

# 2022 Newsletter

Looking back on the last 18 Months



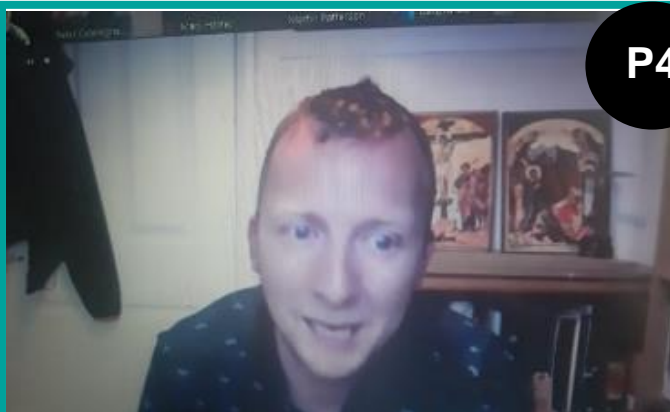
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Homeless Groups @ St Anne's



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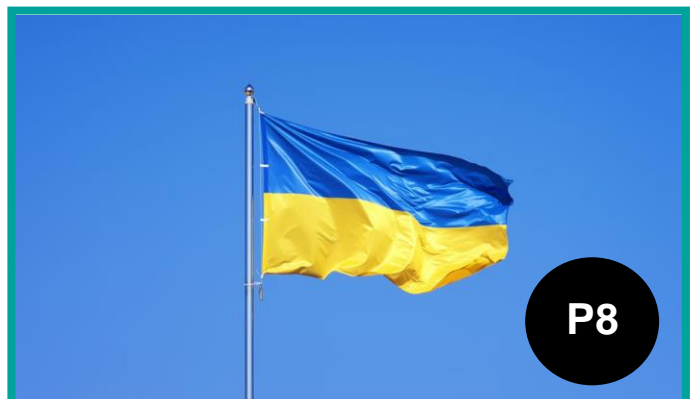
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Supporting Ukraine Response



**Dave Paterson**  
*Project Manager*

We are so grateful for everyone’s support and to all our partners who we have been working with over the last 18 months. The Coronavirus Pandemic,

which we all hope we are moving on from, has thrown up many challenges but we are grateful to God for his faithfulness. One of the key developments has been that Unity in Poverty Action (UPA) is now part of the Core Team @ Leeds Christian Community Trust. We work closely alongside Catherine Beaumont, Helen Coutie and Janice Brown who are providing us with additional support, including Janice in a new Admin Role. We want to say a huge thank you to all members of the UPA steering who have served us very honourably, including Karen Williams, Anna Bland, Hugh Allon Smith and Hannah Hillman who all made up the last steering group of UPA. We are now under the direct accountability of the LCCT trustees and Catherine is providing line management for myself and Mary.



**Mary Halsey**  
*Development Worker*

“One of the most challenging parts of our work is hearing about people’s experiences of poverty. This could be hearing someone's

reason for needing a food parcel or listening to someone’s story at one of our Homeless Charter Action Group meetings. It’s hard to hear the reality of the tough situations that people have faced and are still facing, but it’s also an amazing

privilege and opportunity; because the person had the courage to share with us, and an opportunity, because their stories can help to reveal the heart of the issues that keep people in poverty and hopefully lead to solutions.

One example of this was where two people, who had experienced homelessness as destitute asylum seekers, shared at one of our meetings about some of the ways that past trauma can make it difficult for people to live in shared accommodation, and that this can lead them to reject an offer. Often, people who have rejected an offer of accommodation can then be excluded from future offers of support. A representative from Housing Options was at the meeting and she said that she would use this information in future training for her team of housing advisors and assessors, so that they would have a better understanding of the impact that trauma may have on people’s decision making around accommodation.

At the recent Debt Forum conference, Andrew Grinnel from the Poverty Truth Commission spoke about not ‘building back better’ after the pandemic, but ‘building back with’, where decisions are made with the people whose lives will be affected by them. That’s the challenge for us this year, not just hearing people’s experiences, but valuing their contributions and working with them to develop ideas and shape services.



