



## **About Nottingham Arimathea Trust**

Nottingham Arimathea Trust was born out of a need to provide housing for destitute asylum seekers who were unable to return to their homelands due to fear for their safety should they do so. Once asylum seekers are refused by the Home Office they lose accommodation, financial support and are not entitled to work. The Home Office believes that enforced destitution will encourage people to sign for voluntary return, however this rarely happens and most “choose” to remain in the UK fearing what will happen to them if they return. They then become destitute and homeless.

We work with the most vulnerable of this group of people. We receive many more referrals than we can house, and we have to make hard choices. We look at vulnerabilities – how long have they been in the UK? If not long maybe they lack friends who may have been able to help. We look at whether they are young or old, as either of these groups are more vulnerable when faced with street homelessness. We also look at whether they have any ongoing medical or disability needs, as again this would increase vulnerability. Finally, we balance all of the above against whether they have a solicitor or immigration advisor who is able to prepare a fresh claim or further submissions to give the person a permanent route out of destitution by gaining refugee status. Approximately half of our former residents do gain leave to remain in the UK.

As well as providing accommodation for destitute asylum seekers, which we have done since 2007, we also provide housing for refugees. We have 9 flats in a block, as well as 2 family homes. We also have refugees renting rooms in shared houses where we pay rent for the property, so this helps us by giving us an income with which to pay our rent and allowing us to open more rooms for destitute asylum seekers. We are one of two charities nationally, housing asylum seekers and refugees alongside one another to ensure we can financially sustain any properties we take on.

We provide our residents with excellent quality accommodation and support whilst they live in our housing. We are also always looking to gain new housing, so we can better meet the housing needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham, which is a growing challenge. We currently house over 60 people in 20 properties and we will have a team of 4 full time staff as well as this post, with around 25 volunteers engaged in supporting our work.

We also have a board of trustees of 10 people with varying experiences in the church, an Islamic charity leader, a former solicitor, a financial director, as well as a former manager of a national refugee charity. The board meets bi-monthly and a small exec team meets in between board meetings to resolve any pertinent issues and plan for the full board meetings.