Additional information about the Crisis Grants provided by Positive Action in Housing’s Lifeline Project to Vulnerable Destitute Asylum Seekers Refugees and Immigrants without recourse to Funds – to be added to our original submission.

During the financial year 2016-17, Positive Action in Housing gave out £43,174.70 in hardship funds, £1000 of which was bus passes, and £1000 of which was Tesco food cards (£5 each).

£4,000 of funds are still in the process of distribution as 2017 is not over.

As of 1st March 2017, we gave out 2,578 plus 400 winter payments (one payment equivalent to one weeks support at around £20) – making a total of 2,978 payments in total. Payments ranged from £10 to £250 and a number of long term payments were made to the more vulnerable clients like women on their own, mothers with children, the sick, disabled and elderly).

As of 6 March 2017, we supported over 400 unique cases concerning destitute families and individuals, including 65 children and 6 unborn babies. Final figures will not be ready until the year end has finished. This long term support is essential to helping people turn round their lives, re-engage with solicitors and resolve their legal status. We do not simply provide humanitarian support alone, we are always looking for a long term plan and proactive casework and progress to be made for every client. The vision for this project is to provide help and to produce the taxpayers of tomorrow. We do not see the UK Government ending destitution of those seeking refuge, if anything the problem will get worse as the refugee crisis progresses.

We would appreciate the Scottish Government supporting Positive Action in Housing in our endeavours to help those without resources of any kind and facing extreme poverty. We have developed a Scotland and UK wide online crisis grants system and a Scotland and UK wide refugee hosting programme. We deploy these programmes with proactive casework which we strongly encourage in our 216 partners across Scotland and the rest of the UK who utilise the refugee hosting programme and the crisis grants for their service users. These programmes were pioneered in Scotland and deserve strong
support from the Scottish Parliament and Government as beacons of hope for those without hope. We would appreciate an acknowledgment and financial support to distribute the grants at grassroots level and turn people’s lives around in the process.

Robina Qureshi
Sunny singh
Positive Action in Housing
27 March 2017
CASE STUDIES ILLUSTRATING THE WORK OF THE LIFELINE PROJECT

Sahra

Sahra is 68 years old originally from Iraq and speaks Kurdish Sorani. She fled Iraq in 2011 due to warfare and became separated from her family, she claimed asylum in the UK in 2012. She approached several humanitarian agencies including the British Red Cross without success. Sahra first approached Positive Action in Housing on 17/07/12. She was very vulnerable, distressed and looked confused. She had just received notice from the Home Office informing that her Home Office support would be stopped, as they felt it was safe for her to return to Iraq. We managed to calm Sahra and explained to her through one of our caseworkers who could speak Kurdish, that she had 28 days to appeal the Home Office decision. With no electricity or food in the house we provided regular crisis grants from our destitute funds, which helped Sahra sustain living in the flat while her solicitor applied for section 4 support. Three years later the police arrived at Positive Action on 15/09/15 with Sahra as she was found to be rough sleeping at a bus station. The police informed us that she had recently been evicted from her Home Office accommodation when her support was stopped. We managed to find accommodation for her through our Room for Refugees scheme. This is a hosting scheme for destitute asylum seekers and refugees, and we matched her with a host called Rachel. While staying with Rachel, PAIH contacted Rachel to get an update on how Sahra was. Rachel had become quite concerned about Sahra’s wellbeing as often she would forget things, and in one instance she forgot to turn off the gas while cooking. Worried about Sahra’s mental health, we arranged for Social Work to come and visit Sahra only to be told they could not support Sahra as she had no recourse to public funds. After a year of procrastination by a variety of organisations over the Section 4 submission, Positive action in Housing wrote a strong letter to the NHS and all the agencies who were meant to support her. The Psychiatric consultant agreed to expedite the case and assess her condition and diagnosed her as having an early stage of dementia. As there was not much progress in Sahra’s case we arranged an appointment with a new solicitor, who agreed to take on Sahra’s case and identified that there is sufficient grounds to apply for section 4. Currently Sahra is still being hosted through PAIH Room for Refugees and is continuing to receive crisis payments each month to help her continue to live with a host, while her solicitor is preparing to submit new evidence to apply for section 4 support. We also provide an interpreter at short notice so she can progress her application. We will continue to support and assist Sahra during this difficult time in her life, she is very isolated as she has a language barrier and no friends nor family in the local area.

Olive

Olive was pregnant in November 2015 whilst she was living care of a friend. However her friend had asked her to leave and find alternative accommodation as soon as possible. Without any family connections or further friends she could rely on Positive Action in Housing arranged for her to stay with a host in Glasgow. Her solicitor in the meantime was pursuing a possible judicial review in relation to her case. She had previously applied for section 4 support due to being in advance stage of pregnancy but as a result of administration error she was not provided with this support, and Olive gave birth to her baby son in June 2016. Whilst pursuing her asylum case Positive Action in Housing continued to support her through our register of host’s as well financial support from our destitution fund which
provided her the means to purchase basic essentials for her and her baby son. Whilst Olive was staying with a host she received temporary accommodation with the local authority’s social services under its statutory duty (s17 of the Children Act 1989) towards Olive’s baby son. Currently Olive continues to pursue her case under human rights legislation.

