

DESTITUTE ASYLUM SEEKERS

Briefing on Available Resources

This leaflet provides information about crisis level resources for asylum seekers made destitute under current asylum laws who have no recourse to public funds.

It is for anyone involved in assisting and supporting such individuals.

The resources available are relatively new initiatives and are very sparse. What ever is currently available is brought together in this briefing.

At the end of this briefing there is a list of Useful Contacts.

Should you have any questions or comments please email home@paih.org or call Kam, David or Sraboni on 0141 353 2220.

You can make a donation to our hardship fund for destitute refugees by sending cheques to Positive Action in Housing, 98 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1PJ. Alternatively you can donate online now with any credit or debit card by clicking on www.paih.org.

INTRODUCTION

When a person's asylum application has been refused and all appeal rights exhausted the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) will move to stop their support after 28 days. In addition NASS will instruct the accommodation provider to begin eviction instructions.

Glasgow City Council, and other housing providers have therefore, began a programme of evictions of asylum seekers from their homes. These evictions are being carried out in response to Home Office instructions.

Definition of Destitution

Destitution: 'lacking resources or the means of subsistence; completely impoverished'.

Recently the government has taken the step of stopping all benefits and evicting from accommodation an asylum seeker whose asylum case has been rejected and whose rights to appeal have been exhausted. Destitute clients are sometimes termed "appeals exhausted" or are sometimes referred to as "failed asylum seekers". Once someone is "appeals exhausted" and made destitute they have no recourse to public funds, public housing, council homelessness services or financial support. Destitution can occur whilst clients are pursuing judicial review of their original decision.

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WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE?

Short term crisis accommodation

Positive Action In Housing has set up a surgery in its offices and a register of people willing to give money or accommodation. We aim to match clients with volunteers who will take them into their homes. If this is not possible we may be able to pay for the client to stay in a hostel for a very short period of time. Clients have been referred to Positive Action In Housing by word of mouth, the police, bailiffs and refugee groups. We will work with those supporting destitute asylum seekers in order to reach the best solution.

This is the only crisis accommodation support service being offered to destitute asylum seekers who are not willing to risk their safety by returning to their country of origin.

Contact:

Positive Action In Housing
98 West George Street
Glasgow
G2 1EJ
0141 353 2220
www.paih.org

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Hard case support

“Hard Case” or “Section 4” support is usually very basic, full board only (no cash support) hostel accommodation. This is mostly available in England but there are some places available in Glasgow.

Criteria:

- Individuals must be unable to leave the UK due to a physical impediment to travel (illness, pregnancy)
- Individuals are unable to leave because there is no safe route available for their return
- Individuals are complying with an attempt to obtain travel documents for return
- Individuals have exceptional or compassionate circumstances
- Individuals have applied for judicial review against their decision

How to access:

- Through Scottish Refugee Council (speak to Duty Desk or ask for Tommy or Tasfey).

Contact:

Scottish Refugee Council

5 Cadogan Square

170 Blythswood Court

Glasgow G2 7PH

0800 085 6087

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

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British Red Cross

British Red Cross can provide hygiene packs and sleeping bags, and is looking at other potential support.

Criteria:

- Individual is destitute

How to access:

- Through Red Cross office in Glasgow.

Contact:

British Red Cross
2 Swan Street
Glasgow
G4 OAX
0141 332 1607
www.redcross.org.uk

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Refugee Survival Trust

Refugee Survival Trust can provide some payments to asylum seekers who have no other means of support.

Criteria:

- Asylum Seekers who have lost their initial appeal but are appealing/seeking judicial review under human rights legislation.
- Clients must have no other means of support.
- Support lasts for two week periods.

How to access:

- Referrals through Scottish Refugee Council. Key worker is Juliet Harris.
- If a client presents late in the afternoon and don't have time to go to Scottish Refugee Council by close of business, PAiH can make small payments on RST's behalf (£5.50 for one night or £11 for two nights).

Contact:

Refugee Survival Trust

2 Swan Street

Glasgow

G4 OAX

0141 332 1607

www.redcross.org.uk

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Simon Community

The Simon Community provides sleeping bags and support to anyone who is homeless or destitute in Glasgow.

Criteria:

- Individual is homeless/destitute.

How to access

- Phone the Simon Community.

Contact:

Glasgow Simon Community

69 Dixon Road

Glasgow

G42 8AT

0141 423 0949

www.glasgowsimon.org

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Community Care Needs

This is relevant when the client has support needs that do not arise from destitution. For example: severe mental health problems, physical disability, infirmity etc. It is possible that if the client has any of these needs that the local authority will accept a responsibility to support and accommodate them. To access this you must first have the local authority carry out an 'Urgent Community Care Assessment'. This should be asked for by telephone and in writing.

How to access

- Contact Duty Office at Osborne Street Social Work Department on 0141 276 4800 to request an appointment.
- If not accompanying client it would be helpful to forward a letter explaining the client's situation.
- Social Work Department will only accept referrals from GPs and Mental Health specialists. Therefore we should advise clients to go to their GP, again with a covering letter, to request a formal referral.

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CHECKLIST FOR HOUSING ADVICE WORKERS

- Speak to a solicitor for confirmation of client status. This information may also be obtained from NASS.
- Interview client and record the client details. Include any health issues and check any documentation regarding the eviction. If proper documentation is not in place, eviction may not be lawful.
- Inform client of their situation, explain what this means and the options available to them.
- Check all relevant agencies/support for eligibility.
- If not eligible for above, client should be informed that in most cases their best option is to stay with friends or family. However, client and friends/family should understand that this could lead to adverse consequences if their friend/family member is also staying in NASS provided accommodation.
- If no accommodation is available for client, inform client of facilities for 'rough sleepers' i.e. Simon Community, Soup kitchens, day centres etc.

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USEFUL CONTACTS

British Red Cross

2 Swan Street

Glasgow

G4 OAX

0141 332 1607

www.redcross.org.uk

Refugee Survival Trust

19 Smith's Place

Edinburgh

EH6 8NT

0131 554 6776

info@rst.org.uk

Glasgow Simon Community

69 Dixon Road

Glasgow

G42 8AT

0141 423 0949

www.glasgowssimon.org

Positive Action In Housing

98 West George Street

Glasgow

G2 1EJ

0141 353 2220

www.paih.org

Scottish Refugee Council

5 Cadogan Square

170 Blythswood Court

Glasgow G2 7PH

0800 085 6087

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

YMCA

33 Petershill Drive

Glasgow G21 4QQ

0141 557 2355

options@ymcaglasgow.org

Thanks to David Reilly, Kam Kaur of Positive Action in Housing with support from Michael Collins in a personal capacity - November 2004

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