

hope  
projects  
report  
13/14

# hope projects



# hope projects report 13/14



## Introduction

This report covers the year ended 31 March 2014.

The Hope Projects work to help destitute asylum seekers and some others barred from public funds in Birmingham and the West Midlands. There are currently five main Hope projects:

- **the Hope Destitution Fund**, making fortnightly cash grants to destitute asylum seekers,
- **Hope Housing**, providing emergency accommodation for homeless asylum seekers,
- **the Hope Fund for Children**, making one-off grants to mothers of small children who are barred from recourse to public funds,
- **Ujamaa**, providing specialist counselling and advice/casework support for asylum-seeker and refugee women, and
- **the Hope Special Fund**, making one-off grants for purposes not covered by other Hope Funds.

There are two sub-projects of Hope Housing:

- **the Hope Knitting Group** (also known as **Kuwadzana U-Knitty**),
- **the Hope Gardeners** project (also known as **Kushinga Community Garden**).

Other projects developed by Hope Projects with others include

- **the Advice Birmingham partnership**,
- **the Migrants' Union**.

All these projects work in close partnership with other local agencies.

## Hope Destitution Fund

Asylum seekers are barred from recourse to public funds, including all mainstream benefits and provision for the homeless.

Grants from the **Hope Destitution Fund** are generally made only to those who have a reasonable prospect of securing an alternative remedy to their destitution in the near future. Payments are agreed by a Grants Panel currently made up of representatives from

- ASIRT (Asylum Support and Immigration Resource Team),
- BIRCH Community Hosting Network,
- Birmingham Community Law Centre,
- the Children's Society Midlands Refugee Project,
- the British Red Cross,
- Lifeline Options,
- the Refugee and Migrant Centre of the Black Country, and
- Restore (Birmingham Churches Together for Asylum Seekers and Refugees),

together with workers and volunteers from the Hope Projects.

“ Since 2003 more than £885,000 has been disbursed from the Fund. In the year 2013/14 £71,284 was disbursed ”

All of these organisations are represented on the Hope Projects Steering Group, which also includes co-opted individuals, and which meets regularly to guide the work of both the Destitution Fund and Hope Housing.

The Hope Destitution Fund takes applications only from local referring agencies competent and experienced in working with destitute asylum seekers, so that further information on applications, and longer-term remedies, can be sought from the agencies as necessary.

The criteria for grant-making are available at [http://www.hope-projects.org.uk/hdf/Hope\\_Destitution\\_Fund\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.hope-projects.org.uk/hdf/Hope_Destitution_Fund_criteria.pdf).

The current rates of payment are normally £20 a week for adults and £15 a week for children.

## Fund-raising

In the financial year 2013/14, **£55,171** was raised for disbursement in grants to destitute individuals and families, from grant-making trusts, individuals and faith groups.

Funders included:

- the A B Charitable Trust,
- the Bryant Trust,
- the Cole Trust,
- the Grimmitt Trust,
- the Roughley Trust,
- the Saintbury Trust, and
- the William A Cadbury Trust.

And the Children’s Society Midlands Refugee Project gave £9,000 towards grants for families with children barred from public funds; these grants were made from both the Destitution Fund and the Hope Fund for Children.

As usual, none of the money raised for grant-making has been used for administrative costs, which continue to be covered from our general funds.

## Grant-giving

Since 2003 more than **£885,000** has been disbursed from the Destitution Fund. In the year 2013/14 **£71,284** was disbursed.

