



Asylum Justice And Release

AJAR

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AJAR News update February 2013

AJAR has now started producing cards for asylum seekers to take with them when signing on, see below. We are trying to accompany those most fearful when they sign on. We continue to work to prevent detention and help people get bail out of detention. We need volunteers, funds and prayers (if you do that sort of thing!) to continue this vital work. Below you can find out more detail about what we have been doing over past 6 months and what is needed now.

In October 2012 we held 2 **training events** for the law school in Leeds University, which were well attended and received. We now have 3 students accompanying people to sign on (see later for extension of our work) and 2 other new volunteers. However we have lost a few volunteers due to ill health. We have continued to try to keep in touch with relevant agencies in Leeds and with detention centres. We have tried to raise funds so that volunteers can travel to people in detention and so that people can get to solicitors appointments etc.

In December 2012 we started the **signing on project**. This was initiated by discussions with SOLACE about people who are afraid to sign on because of the fear of being taken into detention. People usually need to sign on every few weeks and this is the most likely time they would be taken into detention, usually with a view to being deported very soon.

Two of the team who helped set up AJAR are now back with us and able to lead the team working with an asylum seeker, so that has been terrific.

We are producing an **AJAR card** which people seeking asylum can take with them when they sign on, to give them confidence they are not alone, and more importantly to prompt them to have all the necessary information gathered before they go in case they get taken into detention. This also has the AJAR phone number on it so that they can let us know as soon as they are detained. This will be sent to all agencies in Leeds working with people seeking asylum.

We are part of discussions with other agencies about further ways to support asylum seekers, such as setting up a unity centre where people can get support before and after signing on.

As a result we urgently **need more volunteers**. This is to do the following:

Update website and share information with others using technology

Hold AJAR phone as part of rota system

Check emails

Communicate with other agencies about our work

Befriend or make phone calls for someone who has been taken into detention

Stand bail for someone in detention

Accompany people signing on

We also **need funds** as we rely completely on donations.

£6 would provide 20 asylum seekers with a card when signing on.

£10 would keep the AJAR phone running for a month.

£4 would pay for bus fares for a volunteer to support an asylum seeker to attend an appointment in Leeds

£30-80 would pay for a volunteer to visit an asylum seeker in detention.

Please **share this** with those in your community and let us know if you are interested in being involved in making sure this work continues, in whatever small way.

For donations our sort code is 08 61 19 and account number 589204950, at the Leeds Building Society. Account name: Asylum Justice and Release: YorkshireAJAR.

Kate Spooner
On behalf of AJAR

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<https://sites.google.com/site/asylumjusticeandrelease>