



# Churches Together in the Merseyside Region

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## SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS S.A.S

Dear Friends,

### **Report – December 2016**

This is a time of goodwill and hope for the future. We cannot forget the Year of Mercy just finished and all the wonderful works of mercy and acts of kindness shown to those seeking asylum and refuge. Hopefully we can continue to see many more Years of Mercy, because the need to “Welcome the Stranger” shows no sign of abating any time soon.

With your help and support SAS will continue to fund the destitution project in collaboration with Asylum Link Merseyside. I would like to thank in particular the work of Jannatul Choudhury, Destitution Manager at ALM. Jannatul works tirelessly with the caseworkers to ensure the humanitarian needs of the destitute are met wherever possible.

SAS has also begun funding some of the wellbeing projects being delivered by Faiths4Change – additional lessons on nutrition and healthy living, visits to our allotments and much more. I would like to thank Annie Merry and Lilli for the invaluable work they are doing with our asylum seekers and refugees. Thank you.

Unfortunately all this support has a cost. This is not an appeal but if any readers can support SAS financially that would be very welcome.

### **Financial Statements**

Attached is a summary statement of financial activities for the 10 months period to October 2016 with comparative figures for the full year to December 2015, grouped under relevant headings of income and expenditure. This shows a welcome net surplus for January to October of £12,824. We have been able to increase the basic monthly cap on grants to Asylum Link Merseyside [ALM] from £1,800 to £1,900. This cap will be reviewed over the coming months. Additionally SAS has contributed on average £230 per month to the new fruit project at ALM.

In the last 6 months we have received two grants via Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services [LCVS] totalling £1,935 plus a monthly average income of £270 from individual supporters via standing orders.

SAS contributed to the ALM Destitution Project £20.4k in the first 10 months of 2016. This covered support grants for individuals, food, toiletries, fruit and £9k for accommodation.

We are receiving more referrals for support grants from other agencies, e.g. SAS made

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#### 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

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individual support grants totalling £2,250 via the Merseyside Probation Service.

### **Properties and Emergency Accommodation**

SAS is currently supporting 3 properties for emergency accommodation purposes– one for 8 destitute women, and two properties for 7 destitute men. We are also vetting three other potential properties, one of which has been offered rent free. Location near ALM is a key issue for emergency accommodation as support for our clients has to be local and accessible on foot or by bicycle.

Once a person feels safe and secure in one of our properties it becomes very difficult for them to move on. We work with them on their exit strategy but this can take months, if at all to translate into a more permanent residence for them.

SAS is working closely with ALM, Boaz Trust in Manchester and seven local churches to initiate a Night Shelter Scheme from February 2017. Based on the Boaz model we hope to provide emergency accommodation for 12 men each night seven days per week. Each church will provide food and shelter for one night per week. This will share the cost and resources between the churches. If it is successful the churches may be able to extend to two nights per week, or we may be able to involve another group of seven churches.

ALM will co-ordinate the Scheme and SAS will contribute to start up costs e.g. sleeping bags, bedding, cooking utensils etc.

To put this in perspective, in order to accommodate in night shelters 240 people registered as destitute with ALM we would need 20 groups of seven churches [i.e. 140 churches in total] each taking 12 people for one night in seven, each week. Watch this space.

### **SAS Support Grants via Other Agencies**

SAS continues to fund ALM to provide individual emergency grants to the destitute

In addition 50 and 60 destitute people are receiving food and toiletries each Friday.

Emergency rations are also provided as necessary.

Hot lunches are still routinely being provided on average for 250 people. Some days in 2016 that has exceeded 300 in one day.

Miscellaneous emergency grants paid out include the usual basic items:

- Train/bus fares for asylum registration, court appearances etc
- Weekly bus passes
- Council tax, utility meter top-ups

In addition to humanitarian support via ALM, SAS is now supporting and targeting personal well being. Via Faiths4Change additional classroom sessions and workshops have been delivered at allotments, also for nutrition and healthy eating, for hygiene and other outreach activities. These sessions have proved extremely popular and the demand for more sessions is evident.

Occasional individual support grants are provided via MRANG [Merseyside Refugee and Asylum Seekers Pre and Post Natal Support Group] and also the Probation Service [Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company].

CTMR/SAS, Together Liverpool and ALM are collaborating on an ESOL pamphlet [English for Speakers of Other Languages]. This is effectively an Addendum to the CTMR document “Welcome The Stranger” which has proved so popular. It will be particularly useful for faith groups and charities who are preparing to support the sudden influx of asylum seekers who have been dispersed to new areas where there is little or no support structures in place. This pamphlet will be available for printing soon.

## **Prospects for 2017**

The numbers of destitute people in Merseyside will continue to rise, for several reasons:

- The effects of the 2016 Immigration Act on refused asylum seekers making appeals and the refusal for families of asylum seekers including those with children.
- The Syrian Resettlement Programme taking effect
- The placement of unaccompanied minors from Calais
- More refugees who have been given leave to stay, finding it difficult to find work and accommodation in the short term.

SAS will do what we can as ever to support all those who continue to present themselves at the door of ALM, but more funds are needed urgently to match the growing demands.

## **Miscellaneous**

SAS is now funding a “fruit” project 4 days per week– the aim is for one piece of fruit to be available at lunchtime per person per day.

We have an arrangement with Costco who allow their surplus fruit to be collected one day per week. So we now have the full working week covered.

## **Support for SAS/ALM**

I would ask individuals, faith groups and other organisations to continue to 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](mailto:sas@ctmr.org.uk) or tel: 0151 709 0125] or directly to myself.

Cheques should be made payable to “Churches Together in the Merseyside Region Support for Asylum Seekers” or simply “CTMR SAS”.

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 on the ferries, at the museums/ art galleries etc. Such outings make such a difference to the wellbeing of people seeking asylum seekers and refuge.

We can provide a list of other ideas or suggestions for raising funds and supporting the work of SAS and ALM.

Thank you once again for the financial support to SAS from individuals, groups, churches, charitable trusts and organisations over the reported period. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Please keep in your prayers the staff, volunteers and trustees of ALM and SAS involved in supporting arguably the most marginalised group in our community.

My best regards and a Happy Christmas to you and your families.

Neil Cunningham

Coordinator, CTMR/ SAS Destitution Project

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December 2016

**Ps If you prefer not to receive SAS newsletters in future please let me know. Neil**

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

**Statement of Financial Activities  
 for the 10 months period to 31 October 2016**

	<b>Total to October</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Grants from Organisations	30,937	29,543
Individual Donations	4,591	10,083
	<b>35,508</b>	<b>39,626</b>
 <b>Resources Expended</b>		
Accommodation	9,048	14,687
Destitution Support	11,386	11,034
ALM Management		
Grant	0	3,177
Probation Grants for Asylum Seekers	2,250	500
	<b>22,684</b>	<b>29,398</b>
 <b>Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources</b>	<b>12,824</b>	<b>10,228</b>
 <b>Fund Balances</b>		
At 1 January 2016	36,843	26,615
At 31 October 2016	<b>49,667</b>	<b>36,843</b>
 <b>Represented By :</b>		
Bank Bal @ 31 October 2016	<b>49,667</b>	<b>36,843</b>