Clients came from 43 different countries:

Afghanistan	16	Lebanon	1
Algeria	5	Malawi	1
Angola	3	Mauritius	1
Bangladesh	1	Namibia	1
Cameroon	1	Myanmar	2
CAR	1	Libya	1
Cuba	1	Namibia	1
China	1	Niger	1
DR Congo	4	Nigeria	9
Egypt	1	Pakistan	11
Eritrea	10	Palestine	4
Ethiopia	3	Philipino	1
Gambia	7	Russian	1
Ghana	3	Sierra Leone	2
Guinea	2	Somalia	10
India	1	Sri Lanka	2
Iran	30	Sudan	11
Iraq	16	Tanzania	1
Ivory Coast	2	Uganda	1
Jamaica	2	Yemen	1
Kenya	5	Zimbabwe	28
Korea	1		

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We closed **205** cases during the year. Of these there were 46 female single adults, 144 male single adults, and 15 couples. Closed cases included 28 children and 9 pregnant women. Generally, a case is closed because a longer-term remedy for the client's destitution has been successfully secured.

## Giving to the Fund

Online donations to the Destitution Fund can be made through our Web site, at [www.hope-projects.org.uk](http://www.hope-projects.org.uk).

## Hope Housing

**Hope Housing** provides emergency accommodation for homeless and destitute asylum seekers, who are barred from mainstream provision for the homeless, including nearly all hostels and night-shelters.

In 2013/14 we accommodated **60 new residents** - 35 women (5 pregnant), 22 men and 3 couples, with 5 children.

As with the Hope Destitution Fund, accommodation is generally provided only to those with some prospect of securing a remedy to their homelessness in the near future.

The general development of Hope Housing is guided by the Hope Projects Steering Group; and a Panel meeting every six weeks guides housing-management matters.

Applications from our referral-agencies are considered through email by a panel including Hope workers and trustees and other co-opted members.

Over the year 2013/14 Hope Housing continued to manage **eight properties** made available at peppercorn rents by housing associations and other social landlords: these were

- Bournville Village Trust,
- Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham,
- Friendship Care and Housing,
- Mercian Housing Association,
- Midland Heart, and
- Yardley Great Trust.

The salary costs of the Hope Housing Support Worker, together with the cost of electricity, gas and water, Council Tax, TV licences and other bills, the furnishing, repairs and maintenance of the properties and other management and running costs, were covered by funding from trusts and other bodies, including:

- the 29 May 1961 Trust,
- the Azadi Trust,
- the A B Charitable Trust,
- Birmingham Central Soroptimists,
- the Bryant Trust,
- Bournville Village Trust Vision '13,
- the Cole Charitable Trust,
- the Eveson Charitable Trust,
- the Friends Hall Farm Street Trust,
- the Joseph Rowntree Foundation,
- the J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust,
- the Roughley Trust,
- the Saintbury Trust,
- the South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust, and
- the William A Cadbury Trust.

“ In 2013/14 we accommodated 60 new residents - 35 women (5 pregnant), 22 men and 3 couples, with 5 children. Our adult residents were of 25 different nationalities,”

Our adult residents were of **25** different nationalities:

Angola	1	Lebanon	1
Afghanistan	1	Liberia	2
Algeria	2	Namibia	1
Cameroon	1	Niger	1
Ghana	1	Nigeria	2
DR Congo	3	Pakistan	4
Eritrea	5	Palestine	4
Ethiopia	2	Sierra Leone	1
Guinea	1	Somalia	2
Iran	4	South Africa	1
Iraq	3	Sri Lanka	1
Ivory Coast	1	Zimbabwe	14
Kenya	1		

The following medical conditions (not including pregnancy or recent birth) were recorded for residents:

asthmatic bronchitis, hepatitis C  
osteoarthritis  
severe depression  
serious domestic violence  
high blood pressure  
depression and anxiety (2)  
depression and back pain  
outpatient at Trauma Department  
asthmatic  
cervical cancer  
lifelong mental-health issues  
depressed, confused and fearful  
HIV, needs safe storage for meds  
on medication for the heart  
high blood pressure, sleeping problems  
possible multiple personalities  
diabetic, high cholesterol, depression  
depression, on medication  
anxiety, depression

arthritis  
gangrene in left arm, foreign object in right arm  
HIV (3)  
mental health - suicide attempts, strong medication, treatment from psychiatrist  
depression  
diabetes, high blood pressure, depression  
mental health problems  
breathing issues  
stomach operation  
loss of hearing in one ear  
back problems, high blood pressure  
calipers on legs, stress  
type-2 diabetes

We continued to use our largest property, in Selly Oak, as first-stage accommodation where residents' needs could if necessary be assessed before they moved on to other properties.

