



Churches Together in the Merseyside Region

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SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS S.A.S

Dear Friends,

Report – October 2015

Few people have been unmoved by the harrowing scenes on television and in the press over the last few months. The numbers of people seeking refuge and asylum, particularly from Syria, are reminiscent of victims displaced because of the two World Wars. Some correspondents have expressed to me their frustration and sadness that they feel helpless to do something.

However there are already many destitute asylum seekers and refugees amongst us now whom we can help. Humanitarian needs are a first priority [food, toiletries, warm clothes and shelter], but we can also help people with their legal work, finding a job if they have leave to stay, learning English, and just as importantly giving them some dignity and self worth.

SAS, in conjunction with Asylum Link Merseyside [ALM] are doing just that on your behalf, and with your support, but we can do more.

SAS already respond to the Probation Trust's request for personal grants for asylum seekers and refugees who are out on licence with no means of support. Funds permitting, we would like to extend our support to Merseyside Refugee and Asylum Seekers Pre and Post Natal Support Group [MRANG] which was an offshoot of ALM in 2004. MRANG has expanded and now work extensively with women refugees and asylum seekers and their children, including victims of trafficking, sexual violence, domestic servitude, and other forms of gender based violence and human rights abuses.

Financial Statements

Attached is a summary statement of financial activities for the 9 months period to September 2015 with comparative figures for the full year to December 2014, grouped under relevant headings of income and expenditure. This shows a net surplus for January to September of £9,894 and compares with the deficit of £9,940 in the first 5 months to May 2015. As the previous rate of grant expenditure was clearly unsustainable we temporarily restricted total monthly support for ALM to £1,800. We also stopped contributing approximately £400 per month towards the ALM Destitution Manager's salary. These restrictions will be reviewed over the coming months.

Presidents

The Most Rev'd Malcolm McMahon, The Archbishop of Liverpool
The Right Rev'd Paul Bayes, The Bishop of Liverpool
The Rev'd Dr Sheryl M Anderson, Chair of the Liverpool Methodist District
The Rev'd Jacky Embrey, Moderator of the Mersey Synod of the United Reformed Church
The Rev'd Phil Jump, Regional Minister, North West Baptist Association
Major Drew McCombe, North-Western Divisional Commander, Salvation Army

(Churches Together in the Merseyside Region is a registered charity, No.519061)

In the last 6 months we received one grant of £2k from the Elizabeth Rathbone Fund, £5,000 from Eleanor Rathbone Trust, £300 from Churches Together in the Chester Region, £825 from LCVS and £3,760 from 29 individual donations.

In June the Archdiocese of Liverpool passed over the 2014 Lenten Alms totalling £19,193. This substantial amount is crucial to the continuation of the destitution project over the next year.

Grants Paid Out

We have contributed to the ALM Destitution Project almost £25k in the first 9 months of 2015. While funds permit, SAS is continuing to fund the costs of support grants for individuals, food, toiletries and accommodation.

We currently finance three properties accommodating 7 women in one house, and 8 men in the other two houses. There are another three people who urgently need emergency accommodation. We have just one host family at the moment to help with temporary emergency accommodation.

ALM delivers weekly grants to the destitute as well as daily breakfast [usually porridge], a hot lunch, toiletries, donated clothes and furniture where possible.

In addition to the ones we house, there are now between 50 and 60 destitute people receiving food and toiletries each Friday. Hot lunches are now routinely being provided for 200+ people. One day recently we had 240 visitors for lunch.

Other miscellaneous grants paid out include:

- train/bus fares for asylum registration, court appearances etc
- weekly bus passes
- council tax, utility meter top-ups
- Probation support

Other News

- I asked ALM for some relevant numbers regarding the footfall of visitors and destitution cases presenting at ALM. The numbers speak for themselves:

“...Visits to ALM - There has been a steady increase of monthly client visitor numbers.

September 2015 saw the highest monthly total ever visiting ALM of 3,080, an increase of over 10% on September 2014.

-The rolling Annual Caseload Totals for each of the five months ending, May, June, July, August and September 2015 have each seen record high months, in turn. Year to May was 826, year to June was 831, etc rising to year to September 885. This is having a severe strain on staff and volunteer resources and the service we are providing.

-The rolling Annual Destitution Caseload Totals have crept up from 250 in the year to September 2014 to 275 in the year to September 2015, showing a 10% increase.

-The rolling Annual Newly Destitute Caseload Totals for each of the three months ending July, August and September 2015 have each seen record or record equalling highs. E.g. in the year to September 2015 there were 94 newly destitute people added.....”

-ALM has been offered 3 additional properties in the Merseyside Area, rent free, from individuals who want to help in some way. Subject to proper vetting and safeguarding checks we hope to accommodate either families or groups of men or groups of women. In total about 15 people will be accommodated. However, even though rent free, it will cost approximately £340 per month, per house to maintain, fund utilities and support those being accommodated.

-Government reforms [i.e. reductions] of benefits from August 2015 mean that more people and families are effectively becoming destitute at a greater rate and earlier than before. The more children in a family unit, the bigger the cut in benefit. Also from July 2016 similar reforms affecting families with children will further exacerbate the destitution situation. More people are being granted refugee status [nearly 50% of asylum claims are successful now compared with nearly 25% three years ago]. What all this means is that more people are becoming destitute, sooner than they would normally have become.

- SAS will do what we can as ever to support all those who present themselves at the door of ALM, but more funds will need to be found to match the growing demands.

-If you have internet access there is a short video on you.to be called ALM Presentation which shows how we are helping asylum seekers and refugees in so many different ways.

<https://youtu.be/TjjewHin4eo>

-There are numerous ways individuals or groups can support the work of SAS and ALM e.g. donations, fundraising activities, new and old clothes, donating specific food items, etc. You can obtain a full list of food items wanted and fundraising ideas for SAS from the CTMR administration office [sas@ctmr.org.uk or tel: 0151 709 0125] or directly to myself. Additionally local supporters in the Merseyside region may be able to offer a few hours weekly teaching [English, Maths, art, music, singing etc] or could join a group of volunteers for a day out with asylum seekers on the ferries, at the museums/ art galleries etc. Such outings make such a difference to the wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees.

We would welcome other ideas or suggestions for supporting the work of SAS and ALM.

Thank you once again for the financial support to SAS from individuals [including 29 standing orders and some anonymous], groups, churches, charitable trusts and organisations over the reported period. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Best regards

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October 2015

Support for Asylum Seekers
CTMR – Churches Together in the Merseyside Region
Registered Charity Number 519061

Statement of Financial Activities
for the three months period to 30 September 2015

	Total 2015	Total 2014
Incoming Resources		
Grants from Organisations	27,318	58,335
Individual Donations	7,560	4,440
	34,878	62,775
 Resources Expended		
Accommodation	13,017	20,233
Destitution Support	9,722	15,632
ALM Management		
Grant	2,255	2,186
Probation Grants for Asylum seekers	0	875
	24,984	38,926
 Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources	9,894	23,849
 Fund Balances		
At 1 January 2015	26,615	2,765
At 30 September 2015	35,509	26,615
 Represented By :		
Bank Bal @ 30 Sept 2015	36,509	26615