*From LCCT Away Day*

**Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.**  
PROVERBS 31V 8-9

# VOLUNTEER BEFRIENDING

One of our new pilot projects is to get more people supporting people who have experienced homelessness through volunteer befriending.

Many people who find housing are at risk of returning to the streets because they become isolated and lack community where they live.

We are encouraging Churches to themselves take up the challenge of volunteer befriending.

**If you are part of a group that's not Church-based or you are not a Christian yourself then please just get in touch and we can sort something.**



## Churches Befriending to Prevent Homelessness

Unity in Poverty Action and the Leeds Homeless Charter are offering the opportunity for churches to be able to use Befrienders to support people who are vulnerably housed, helping to reduce isolation and link them with their local communities.

Churches will need to adopt pre-written guidelines and will oversee their own volunteers, who will be linked with people who are being supported by the organisation Barca-Leeds. Befriending can be done at agreed times when the volunteer is free, and the ideal is that contact is made with the vulnerable person once a week. Advice will be available throughout from the Homeless Charter and Barca.

Please get in touch if your church is interested.



UNITY IN POVERTY ACTION UPA



For more information please contact:

Email: Mary - maryhalseyupa@gmail.com

Phone: Dave - 07903 123283

## St Anne's Resource Centre and Groups running Kitchens



Back in the spring and summer of 2021 we worked with Leeds City Council and St Anne's Resource Centre to enable groups that had been operating out on the streets pre pandemic to use St Anne's Resource Centre so they could support the homeless and vulnerably housed indoors at the centre with food, clothes and friendship.

This involves working with Focus for Hope, Community Kettle, West Yorkshire Hardship, Leeds / East Leeds Homeless Support Groups covering 4 nights between them.

## Prison Release

Through our Homeless Charter Prison release working group we have worked with Housing Options and New Hall Prison to set up a Prison Release Case meeting. This compliments the existing men's case meeting that already existed.

The case meeting allows Housing Options, workers in the prisons and other agencies e.g., Joanna Project to discuss those prison leavers who are at risk of Homelessness before they leave prison, thus making it easier to accommodate people on prison release.

'For I was a Stranger and you welcomed me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me'. Matthew 25:35-36.

## Supporting people with Items



Pic of Focus for Hope providing items

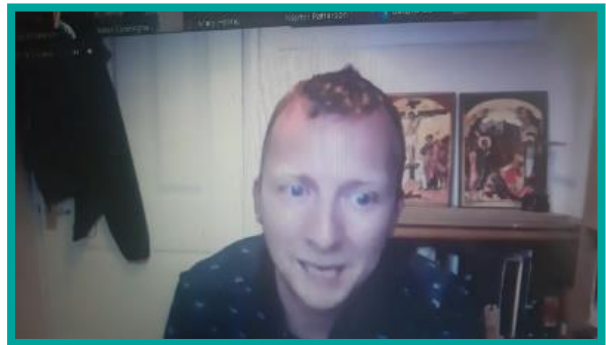
We have been working with the organisation Barca and different groups in the city to help supply items to vulnerable people who are vulnerably housed. This includes items such as TV's, computer tablets, radio's, vacuum cleaners and basic kitchenware. These items are part of the bigger picture which many partners are working towards and that is to support vulnerable people as much as we can in the houses and accommodation where people live.

## B and B Homeless Provision

Back in March 2021 when the third lockdown was starting to ease we were asked by the Street Support Team if we would be able to work with different groups to provide hot meals every evening. There is one B and B which is totally dedicated to supporting the homeless and since the end of March 2021 we have supported this place with meals every evening.

Big thank you to **Homeless Street Angels, Homeless Hampers, Wrangthorn, Gateway, Vineyard Churches, Caring for the Homeless, Focus for Hope** and the **Homeless Leeds Support Group**. The meals are valued by those there and one of the knock-on effects is that vulnerable people are more likely to stay in the B and B on a night-time rather than take to the streets. In addition, in 2021 we provided 25 nights of B and B accommodation. Your financial support really helps with this.

