

“Destitution has become a tool of public policy in the case of asylum.”

Maeve Sherlock - CEO , The Refugee Council

“One young person who came to Newcastle shy and afraid, having lost his family in appalling circumstances, has had his life changed by the Open Door housing scheme.

I was extremely concerned about him as he was so vulnerable and unable to look after himself. Now, he has a group of friends for support and has found new confidence to be able to think about his future for himself.”

Geof Godwin from ‘Common Ground’ (referral agency) speaking about an Open Door resident he referred.

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Open Door is a registered charity no. 1099865

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Housing Destitute
Asylum Seekers

Open Door (North East) is one of the few charities providing accommodation for destitute asylum seekers in the UK.

Many asylum seekers become destitute when their support is withdrawn after their claim is refused. However, thousands are in this situation for months and even years before they are removed to their home country. They are not allowed to work, claim any benefits or access any statutory support* unless agreeing to go back home. This forces many underground, making them very vulnerable to exploitation simply to survive.

There are many individuals sleeping rough or depending on the charity of already overstretched family or friends. A report by Open Door estimated the number of destitute asylum seekers in Newcastle during December 2005 to be in excess of 300 people.

We have an urgent waiting list of people whom we cannot yet house due to lack of resources.



* With the exception of Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 for those with needs 'over and above destitution' i.e. extreme health care needs.

“Everyone on our waiting list is extremely vulnerable and urgently in need. We have seen how providing accommodation can dramatically improve their health and outlook on life enabling them to access other services that they desperately need.” Julian Prior — Project Director



The Open Door Hosting Scheme facilitates a private arrangement whereby volunteers will host asylum seekers in their homes for an agreed period of time. We would like hosting an asylum seeker to be like inviting any other guest to stay in your home.

We are not asking for professional support to be offered, simply a bed to sleep in, facilities to wash, do laundry and somewhere to store, cook and eat food. All our guests will be supported financially, (and in other practical ways) by a support agency so we do not encourage you to give any money to your guest.

Our hosting team will keep in touch with you on a regular basis to check how things are going and to arrange alternative accommodation for the guest at the end of the agreed hosting period. We do not advise people to host guests continuously and you can end the agreement at any time.

Why not contact us for an application form today?

