular taxpayer then you could consider offering us Gift Aid at no extra cost to yourself, which would increase your contribution by a further 25%.

Pass it on!

Once you have read your copy of our Quarterly Newsletter, please pass it on to a friend or colleague or anyone else who may be interested in or wish to support the work of the Destitution Project or who may wish to join us as a Volunteer.