This house also has a small office for Hope workers and volunteers, and is the base for a range of activities for residents from all the houses.

A local storage firm, 1st Self Access Storage, has generously continued to provide us with free furniture storage space.

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## “Mixed-use” properties

We are currently seeking properties from housing associations and the City Council for which management and running costs could be financed on a sustainable “mixed-use” basis, with residents who have recently obtained leave to remain in the UK (and so can work, and claim Housing Benefit) paying rent to subsidise the asylum-seeker residents who are “barred from recourse to public funds”.

## Coventry Peace House

There is no night-shelter in Birmingham that regularly accepts homeless asylum seekers. We therefore rely on our partner-organisation the Coventry Peace House, with very little funding but a huge commitment, to provide basic emergency overnight accommodation in cases where we cannot help street-homeless people immediately.

## Hope Knitting Group and Hope Gardeners project

These groups, made up of Hope Housing residents, other Hope clients, volunteers and friends, continued to thrive, and to provide therapeutic recreation and companionship for our clients, as well as raising money for the projects.

**The Knitting Group (Kuwadzana U-Knitty)** meets every Monday in one of the Hope houses, teaching the basics to women new to knitting, and providing them and more experienced knitters with

the tools and goods to use their skills; it also provides emotional and practical support to women housed in Hope accommodation, and builds bridges of friendship, helping them to tackle isolation and develop a sense of community.

## Hope Gardeners (Kushinga Community Gardens)

is a partnership between Hope Housing residents and supporters, members of the local community in south-west Birmingham including the Gung Ho housing co-operative, the South Birmingham Food Co-operative, and Bournville Village Trust, who have provided a plot of land close to one of the Hope Housing properties.

The project aims to give Hope residents, other asylum seekers and refugees and the local community a garden to work on together – to be creative, promote interpersonal relationships, keep minds and bodies active, and provide nutritious food.

## Joseph Rowntree Foundation

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has provided funding to the Hope Projects to support JRF at meetings in other parts of the country aimed at promoting the Hope Housing model for provision of accommodation to asylum seekers and other new migrants barred from recourse to public funds.

“ Ujamaa is operated in partnership with the Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP), Freedom from Torture and ASIRT ,”

## Hope Fund for Children

The **Hope Fund for Children**, which is funded by the Children's Society Midlands Refugee Project, makes one-off grants to mothers and small children barred from recourse to public funds in and around Birmingham (including non-asylum-seekers).

During 2013/14 applications for grants were again made to and determined by the Children's Society, while disbursement of the grants was administered by the Hope Projects. Applications to this Fund come not just from Hope Projects referral-agencies but also from other statutory and non-statutory agencies working with new-migrant mothers and children, including children's centres, women's projects, health visitors and other social and health workers.

During the year a total of **£4,500** was disbursed to **36** beneficiaries in one-off grants of £125. The balance of the Children's Society's £9,000 grant for the year was used for payments from the Hope Destitution Fund to women with small children.

Since the Fund started operating in 2008, **£51,750** has been disbursed in one-off grants to **385** women.

Application forms for grants from the Hope Fund for Children are available on the Hope Projects Web site at <http://www.hope-projects.org.uk/HFC>.

## Ujamaa

This project, funded by a grant from Comic Relief, provides traumatised female asylum seekers and refugees with professional counselling, and with other one-to-one support, advice and information services. It is operated in partnership with the Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP), Freedom from Torture and ASIRT.

During the project's first year **more than 80 women** have been supported

The project also runs training courses for professionals and community groups around issues faced by such women.