## Discipleship on the Margins Zoom Gatherings / Housing



Pic of Jon Swales from Lighthouse

We have restructured these meetings to take place roughly twice a year. There are specific focuses on different themes such as Housing, which was our focus back in June 2021.

This is leading to productive dialogue with Green Pastures around taking on houses where vulnerable people can be supported through the Christian community, whether that be from Churches and organisations giving intentional support or exploring the idea of Christians living with those on the margins in shared houses that aim to take on a fuller expression of Christian Community.

Meals to B and B





## Cash Grants

Throughout 2021 we have worked with Leeds City Council and the Trussell Trust to run a cash Grants Pilot. This has involved foodbanks being able to refer into the Council for someone to receive a cash grant. Once a referral is made the Council would then call the client in question to see if the person was eligible. If they were they would receive cash either as one payment or sometimes as weekly payments to cover a substantial gap in having no money.

The scheme worked with cash perks and people would get a notification on their phone which could then be used at an ATM machine. The pilot has come about due to a growing desire to reduce people's dependency on foodbanks and give people cash to buy their own food.

## Cash First (Worrying about Money) Flyers



We have worked with the national Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) to produce flyers which detail lots of different services in Leeds which can aid people with different money issues. They are very useful and can be used to help signpost people to the right places.

Please get in touch if you would like some copies

## New website



In late Summer of 2021 we revamped our Leeds Food Aid Network website. The site is more user friendly and enables people to see what food items are needed and enables people to state what food items they may have to donate as it connects to the Street Support website. Please visit [leedsfoodaidnetwork.co.uk](http://leedsfoodaidnetwork.co.uk) to have a look. Thank you to Matt Hardy, David Harrison, David Smith and the Council for their support with this.

## On Location Support

Many foodbank outlets have reopened and we have worked with Money Buddies and the Leeds South and East Foodbank to put debt / money advisers into foodbanks run from Gipton Ephiphany and St Cypriene's Churches. This is helping in tackling some of the root cause re: the reason why people are experiencing food insecurity. Pic from Gipton Ephiphany Church, (L S+E FB)



# FUEL BANK



We have worked in partnership with different food providers and the fuel bank foundation to support vulnerable people with fuel costs.

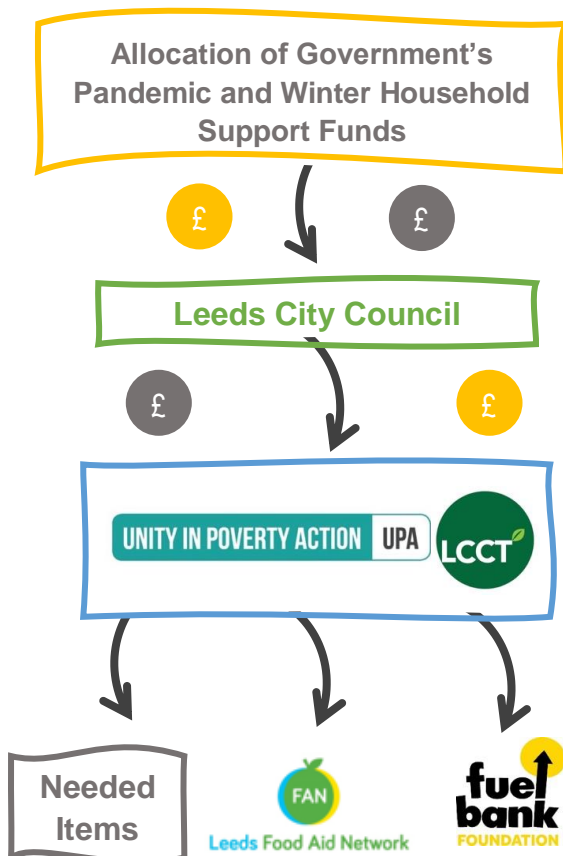
A number of providers can make a referral to the fuelbank Foundation who will then issue a person in need with a fuel Voucher to their phone. This can be redeemed at a shop which has a Pay point function and enables the client to top up their Energy meter (£30 in spring / summer) and £49 in autumn / winter).

