

ASSIST Sheffield Annual Review 2017 - 2018



www.assistsheffield.org.uk

ASSIST Sheffield is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation no. 1154862



ASSIST Sheffield What we do

Here at ASSIST Sheffield we support some of the most vulnerable people living in Sheffield - people who have been unsuccessful in their applications for asylum and as a result have been made destitute. Many of our clients have escaped the unimaginable horrors of war, violence and persecution, but simply telling the truth about the conditions they have fled sadly isn't always enough. Without refugee status asylum seekers are not allowed to work. Once their application for asylum has been turned down many are left with no right to housing, benefits or other vital support. They're left homeless,

destitute and vulnerable on the streets of our city.

This is where we come in. ASSIST Sheffield is an invaluable lifeline for failed asylum seekers in Sheffield, offering solidarity, support and hope in the form of accommodation, advice and access to essential services.

A message from the chair



Another year of ASSIST. Another Annual Report. Still the scope of our work expands and grows.

Since our founding in 2003, so many have passed through our organisation. Clients, volunteers, hosts, staff.

There will never cease to be ways of improving on the basis of the considerable experience accumulated, but everyone associated with us can feel proud of what has been and is being achieved, and look forward to an exciting and rewarding future for the work that we do.

As ASSIST develops we increasingly recognise that our task is not simply to fight destitution, but to challenge its causes, to look outwards more and ally ourselves with others working with asylum seekers to end it.

One day we may no longer be needed. That will be the day when the cruelty and injustice that is such a part of asylum seekers lives is a thing of the past. Thank you everyone. All are welcome to join us and work for that day.

ASSIST leadership team

In 2016 creation of a Leadership Team emerged from discussions about restructuring of decision making processes within ASSIST. There was a suggestion to appoint one person to head up operational management and delivery but that felt alien to the ethos of ASSIST.

The team, established in November 2017, comprises three staff members and two volunteers, who are ensuring that a strong volunteer voice remains at the heart of the running of the organisation.

A message from the leadership team

It has been an exciting and successful year for us and all against a backdrop of big changes. These include the establishment of four Support and Advocacy Teams to enable clients to have regular contact with caseworkers; expanding our accommodation offer through two newly donated houses; the addition of new staff posts, a Client Support Manager and a Finance Officer.

While the work of the Leadership Team and its close relationship with the ASSIST Board of Trustees is still very much a work in progress, we believe the benefits of having a dedicated team to provide the operational steer for ASSIST are already in evidence, especially in terms of decision making. We look forward to another successful year ahead.



A Client journey

68 clients
slept at our
night shelter

34
clients housed
with weekend
hosts

Our weekend
hosts provided
270
bed nights

41 clients were
accommodated
in a house

54 clients
accompanied to
280
appointments

1442
advocacy
appointments

We hand out
750
food bank
vouchers
per year

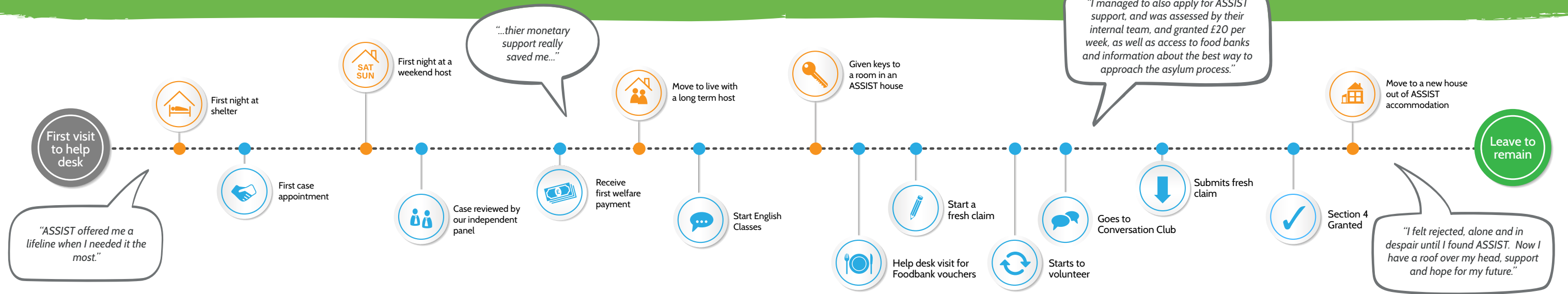
160
clients receive
long term
welfare payments
or bus passes