## Hope Special Fund

Back in 2011/12 a group of Hope Projects supporters in Lichfield undertook to raise money for a new fund, the **Hope Special Fund**, which now provides grants to asylum seekers for purposes not covered by the Hope Destitution Fund or the Hope Fund for Children, e.g. fares for essential travel, the cost of reports to support asylum applications, and other one-off needs.

During the years 2013/14 **£1,389** was disbursed in grants from the fund.

Personal links between asylum seekers in Birmingham and Lichfield residents continued through the knitting and gardening groups.



## Advice Birmingham

Advice Birmingham is a partnership of advice and casework agencies in Birmingham working together to develop new ways of delivering advice and casework in response to drastic cuts in the availability of Legal Aid and of other funding for advice and casework services.

The partnership is resourced and serviced by Hope Projects and chaired by Hope Projects trustee Ranjit Sondhi.

Advice Birmingham's Web site is at <http://www.advice-birmingham.net>.

## Migrants' Union

One project developed from Advice Birmingham is the Migrants' Union. The Union's membership includes asylum seekers and other new migrants who are seeking to regularise or extend their immigration status, together with others who have succeeded in this, and gives practical mutual support to members submitting asylum and human-rights claims. It has some funding, via Hope Projects, from the AW60 Trust.

The Union, an autonomous organisation, is chaired by Almamy Taal. Its Claimants Group (asylum seekers and migrants seeking to regularise or extend their immigration status) meets every fortnight at Birmingham Asian Resource Centre in Handsworth; and the Union's Convenors meet once a month. Contact [migrants-union@hope-projects.org.uk](mailto:migrants-union@hope-projects.org.uk) for more information.

## Birmingham University Practitioner Research Programme

Hope Projects are a member of the Practitioner Research Programme. This network allows information-sharing and joint funding applications for research, developing skills to understand and respond to population changes in the city.

## Migrant Families Support Project

This new project, a partnership between Birmingham Community Law Centre, ASIRT and the Hope Projects, is funded by the Baring Foundation, Comic Relief and Unbound Philanthropy. It works mainly with new-migrant families with children who have "no recourse to public funds".

Hope's involvement in the project is "to provide advocates to support service-users and engage social workers throughout the assessment process for local authority support, ensuring that individuals' situations are understood, and that voluntary and statutory sectors collaborate for their clients' best interests."

## Casework

Hope Project workers have continued to undertake casework. This has mainly involved making applications for UKBA or local-authority support for Hope Projects clients, and particularly Hope Housing residents.



“ We depend on the commitment of volunteers, partner-organisations, trustees and individual supporters ”

## Hope Projects people

### Trustees

- Shari Brown, chair
- Derek Bennett, treasurer
- Chris Chaora
- Dr Surinder Guru
- Rev. Neil Johnson
- Adrian Randall
- Rt Hon. Clare Short
- Ranjit Sondhi CBE

During the year the projects also depended heavily upon the commitment and support of Hope Projects Steering Group members, workers at our partner-organisations, and individual supporters.

Our thanks also go again to Birmingham Asian Resource Centre for providing office space and facilities to the Hope Projects workers.

## Workers and volunteers during 2013/14

### Workers:

- Sarah Malka, Housing and Support Worker
- Geoff Wilkins, Project Co-ordinator

### Volunteers during the year included:

- Rose Basada
- Marzien Bezheshti
- Rosemary Crawley
- Sue Fallon
- Priscilla Jlay
- Linda McLeod
- Muna Edris Mohamed
- Felipe Molina
- Mark Phillips
- Ger Sampson
- Dot Squier
- Almamy Taal
- Agnes Tanoh
- Gloria Tafirenyuka



## Hope Projects case-studies

These case-studies illustrate how the Hope Projects and our Housing and Support Worker, working with our partner-organisations, can often provide support which goes beyond cash and accommodation.

**PB** is an Iraqi woman whose family were killed in front of her. She claimed asylum here but was refused because she could provide no evidence of the attack. She also suffered a street-attack here in the UK which left her disabled.

