

Appendix 2

Multi-Agency Work

Improving access to mental health support for asylum Seekers & refugees living in Charnwood

Difficulties with accessing Health Services

- ▶ After an initial visit to The Cedars Hotel with Healthwatch in July 2023 to identify the mental health support residents required. This led to the development of a weekly “coffee morning / drop in” session delivered by Charnwood Neighbourhood Mental Health Lead, Local Area Co-ordinator and Loughborough Town of Sanctuary. The aim of the session to provide advice, signposting and referrals into other local community activities and services. As a result, people have been registered with GP’s , Dentists, supported with college applications, housing applications, volunteering, accessing community activities. The social aspect of the session has also helped to reduce isolation & helped people with their English skills.

- ▶ Feedback from The Cedars Hotel Housing Officer:

“Thank you for yours and your team’s support. It really is appreciated, and we now have a contact when we are unsure where to send people for support. The men really look forward to your weekly visits”.

- ▶ Feedback from residents:

“Thank you for all of your support, you are really kind and have helped me.

”You have done a lot of good work, thank you for caring”.

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Charnwood Asylum Seeker & Refugee Network:

- ▶ In September 2023, the Charnwood Asylum Seeker & Refugee Network was established, holding regular meetings to bring together partners from agencies such as education, health services, VCSE, and statutory services with the goal of enhancing collaborative efforts and creating an action plan to aid individuals in Charnwood. The network has been the golden thread through all of the work in Charnwood. The collaboration has fostered closer working relationships among organisations, acknowledging each partner's strengths and resulting in increased support. Additionally, the network is responsive and promptly addresses issues or decisions that significantly impact individuals awaiting the outcome of their asylum claims.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support:

- ▶ In order to enhance mental well-being and promote mental health, a community-oriented approach has been implemented. This approach encourages individuals to participate in activities such as gardening projects, football sessions, and events at local community centres, organised by different organisations. Building relationships and trust with individuals is achieved through weekly drop-ins. The Local Area Coordinator offers personalised support, guiding people around Loughborough and introducing them to various community centres and groups, motivating them to join activities. Additionally, a volunteer from Loughborough Town of Sanctuary offers transportation to take individuals to these groups.
- ▶ Referrals have also been made into specialised services when identified that additional interventions were needed

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Trauma Informed Practice

- ▶ Treated individuals with dignity and compassion, offering person centred support.
- ▶ There have been instances where individuals arrived at hotels with minimal personal belongings, with only the clothes on their backs. A collective effort has ensured that essential needs are fulfilled, including donations of clothing, footwear, bags, phones, iPads, educational materials, and toiletries.

Contingency to Dispersal Accommodation Difficulties:

- ▶ While there are limitations to the team's post-relocation support, individuals are offered food parcels, information on Local Area Co-ordinators, Food Banks, and organisations such as City of Sanctuaries before they move. Referrals are sometimes arranged prior to the move to ensure individuals receive essential support upon arrival at their new location, easing anxiety about the initial days in a new environment.
- ▶ Leicester Adult Education service facilitated Cook, Meet & Eat courses which taught men from one of the hotels skills in cooking on a budget. After successful completion of the course, individuals were presented with a slow cooker which they would be able to take with them into their new accommodation

Housing and Homelessness Difficulties:

- ▶ To support individuals experiencing homelessness, the Charnwood Asylum Seeker and Refugee Network has united to provide food, tents, and assistance until suitable accommodation is arranged.
- ▶ In efforts to decrease such occurrences, The Bridge began attending drop-in sessions at the hotel, assisting individuals upon receiving their leave to remain, and sometimes even before, to prepare them for the next steps once their status is confirmed.

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