## Finance to Resource Food Providers

Working with our partners LCCT, Leeds City Council and many different food providers we have successfully been able to allocate over £275,000 to support food providers in the city. Over an estimated 20,000 people have benefitted from this.

The original source of the money has come from DEFRA and the latest allocation of money has come from the Winter Household Support Fund.

See diagram below for how it works.



## Meeting with the West Yorkshire Mayor

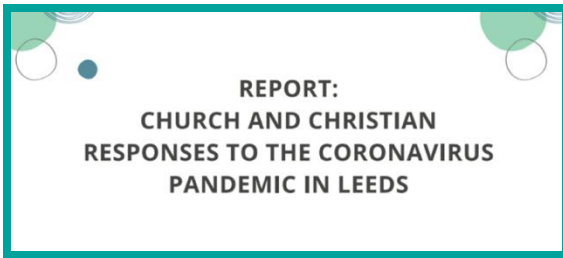


As part of the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network we met with the new Mayor of West Yorkshire. Tracy Brabin expressed her heart to be able to tackle the root causes of food poverty in our region and will advocate on the region's behalf with government to protect some of the poorest people.

**Vaccine Responses** – As the vaccine roll out happened, we were able to get an estimated 100 people vaccinated early who were working with people on the margins. Thanking Central Forum and the NHS / Public Health for helping us to do this.



## Church and Christian Responses to the Pandemic in Leeds



We have been able to work closely with a number of initiatives including Leeds Church Institute and St George’s Crypt to put together a piece of work that would detail different Christian Responses to the Pandemic in the city of Leeds. This included the initial response in early spring 2020 when the world seemed to turn upside down and we helped to work with partners to deliver a proactive coordinated food response. The document is highly recommended for reading and can be accessed on <https://networkleeds.com/news/church-and-christian-responses-to-the-coronavirus-pandemic-in-leeds>

## Addiction Connection Leeds (ACL)



After a bit of a break during the Pandemic we met over Zoom in the autumn of 2020 with participants of Addiction Connection Leeds (ACL). It was good to be able to say farewell to Graham Fell who has served with Spacious Places for over a decade as their Project manager before retiring in 2020. Graham had worked tirelessly and developed Spacious Places, so it now served over 20 people at any one time through 12 step structured day care provision, which enabled many people struggling with addiction to come into a place of Abstinence Based

Cont..... Recovery, where Alcohol, Drugs, chronic gambling were no longer part of their lives. One of the off shoots of this was that another project was set up called Growing Rooms, which involved structured day care 3 days a week, alongside volunteering and being placed in a shared house where community has the potential to flourish.

## Prayer in the City



We have supported a number of prayer initiatives throughout these last 18 months. These have included Zoom prayer lunches covering the NHS at the height of the third Lockdown in January 2021, Evangelism in Easter and then in May 2021 we did a prayer lunch outdoors hosted by St Matts Church with Street Angels and then we very much enjoyed having the deputy leader of the Council Jonathan Pryor come to speak to us about the opportunities and challenges faced by the Council. Jonathan stated that he thought there were many in the city suffering from a case of post-traumatic stress in light of the effects of the pandemic and we all had to navigate this. In both November 2020 and November 2021, we held city wide prayer events led by Church leaders from across the city seeing over 100 people in attendance on each occasion as we prayed for the wellbeing of our city. In March 2022 we held 24-hour prayer with Cornerstone Baptist after a break of 2 years due to pandemic. See next page....

Continued.... In addition, we have been able to support the Leeds House of Prayer which runs evening and night prayer twice a week on Zoom and be part of the Bless Leeds 21

initiative. This involved over 150 people praying for many different streets in Leeds. Over summer we managed to pray for around 60% of the streets in Leeds.

