

Oxford City Council's funding contributes to life changing services like those described below.

Case Studies from Asylum Welcome

One of Asylum Welcome's objectives is to help clients avoid homelessness. The organisation may variously support clients to access housing through friends, members of their community or being in a hostel.

A client with Leave to Remain was working until he was injured at work. He did not fully recover, lost his housing and became street homeless. At first, he was not considered to have the local connection necessary to access Oxford's homeless services. Asylum Welcome worked with him and to prove that he had a local connection, access appropriate healthcare, to get back his benefit and find housing. He is now living in local housing and seeking employment again.

Another client lost his accommodation when St Francis House was closed and he became street homeless. Asylum Welcome successfully helped him to apply for Home Office accommodation and financial support preventing this man from becoming street homeless and destitute. The client is currently waiting for the Home Office to make a decision on his asylum case.

Case Study from Donnington Doorstep Family Centre

A 13 year old carer lives at home with his mum and 23 year old severely disabled brother. His brother does not sleep well and gets up very early. (This usually wakes the 13 year old who then makes his brother's breakfast and helps him to get ready before doing the same for himself. The early starts make it difficult for the 13 year old to get organised for school and he can often be very tired during the day as a result

The 13 year old helps to care for his brother to give his mum a break and also because he loves him. He feels frustrated at times especially when he struggles to find a quiet space to do his homework.

With 1:1 support from Donnington Doorstep the family have worked out a flexible timetable for the 13 year old to give him access to a laptop and a quiet space at the centre when he needs it and his support worker gives him time to talk and be heard.

The young carer's comments below:-

"One thing that really helps is the support I get from Doorstep. They understand what it's like; I can trust them and talk about my problem's knowing that I won't be judged. The youth drop in centre is also great".

Case Study from Open Door

A regular attendee to Open Door came to the UK in 2006 as an asylum seeker from Eritrea. Initially, Open Door helped him to find English as a Second Language (ESOL) class so that he could learn to speak English. Since then, Open Door has helped him with job application forms and today he works as part of the Rapid Response Team at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

He still regularly attends Open Door. He comes to socialise, play pool and, because he is on a low income, to eat and to get food. Although he has excellent spoken English, he has great difficulty with reading and they routinely help him with letters and correspondence. Recently, because of his low literacy, he got into debt and risked losing his accommodation.

An Open Door volunteer was able to help him, and with the aid of the Citizens Advice Bureau stopped his eviction and applied for a repayment plan. Thankfully, he is now back on track.

Comments from the asylum seeker:

“Open Door helps me with everything: with food, with letters, with jobs – and when I have a problem, like with my bills and my housing.”

Case Study from the Parasol Project (youth volunteering)

A young woman with cerebral palsy, has difficulty walking, has learning difficulties and struggles with gross and fine motor skills. She has been attending the Parasol project since her early teens. She has thrived as a result of their inclusive activities and taking part in activities that other more able teenagers can do.

She was one of several young people that took part in Parasol’s volunteering project last year which helped her to feel part of a team and work towards an end goal. Using her summer volunteering as a work experience role, by the end of the summer Parasol offered her a trial position at their Wednesday night youth group sessions as a paid worker with additional support.

A young carer (non-disabled) who has attended Parasols Wednesday night youth group and summer provision since 2013, volunteered last year and showed enthusiasm and understanding for young people with disabilities.

His consistent focus made him an excellent candidate for their Senior Volunteers Initiative. In the advanced volunteer role he stepped up and went above and beyond what was asked of him. He led other volunteers and users, helping to deliver a number of projects over the summer. He used his initiative and ran the raffle for the summer celebration, finding prizes for it in his own time. His hard work and additional responsibility made him an inspiration for existing volunteers and earned the respect of the Parasol team.

Case Study from Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau

A client lives with her 20 year old disabled son. She works for 22 hours per week plus overtime and earns between £750 and £850 per month. Her son receives Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and was on higher rate care Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and lower rate mobility. He failed to make an appointment at The Warneford and his DLA was stopped. The client had a partner but he left her and she continued to receive tax credits so there was an overpayment. The client owes council tax which was being recovered by bailiffs. Arrears of council tax for

previous years were also being recovered via two attachments of earnings, in addition to other debts. The client lives in a two bed council property.

Over the course of a series of meetings Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau helped the client to transform her situation. The CAB team prevented bailiff action, established entitlement to housing benefit and council tax reduction and helped her claim. Advisors reviewed how she could increase her working hours to 30 and so receive Working Tax Credit. Referred her to CAB's Benefits in Practice caseworker for help with benefits for son (Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Having stabilised her finances the CAB was able to help her obtain a Debt Relief Order (DRO) in order that she could make a new start.

Case Study from Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre

A client came in to the centre who had lost her husband, wanting advice and help towards the funeral costs.

The Centre helped her claim Bereavement Benefit and in case this was not successful because her husband was claiming a state pension when he was alive Employment Support Allowance.

As the client was very upset The Centre arranged a home visit to complete the funeral grant form and forms for charity grants towards the funeral costs.

A month later the client returned to the office very distressed because the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had not received the form sent. The Centre helped with another claim over the phone. The DWP declined the request for help with the funeral costs because the copy of a final bill sent had no date on it.

The caseworker contacted the DWP explaining that the Funeral service provider does not date an invoice until a deposit has been paid. The DWP suggested using an alternative funeral parlour.

Sometime later the client returned again and said she had found another funeral parlour which had agreed to provide a dated invoice for its funeral services. The DWP awarded £2,200 towards the funeral costs.

For the remaining £1,500 bill, The Centre helped the client to complete applications to charities. She successfully applied for £700 from charities and a family member loaned the rest. The client is re-paying the debt weekly.

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