

Biographies

Dave Smith

Dave is founder and director of the Boaz Trust and co-ordinator of NACCOM. His passion is to see the Christian Church mobilised into positive action for the marginalised, particularly those who are seeking sanctuary in the UK from persecution and injustice. He was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community in 2012, presumably for helping people whom the government wants to deport.....

Mike Kaye

Mike Kaye currently manages the advocacy work for Still Human Still Here, which is a coalition of more than 50 organisations that are working together to end the destitution of refused asylum seekers in the UK.

His previous jobs include working as Communications Manager for Anti-Slavery International, Parliamentary Officer for Refugee Council, Policy Officer for the Central America Human Rights Committee and three years working in Central America during the civil wars.

Jon Lord OBE

After working as a Funeral Director, Jon made the leap into housing in 1987 and gained his wealth of experience in a wide variety of roles. He became Chief Housing Officer in Bolton Council in 2001 and was the Chair of the Greater Manchester Consortium for refugees and asylum seekers from then until 2013. He was awarded an OBE in 2007 for services to housing.

In April 2010, Jon became Chief Executive of Bolton at Home and led the organisation in the transition from ALMO to Registered Housing and Regeneration company. He is the current Chair of the Greater Manchester Housing Chief Executives Group.

Paul Birtill

Paul is the Head of Metropolitan Migration Foundation (a charitable foundation within a housing association) and previously worked as Director of Development of Metropolitan's care and support business.

Paul's expertise is in developing and funding community initiatives across the UK with organisations such as Comic Relief, The Scarman Trust and Refugee Housing Association. He has many years' experience in developing initiatives that support new migrants, including a foyer in Sheffield and a housing and support service for asylum seekers in the East Midlands.

Heather Petch

Heather is an expert in housing, homelessness, migration, community development and social investment. Until 2011 she was Director of HACT, a national housing charity supporting innovation and development projects.

Recently she has worked on a number of housing initiatives as Heather Petch Consulting, including supporting Refugee Action in managing strategic change, coordinating the work of the Housing and Migration Network for HACT, JRF and Metropolitan Migration Foundation, and working for Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of their Housing and Poverty programme, to develop housing initiatives for people in extreme housing need, including migrants.

Jane Henson

Jane retired from University administration four years ago. She had been involved with Asylum Seekers and Refugees for some time before that, and wanted to devote more time to it. She helped to set up Host Nottingham 18 months ago, and feels she has learnt a great deal and been really enriched by the people that they have hosted and those who have offered to open their homes.

Jo Garbutt

Jo was an English teacher. After retiring she became a Boaz trustee from its inception in 2004, and was Chair of the trust from 2007-12. In addition Jo ran the hosting scheme for several years in a voluntary capacity. She and her husband David have also hosted a considerable number of destitute asylum seekers over the past 9 years.

Jenny Richardson

Jenny is the part time Volunteer Co-ordinator with ASSIST Sheffield, and also a freelance trainer. She has experience of working with, and training, volunteers in a variety of different contexts, particularly in housing estates in the UK. www.jennyrichardson.co.uk

Mark Cloherty

Mark Cloherty is the Chief Executive of the Boaz Trust and has been working in the UK asylum and refugee sector in the UK since 2010. Prior to this, Mark spent some time overseas working for an aid NGO in DR Congo and Uganda. He is also a qualified accountant.

Sarah Taal

Sarah is the housing and women's support worker for Hope Projects in Birmingham. Hope Projects provides assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in partnership with local refugee agencies. She is also a human rights activist and research student in migration and social policy.

Julian Prior

Julian founded and leads the charity Action Foundation that runs a number of projects that support asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants with supported housing and English Language tuition in Tyneside. He was also the author of the report 'Asylum Matters' commissioned by the Centre for Social Justice to report on why so many people in the UK asylum system became destitute, and made recommendations to make the process, fairer, more efficient and humane. Julian is a keen cyclist and once rode from Coast to Coast in one day to raise money for Action Foundation.