



About the drop-in centres

There are 28,000 asylum seekers in the UK waiting for the home office to grant them refugee status. During this period, they get minimal financial support from the government, and are not allowed to work. These people need support during the months (or in some cases years) that they are waiting.

There are 2 US asylum seeker drop-in centres at Hendon and Woodford Forest. They open their doors for 2 hours in the afternoon once a month. It is run by United Synagogue volunteers from across all US shuls. The centre includes the following areas:

- **Mentoring:** professional members of United Synagogue including lawyers, doctors, dentists and counsellors. These people give professional advice to help them with some of the issues they face daily.
- **Befriending:** members of our community spend time having food and coffees and teas with the guests, talking and befriending the asylum seekers. They are very new to the UK and enjoy meeting new people. They sometimes want to share their stories and experiences of coming here. Volunteers are able to help them with mundane day to day issues/chores.
- **Food:** volunteers cook hot vegetarian food on the premises and serve it to the guests. This gives a space for the volunteers and asylum seekers to eat together, socialise and befriend.
- **Coffee, teas, biscuits and cakes:** this gives another area to relax and socialise
- **Kids area:** our youth groups will be running activities for the youth, and a crèche service for the younger children. Activities include arts & crafts activities, playing with a range of toy and organised group games.
- **Donations:** there are ongoing collection by our shuls of clothes, shoes, toys and toiletries. They are sorted and put out by size, so that the asylum seekers are able to easily find suitable items for themselves and their children.
- **Food vouchers:** The asylum seekers also receive vouchers from Tesco's. This is funded by money raised by our communities, government grants, funds from foundations and some angel investors.

For more information please email ypeleg@theus.org.uk [1]

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[1] <mailto:ypeleg@theus.org.uk>