**Notre Dame Refugee Centre**

We aim to help refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants to overcome their difficulties and live happy, healthy, and productive lives. We believe that every individual and family in the UK has a right to live with dignity and respect. Our doors are open to all – we currently have 1300 active users.

**The asylum process**

In August 2016 the UK government introduced a new Immigration Bill. Its measures make it even more expensive and even more difficult to achieve immigration status for refugees and asylum seekers, especially those who are overstayers (original entry on a visa) or failed asylum seekers (those who have exhausted asylum applications and appeals). It often takes many years to reach a successful outcome for clients, who are stuck in limbo meanwhile with little or no financial support and no right to work. The number of destitute individuals and families is increasing. Their physical and mental health suffers as a result.

The Bill also criminalises the public – such as landlords and employers – for engaging asylum seekers.

We are one of only a few remaining Centres in London offering free services to refugees and asylum seekers. Our work is one of solidarity and advocacy in a very direct and compassionate way.

**We know we make a difference:**

CASE STUDY

The client is a Nigerian national who arrived in the UK in 2011 and was granted leave to remain as a Zambrano carer on 8th January 2015. She is a single parent and sole carer of 2 children who have British citizenship. However she was not allowed to receive public funds. Despite her part time work, the family is destitute and needed access to public funds to afford housing and to meet day to day living needs. The Home Office advised in a letter from 24th May 2018 that they would need to apply for further leave to remain to access to public funds. The NDRC Advisor made an application under Article 8 ‘The Right to a Private and Family Life’ in October 2018. A positive decision was reached in December 2018. The client can at last move on in her life and secure a future for her children.

Notre Dame Refugee Centre relies on the generosity of Londoners and others who share our aims and beliefs. Like many of our supporters, many of our visitors are French speaking, but we welcomed visitors from 91 different countries last year. These individuals and families have left their homes and countries as a last resort; on arrival in the UK their earlier traumas are often added to by the difficulties they face struggling to build new lives. One young visitor says:

“Since I’ve started to come here, I became more open. I feel welcome and safe here.

With the support of everybody in the Centre I feel ready to fight for my rights. You’ve always been there for me.

Thanks to the English teacher I could find an ESOL course adapted to my level in English. She also helped me to apply to college and I now go to mathematics and IT classes. I thought I would never be able to go back to studies. My dream is to become a pilot when I have my status.”

**The help we need**

* General volunteers – even if not immediately needed, it is always useful to have a waiting list as there’s a high turnover.
* Dedicated volunteers who are interested in being better informed on refugee issues, informing others, and getting involved in advocacy eg. attending meetings, joining campaigns.
* Donations via Just Giving on website www.notredamerc.org.uk
* Good quality clothes especially large women’s sizes and for men.

**Thank you for your interest and support. Please take a leaflet and visit our website.**

**https://www.ndfchurch.org/en**