



Wakefield District City of Sanctuary has over the last ten years built a broad network of support within our community for asylum seekers dispersed into our community and for those passing through Urban House. We have provided practical friendship, help, advice and support via five drop-in sessions per week, peer support, English language and conversation, gardening, art sessions, craft sessions, social games and activities, children's activities, and access to expert advice and support across a range of issues. We have run an Asylum Seekers Support Fund to provide basic funding and supplies of food for those most in need.

Over the last eight years we have also run a clothing store to provide 'Emergency Clothing Packs', support clothing, shoes, toiletries, books, games, 'Welcome to the World' packs, Moses baskets, children's buggies and many other resources to people passing through Urban House, to asylum seekers within our community, and, indeed, to those in surrounding districts as required. The store receives generous donations from the local community and from groups as far afield as York, Ripon and Nidderdale. WDCoS also ensures that all clothing provided is of good quality, clean (free from any infestation), washed by volunteers. The store, it is pleasing to note, has been taken by others to be a model of good practice that they would seek to emulate.

The WDCoS has its own well-defined protocols for ensuring that all the goods it offers to Urban House are of good quality, clean, safe and as far as possible new. It has defined protocols for transferring these donations safely into Urban House. During the pandemic these procedures have been strengthened and extended to include local initial accommodation. At the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis the store received additional funding of £14,000 to continue to provide new clothing and shoes to all those in Urban House and other initial accommodation locally. No-one seeking our support within initial accommodation, or in dispersed asylum accommodation has gone without. The work of our volunteers is ongoing and greatly valued and we thank all our grassroots members for their help and support.