



Proudly supporting

December 2015

Merry Christmas from Asylum Justice!

Work Review for 2015:

Sadly, at the beginning of 2013, having operated for 8 years and having assisted over 3,000 clients, Asylum Justice was forced to suspend operations. Thanks to crucial funding from the Tudor Trust Asylum Justice were able to recommence operations and continue to provide free legal services to asylum seekers and refugees in Wales.

The Board of Trustees appointed Ruth Brown as Legal Director of Asylum Justice. Ruth joined in October 2014 and remains the only paid member of staff. Ruth has done and continues to do a fantastic job particularly when considering the extremely high demand for our services. Since reopening in January 2015 Ruth and our wonderful team of volunteers have assisted 277 asylum seekers and refugees both at our Monday night free legal advice drop-in at City United Reformed Church and at our office in Portland House. (113-116, Bute Street, CF10 5EQ)

We receive regular referrals from Migrant Help, Social Services, local Solicitors, Churches and Community Organisations, other NGOs/Charities, and the Women's refuge. We, in turn, regularly refer clients to local Solicitors, Asylum Support Organisations, other NGOs/Charities, Social Services, Experts, Medical Experts, and to First Responders. We offer one-off advice as well as full representation. We assist clients at the initial stage of their asylum and/or human rights claim but most of our work is focused on representing clients on appeal before the First-Tier and Upper Tier of the Tribunal. We assist a number of clients to challenge decisions made by Legal Aid lawyers to withdraw/refuse representation under Legal Aid. We also help a number of clients with fresh claims and with applications for refugee family reunion. (Read our Case Studies opposite)

Case Studies: Family Reunion

A Syrian man from Dara'a Province fled to the UK after being detained and tortured on suspicion of supporting anti-government rebels. Although he was eventually granted asylum, his wife and four children were stuck in the middle of a war zone and he was completely beside himself when he realised he couldn't get legal aid for applying for family reunion. AJ did family reunion applications for his family members and they were recently all granted family reunion visas to come to the UK to join him here. They still haven't arrived, as they don't yet have the money to pay for 5 flights, but they are expected soon.

A Syrian Kurd who was detained for more than 4 months on his arrival in the UK on an apparent whim, the UK government wouldn't accept he was Syrian. He was detained in HMP Wormwood Scrubs for most of that time, and eventually the Home Office backed down, accepted his nationality and granted him asylum. By this time, he had become severely depressed, and continues to suffer from depression. His wife and four children had managed to escape from Syria to Turkey by this time, but were living in complete squalor there. AJ did family reunion applications for his family and we are currently awaiting the visa decisions in this case.

Lesson learnt – it is a travesty that Syrian clients have no other means of help in seeking family reunion. AJ feels it has a moral duty to ensure that we do all in power to support these clients.

Legal Advice Drop in:

Open drop-in sessions are held every Monday at City United Reformed Church in Windsor Place, Cardiff (CF10 3BZ) between 6 and 8.30pm.



Please note that there will NOT be a drop in session on Monday 28th December 2015 and Monday 4th January 2016. Our drop-in will re-commence as usual on Monday 11th January 2016.

Huge Thanks to City United Reformed Church for hosting our drop-in!



If you would like to donate and help ensure the continuity of our services then please make a contribution large or small. Thank you for your continued support.

You can make a donation of up to £10 by texting AJUK33 (plus the amount of the donation) to 70070. For example, if you wish to donate £5 to Asylum Justice then text "AJUK33 £5" to 70070.

Standing Order Forms are available via our website: <http://asylumjustice.org.uk/fundraising/>

Volunteers:

Asylum Justice now has a dedicated team of volunteers who regularly assist both at our Monday Night Drop in at City United Reformed Church and at our office. Our volunteers run the drop in. They assist with interpreting, taking important client details and information and offering tea/coffee and a warm welcome to all who access our services. The continued contribution of volunteers is invaluable to the provision of our services. Asylum Justice would like to say an enormous thank you to all of our volunteers!

Volunteer Feedback

'I am still a new volunteer at Asylum Justice but so far have enjoyed the friendly and welcoming atmosphere here. I have been shown how to greet the clients and take their details, plus I have helped lawyers with interpreting. The experience has been very rewarding and educational at the same time, and I look forward to continuing working with Asylum Justice in the new year' **Adel Meligy, Volunteer**

Client Feedback:

We measure the success of our project not only by the number of successful outcomes but also by the positive feedback from clients, volunteers and other individuals. Some of the comments from our drop-in feedback sheets:-

"Thank you for your time, kindness, patience and dedication. God bless you".

"Amazing people, help me a lot. Thank you from my heart"

"Very happy. Awesome service".

"Ruth was very patient and kind to us. She listened to everything and was very compassionate. I am extremely pleased by her pleasant service. Many thanks".

"Very helpful and patient. I am happy to get advice for free".

"I found your services so good for me and for others. But there is not all languages. Hope you ask some others, like asylum seekers to do this job and feel like they can give you help".

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Asylum Justice

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!