

October 2017

Well, a lot has changed at Dash since March!

We have five staff members who are doing a great job. Abiey continues with casework and Sham has become centre manager, handling the day to day running of the drop ins such as distribution of food parcels, supervising the kitchen and the clothes distribution. Ketina is doing sterling work keeping our accounts straight and we have been joined by Nigel Nyathi as volunteer coordinator. He did a student placement with us last year, wrote his dissertation on homelessness among asylum seekers in Huddersfield and we head hunted him just before he was awarded a first class degree from Huddersfield University. Maeve became general manager in September following a period of volunteering with us where we quickly identified she was too good an asset not to employ.

Still at the Salvation Army, we struggle for space. Numbers of clients have gone through the roof with 90 new clients since June and attendance peaking at 165 one day in the summer. Unsurprisingly we have run out of funds for basic travel costs and can no longer give clients a £4 bus pass to attend so inevitably numbers have fallen by around 40% on Mondays and 25% on Thursdays. This is worrying because clients may not know they have a problem and put off coming to us if they don't have the fare. An example of this is a client who came in because she had lost her benefits payment card. However she also told us she had been to her main interview with the home office the previous Friday and wasn't sure she was happy with the interpreter. The window for changing information given at interview is five days. She didn't know that, or that she could have it checked: we referred her to a solicitor who saw her the following day to avoid problems in future. This could make the difference between being granted asylum in six months, or having to wait years because the home office did not accept the information given at the start which may have been wrong.

On a lighter note we are catering the Marsden Jazz Festival this weekend to raise funds. A lot of work has gone into the planning of this, from staff and volunteers, so a big thank you is due. Much of the festival is free and we're encouraging clients to attend for a great experience.

If you have any ideas for fundraising you could do for DASH please let us know.

There are new projects starting up in Huddersfield to help refugees into the job market, to help new asylum seekers find their way round town and round British ways of doing things, so that should make things easier for clients.

Thank you for all your support and please keep us in your thoughts.

Best wishes  
Lucy Lucy  
Chair