82 Muslim
50 Christian

132 men
27 women

42
clients moved
on to statutory
support

Help Desk saw
174
individuals



113

people
accommodated
by ASSIST

7,747

Bed nights in
our houses

27

Clients in long
term hosting

1339

Bed nights in our
night shelter

132

weekend hosting
placement

Accommodation

Our accommodation services continue to expand. In April 2017 we opened the sixth ASSIST house, a four bedroom terrace in Pitsmoor. It replaced the presbytery at the Holy Family Church in Arbourthorne, which the Catholic Diocese of Hallam had very kindly let us use for the previous year.

In August 2017 a very generous supporter completed the purchase of a property in the Firth Park area, which will be made available to ASSIST clients once it has been fully refurbished. This will mean the addition of four much needed

bed spaces for men. Including this property, we now have seven houses with 27 bedspaces that we can offer to destitute asylum seekers, in addition to bed spaces that are being made available by our partner organisation Open Hands.

We have continued to expand our hosting programme and now have a total of 35 households who are able to offer hosting across our weekend, emergency and long-term hosting schemes.



“ The kitchen at the night shelter provides space for volunteers and guests to mingle, share food and get to know each other. It is such a nice atmosphere. ”

Victor, ASSIST volunteer

Funding: How we have raised money this year



Our fundraising dinner and online auction of promises raised over £5000

“People have been through trauma fleeing their own country and then made homeless and destitute in Sheffield. I support ASSIST because they let people know about asylum destitution and do something about it

Rachel Smith, ASSIST supporter

We've had another successful year with an increase in regular supporters, a successful Lottery application and more partnerships created. Here we share some of the highlights.

Regular Monthly Donations

Our individual supporters continue to be hugely important part of our funding. Regular monthly donations enable us to plan with confidence.

Being reassured we can pay the bills for our houses each month means we can concentrate on improving our services in other areas.

Grant Funding

We continue to be part funded by a range of very generous grant funders. This year we were pleased to be in receipt of a 5 year grant from the Big Lottery Fund. This grant has enabled our reorganisation of how

ASSIST is run, improvement of our services, appointment of a Client Support Manager and extra support for our finance team.

Partnerships

A couple of examples of our partnerships include Lush and Talking Gigs:

Lush

We have been very fortunate to have received a grant from the Lush charity pot over the last couple of years.

This year we were able to expand this relationship further. On a week-end before Christmas we promoted ASSIST and sold our cards in their Fargate store. We received donations from the sale of the charity pot body lotion the whole weekend. We were also invited to the hugely inspiring Lush summit in London. We were able to raise awareness amongst Lush staff from all over the world about asylum policy and the work

of ASSIST. Lush continue to give us incredibly generous product donations for our clients. Our recent Lush grant covered the costs to update our website.

Talking Gigs

We continue to be supported by Talking Gigs with free tickets for our clients and fundraising at every gig. Last year they raised over £1500!

Thank you to everyone that has donated, volunteered, attended an event or supported us and destitute asylum seekers this year. We couldn't do it without you!



Volunteering



Our volunteer team has continued to grow; training over **150 new volunteers this year** particularly for our support and advocacy team expansion. Recognising the challenging nature of our volunteer work we have also expanded our **volunteer development programme; training 83 volunteers** on issues such as listening skills, human trafficking, post traumatic stress and managing risk.