She was referred by her solicitors to Hope's Ujamaa project for counselling around rape and sexual-violence issues. She was staying with a friend who could not keep her any longer after having married, and was referred for support and accommodation to the Hope Destitution Fund and Hope Housing while her solicitors obtain a psychiatrist's report and other evidence to support further representations to the Home Office.

Following submission of these representations, we were able to secure Home-Office support and accommodation for **PB**.

**MK**, from Pakistan, has complex mental-health issues. These have contributed to difficulties faced by his legal representatives, Hope partner-organisation Lifeline Options, in

producing the correct documentation to support an application for Judicial Review of the refusal of his asylum claim.

Lifeline Options referred him to the HDF and Hope Housing for support and accommodation until they could obtain the necessary documents. The Judicial Review application was lodged, and **MK** was given Home-Office support and accommodation pending a decision on the case.

**YH**, from Cameroon, was detained in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre while pregnant. Having been referred to the HDF and Hope Housing by Hope partner the Red Cross, she was granted bail, released into Hope Housing accommodation, and given further support from Hope's Ujamaa project – we referred her to Mimosa Midwives for antenatal classes and the Doula Project for pregnancy support.

An application for Judicial Review of her case was submitted, she was granted Home-Office support and accommodation, and gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

**HZ**, from Lebanon, had been detained for over two years before being released on bail. He then spent three months sleeping at the Coventry Peace House night-shelter. (There is no night-shelter in Birmingham that accepts asylum-seekers.)

He was referred to the HDF and Hope Housing by Hope partner-organisation

“**HZ** had been detained for over two years before being released on bail. He then spent three months sleeping at a night-shelter,”

ASIRT. The Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre then applied for Home-Office support and accommodation on the basis of new asylum representations submitted by **HZ**.

This application was refused, but an appeal against the refusal was successful, and **HZ** was housed in Home-Office accommodation in Birmingham.

**NG**, a Zimbabwean woman, had submitted an asylum claim in 2007, but the Home Office maintained that this claim was no longer under consideration, and her Home-Office support and accommodation were terminated.

At first she stayed with a friend, but when the friend asked her to leave, destitute and homeless, she went to stay at the Coventry Peace House night-shelter.

She was then referred to the HDF and Hope Housing by Hope partner-organisation the Refugee Council. Hope's Housing and Support Worker was able to provide evidence that the 2007 submissions were still pending, and on this basis **NG** was granted Home-Office support and accommodation.

**NG** is an enthusiastic member of the Hope Knitting Group, and supports Ujamaa as a volunteer working with families.

**SN** came to the UK from Eritrea and claimed asylum. She fainted during her asylum interview, and was taken to hospital suffering from yellow fever.

She had accommodation in Birmingham, but no financial support, and was referred to the Hope Destitution Fund and the Hope Ujamaa project by her solicitor.

We referred her also to Hope partner Freedom from Torture, where she was offered counselling and one-to-one support, and we “signposted” her to other networks and organisations including Celebrating Sanctuary, the Refugee Council, and Restore.

Her Home-Office support has now started. As well as regularly attending Freedom from Torture she has a Restore “befriender”, and runs hair-making sessions for the Hope Knitting Group.



## Hope Web sites

We are now offering a professional Web-site development service. We can design, build and maintain fully responsive sites with or without content-management systems, at competitive rates. All proceeds go towards the work of Hope Projects.

(For examples, see our own site at [www.hope-projects.org.uk](http://www.hope-projects.org.uk), or the Birmingham Black Oral History Project site at [www.bbohp.org.uk](http://www.bbohp.org.uk).)

**Contact [websites@hope-projects.org.uk](mailto:websites@hope-projects.org.uk) for more information.**

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You can contact Hope Projects at [admin@hope-projects.org.uk](mailto:admin@hope-projects.org.uk) or through our Web site at <http://www.hope-projects.org.uk/>.



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