# RESPONSE TO UKRAINE

SEE DOCUMENT RE: WAYS TO SUPPORT,

'THE LORD IS A STRONGHOLD FOR THE OPPRESSED, A STRONGHOLD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE' (PSALMS 9:9)

## Ways to respond to the conflict in Ukraine

(This is specifically aimed at the Christian community in Leeds but the information will be relevant to all)

### Financial Giving

**Baptist Mission Society Appeal**

[bmsworldmission.org/appeal/Ukraine-2022](https://bmsworldmission.org/appeal/Ukraine-2022)

**USPG Anglican Mission Agency Appeal**

[Ukraine-emergency-appeal.raisely.com](https://Ukraine-emergency-appeal.raisely.com)

**Methodist Churches in Great Britain – All We Can Appeal to Ukraine**

[allwecan.org.uk/donations/ukraine](https://allwecan.org.uk/donations/ukraine)

**Leeds Together for Ukraine** in association with Leeds Community Foundation and Leeds City Council

[justgiving.com/campaign/LeedsTogetherforUkraine](https://justgiving.com/campaign/LeedsTogetherforUkraine)

**Disasters Emergency Committee**

[dec.org.uk/appeal/Ukraine-humanitarian-appeal](https://dec.org.uk/appeal/Ukraine-humanitarian-appeal)

Other church families involved include Avail Mission Ukraine, Christ Central and Vineyard. Connect through local contacts.

### Donate Items

We are focusing on providing clothes and items to those refugees who are here and other refugees who may be coming here. The Refugee Council is working on providing a building where donations can be sorted and allocated for refugees in Leeds. Contact [Duncan.wells@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:Duncan.wells@refugeecouncil.org.uk)

### Medical Supplies Needed for Ukraine

Supplies needed are Bandages and Dressings, Burn Creams, Tourniquets / Boxes of Matches, Painkillers and Anti Inflammatory, First Aid Kits and Associated items, Plasters.

Contact Unity in Poverty Action (UPA) and we will link you with the Leeds Ukrainian Centre or another collection point - [davepaterson.upa@gmail.com](mailto:davepaterson.upa@gmail.com), 07903 123283

### Hosting Refugees

To put your name forward to host a refugee then please register on government-based web link: [homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk).

**To Contact Leeds City Council re: supporting Ukrainians please email: [homesforukraine@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:homesforukraine@leeds.gov.uk). To join a WhatsApp group with hosts and people offering support contact us and we will link you.**

### Immigration Advice

To access Free UK Immigration Advice for people fleeing Ukraine see this link: [Advice-ukraine.co.uk](https://Advice-ukraine.co.uk)

**Joint Statement** - Over 100 Church leaders in West Yorkshire have signed a letter in support of Ukrainians who live here or may come here as Refugees and asks for respect to Russians. Please see link to Letter and Radio Leeds interview - <https://networkleeds.com/news/leeds-based-ukrainian-shares-testimony-on-easter-sunday>

### Supporting Refugees in Schools

When Ukrainian refugees start to arrive here it's important that children and families are helped to integrate into British society. If you come across Ukrainian refugees in a school, then please connect them with **Leeds Development Education Centre**. They can offer invaluable help to schools in connecting children from different nationalities together. Please see this link: [leedsdec.org.uk/projects](https://leedsdec.org.uk/projects) (scroll down to the section on 'School Linking') or email [hannah@leedsdec.org.uk](mailto:hannah@leedsdec.org.uk)

### Contact details

This document has been put together by Unity in Poverty Action (UPA) part of Leeds Christian Community Trust (LCCT) You can contact us on: [davepaterson.upa@gmail.com](mailto:davepaterson.upa@gmail.com) or 079 0312 3283

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### Donate

Thank you to all our supporters in helping to develop our work over the last 18 months. If you would like to make a donation to support the work of Unity in Poverty Action (UPA) please get in touch using our contact details.