There has been particular effort this year to support the interpreters team with a social and outings. **We now have 43 interpreters covering 15 languages.**

In November 2017 we held an ASSIST volunteer social for the first time for a couple of years. A good evening was had by all.

We were very proud to win Volunteering Sheffield's "Voluntary Organisation of the Year" award for 2018.

Thank you to all our volunteers, we could not do it without you. If you would like to get involved please get in touch.

Finance

Restricted Income
£193,181
Unrestricted Income
£223,726
Total Income
£416,907
Total Expenditure
£343,739
Surplus
£73,168

Our finances have been independently examined and our full financial statements will be available on our website.

In 2017/18 ASSIST raised an income of £416,907. Approximately 46% of this income was restricted for use with specifically pre-agreed costs and the rest is unrestricted and can be used to cover any costs. We are really grateful to our many regular donors.

ASSIST's expenditure in 2017/18 was £343,739 which left us with an operating surplus of £73,168 - mainly due to a large legacy donation.

The years to come

This year saw huge structural changes at ASSIST. With Lottery funding came opportunities to act upon much needed development of services. We moved client appointments into our own expanding office spaces while amalgamating and streamlining our advocacy and welfare support services. We have just started to see the benefits of the relationship building between clients and advocacy volunteers.

From this platform we are looking to the years ahead. How can we further innovate to provide what our clients most need. A significant develop-

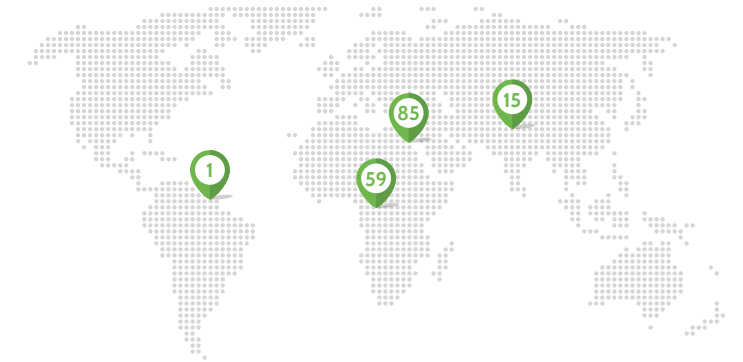
ment we hope to be able to report on next year is the recently signed partnership with South Yorkshire Refugee Law and Justice. This aims to increase our legal support for clients, often the most important stepping stone for people moving on to a more positive future.

In our accommodation provision we have another couple of houses joining our portfolio and with this the need to raise more funds each year to cover the basic costs of bills.

In our resources and fundraising sector we will be looking ahead to

beyond our Lottery funding, promoting legacy giving which has been so important to us over the years, increase our work with local businesses and continue to improve our support of our individual givers. We have recently refreshed our website bringing with this the opportunity to raise more money online by avoiding costs incurred from online donation platforms. We look forward to a future where we can continue to increase our support for asylum seekers in Sheffield.

160 clients from around the world



85

Middle East and North Africa:

Algeria, Egypt, Iran (35), Iraq (30), Kuwait, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Western Sahara, Yemen

59

Sub-Saharan Africa:

Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Congo, DR Congo, Ivory Coast, Eritrea (9), Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe

15

Asia:

North Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Armenia

1

South America:

Guyana

2

Unknown



There are so many ways you can get involved

There are many ways to help ASSIST to continue providing crucial services for people who become destitute through seeking asylum:

- Host an asylum seeker in your home.
- Volunteer - We run regular information sessions where you can find out what opportunities we have available. We need people to do a wide range of things such as admin, run stalls, speak at events, manage teams, sleep at our night shelter, interpret, accompany asylum seekers to appointments, grant applications etc!
- Fundraise - Set yourself a challenge, run a marathon, give up chocolate, run a bake sale, organise an event... Get in touch with your ideas and we can help you make it happen. Give generously by making a one-off donation or setting up a standing order. Follow us on social media and join our mailing list - all information is on our website

Find out more at:

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