Rani

Rani, came to the UK from India in 2010 to study social care at college. While studying Rani worked part time in a care home to help pay for her studies and her rent. In 2011 her husband and her 5 year old son came to join her in the UK. Both Rani and her husband had part-time jobs so they were able to afford the rent for their flat. Their son started Primary one at the local school. The struggle for them began in 2014 when the Home Office refused to extend Rani’s visa and asked for her and family to return back to India. Rani and her family have nothing to go back to in India as they had sold most of their property and had accumulated huge debts to help for Rani’s college fees. Another factor is their son Benedict knows no other country as he has been brought up in Scotland and has attended school here for the last 6 years. He does not speak Malayalam language. He also suffers from stammer in which he is receiving speech therapy on a weekly. He would not receive this type of care in India. After being referred by British Red Cross, on the 04/07/14 Rani and her family were still living in private rented accommodation which was being paid by their friends. PAIH provided small grants to help purchase a bus pass for two months for them to travel to solicitor’s appointments and Home Office sign-on dates. By 25/07/16 Rani and her family became totally destitute as their friends could no longer help pay rent for their flat. PAIH managed to secure accommodation through our Room for Refugees Scheme, this allowed them to stay with a host family. Valsamam and her family stayed with two hosts from Room for Refugees scheme and recently have moved in with a new host family. Rani and her family are hard workers who have always worked in Scotland. Even now when they are not permitted to work they spend most of their time volunteering in food banks or church projects. They are currently waiting for a decision for their Article 8 to be approved and are being provided support by PAIH for accommodation and crisis payments to help them while their case is being decided by the Home Office. This is a worrying situation for them to be in. They want to live together in Scotland as they feel settled here.

Mohamed & Family case study

Mohamed and his young family were referred to Room for Refugees when their friends could no longer support them. Mohamed claimed asylum in the UK in 2010 due to death threats from the Sri Lankan government for creating a website that was critical of the Sri Lankan government. Initially Mohamed, his wife and their baby approached social services when his friends could no longer support them, but they were informed they can support their child only and not Mohamed nor his 7 month pregnant wife. At which point they sought help from British Red Cross who then referred the family to the host a refugee scheme. Positive Action in Housing were able to source temporary accommodation through the scheme, and Mohamed and his family stayed with hosts during which time they applied for section 4 support from the Home Office and Positive Action in Housing provided written support for the family to be given section 4 support given they have no right to work, destitute and no other means of supporting themselves. During the stay with a host the family were given
section 4 support. Mentioning one of the hosts the family stayed with Mohamed said: “Gwen and Tony were very kind to my family. Tony and I went fishing some weekends and I forget for a few hours the stress of our situation. We caught a lot of fish! My wife felt safe to be by herself in their home. I hope one day we can properly repay their kindness.”

**Sannah case study**

Sannah is young women from Pakistan. She came to the UK to study and met her future husband here. Sannah’s husband was physically abusive towards her because he wanted her to have an abortion hence she fled the accommodation they were staying at. She sought help where she could and stayed with friends in Glasgow. However the friend was only able to provide support on a temporary basis. Sannah approached social services for help. After Sannah was suffered from poor mental health caused by the stress and anxiety of her circumstance, and as a result she was hospitalised for a mental break down and her baby was taken into care by social services. Later Sannah was referred to Positive Action in Housing by social services upon her release from hospital. A meeting was held between Sannah, social services and Positive Action in Housing. We arranged due to the sensitivity of the case. Positive Action in Housing had to find a host who would be suitable to accommodate Sannah and her 5 months old baby. After searching through the Room For Refugee database we found a family who were willing to take Sannah and her baby to stay with them. Whilst she pursued her case to regain custody of her child. After attending a Children’s Panel hearing it was deemed she was fit and well enough to regain custody for her child, aided by having some where safe and stable to stay via a Positive Action in Housing host. In the mean time she applied for asylum support from the Home Office for her and her baby, and Positive Action in Housing provided written support for this purpose. Two months after approaching Positive action in Housing Sannah and her baby were given asylum accommodation and support from the Home Office.

**Hamid Case study**

After fleeing Iran due to political regime, Hamid claimed asylum in the UK in 2007. He was initially provided with support by the home office until 2008. After his support was stopped. Hamid spent the next few years staying with various friends across Glasgow. As Hamid friends found it difficult to accommodate him, as they themselves were asylum seekers, they referred him to Positive Action in Housing on 02/10/15. With being destitute and in difficult situation Hamid was really upset and distressed. And didn’t know what to do.

PAIH managed to find a volunteer host who agreed to take in Hamid. Since them Hamid has integrated well with the family and has become a integral part of the family. With things looking much positive for Hamid, he started concentrating on his future and started volunteering at stophill hospital three time a week working closely with nurses and providing friendship and stimulation for patients in the wards. With this new confidences Hamid decided to apply to college for HNC care administrative practice in the hope of becoming a nurse one day. Recently Hamid went down to Liverpool to submit new evidence in regards to his case and is currently waiting for his section 4 decision. Hamid just want to be given a chance to contribute to this country as he has spent a majority of his life in the UK