



City Life Church awarded over £489,000 by the National Lottery Community Fund to help those in need of refuge

June 2021

City Life Church in Southampton is celebrating a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund for £489,372 to support its work with refugees and asylum seekers in Southampton.

CLEAR (City Life Education and Action for Refugees) has been operating for 20 years helping hundreds of people each year finding sanctuary in the city.

Church Leader, Paul Woodman, said: "I am delighted that our passion to empower and support refugees and asylum seekers has been recognised and that the National Lottery Community Fund are continuing their invaluable partnership with us.

"We need only put ourselves in the shoes of the people we are helping to see why this work has been prioritised. People come to us for a wide range of reasons, whether it is fleeing war torn countries, escaping persecution and punishment because of their sexual orientation, race, or religious beliefs, or they are young girls avoiding the practice of FGM or they have been beaten and tortured in their home country.

"Our practical support, advice and English classes help them to make a new start and contribute to our society. Over 20 years, we have seen many of our clients go on to lead their lives as teachers, engineers and other vital roles in society.'

There will be around 1200 beneficiaries from the project, each gaining financial and social stability through access to non-judgemental and impartial advice and support. They will substantially improve their command of the English language and acquire the essential digital skills required to access learning. They will also gain confidence and self-worth, as they progress toward employment and other life goals.

Overall, the project aims to provide a safe, welcoming environment where refugees can rebuild their lives, meet new friends and access support services.

Cllr Spiros Vassiliou, Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Heritage, said: "Southampton is a diverse place for all and has been a welcoming port city for centuries. Building a new life in another country can be a difficult process so it's great that the CLEAR Project has received this funding to continue to offer invaluable support and advice for those who seek sanctuary in our city and call Southampton home."