



## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2023

Dear Friends

Someone once said that you should work like that was the only thing that made a difference and also pray like that was the only thing that made a difference. We think that's a pretty good way for any Christian based organisation to go about its business, and it reflects both the ethos of SCRATCH and the hard work that our team of employees and volunteers put in to serve its clients.

As we continue to assist the neediest in society through the provision of furniture, appliances, paint, electric top up and Christmas presents - and the area we operate in continues to expand - it is fair to say that we are the busiest we have ever been. But that only tells half the story. As the cost-of-living crisis hits the UK it is those with the least who are hit the hardest and the services we supply become more critical than ever and can make life changing differences to some of our clients.

For many years we have struggled to recruit enough volunteers capable of completing the tasks required and have had to rely on an ever-decreasing pool of personnel. Recently, we have gone truly international by recruiting many asylum seekers who are temporarily resident in Southampton, giving them a real purpose to their days and the chance to integrate and make friends whilst they await home office decisions on their futures. Our volunteer delivery team is now made up of asylum seekers 80% of the time and 100% on certain days. They have been a breath of fresh air and a real education for many of the staff team here.

### [FURNISH TO FLOURISH \(previously known as DORCAS PROJECT\)](#)

As reported in our last newsletter, we continue to experience shortages of many furniture and household items needed to make up the furniture packs that we deliver to the many individuals and families referred to us. This results in waiting lists and additional fuel costs as we occasionally have to visit the same property 2 or 3 times.



So, the same plea is made – if you or anyone you know has good quality re-useable items, please do get in touch.

Based on the figures for the first six months of this financial year, we will exceed last year's record figures (of 1993 deliveries helping 2601 adults and 2239 children) by about 10%.

Below are some comments from people who recently benefited from a delivery.

◆ Thanks to SCRATCH, I have been able to furnish my flat and I am so happy with the items that you

provided. Everything is in great condition and I still can't believe how great my flat looks. A huge thank you to all for this assistance.

- ◆ SCRATCH has been a lifesaver. I have been sleeping on a mattress for several months. Having a new bed has been incredible.
- ◆ You have really helped, taken away loads of stress and given me some hope.
- ◆ My God, SCRATCH has made such a big difference. I am disabled. We had a leak in the ceiling from the toilet which ruined sofa and washing machine started leaking when we moved. The replacements have both have been a tremendous help. Thank you so much.

## CHRISTMAS COMPLETE

Plans for this year's project are well underway and we are seeking donations to help ensure that we can fulfil all referrals this year (we are expecting the need to be as high, if not higher than last year). You will find Amazon wish lists for each age group on our website - <https://www.scratchcharity.co.uk/projects/christmas-complete/index.htm>

If you would prefer to drop items to us, you can do so at our premises on Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate weekdays between 9am to 4pm. Alternatively, there are several other donation points, details shown on the website.

Can you help families who are struggling to provide toys and gifts for their children this Christmas?

Your donations will help to bring a little light into otherwise dark situations.

For further information, please get in contact.

We need: -

- ⇒ Donations
- ⇒ Finance
- ⇒ Volunteers

**SCRATCH**  
Fighting Local Poverty  
Registered Charity No. 1078344

**CHRISTMAS COMPLETE 2023**



[www.scratchcharity.co.uk](http://www.scratchcharity.co.uk)  
[cc@scratchcharity.co.uk](mailto:cc@scratchcharity.co.uk)  
023 8077 3132



Donations required: -

- ◆ Games / Puzzles
- ◆ Arts, crafts and stationery
- ◆ Toys
- ◆ Teddies / soft toys
- ◆ Sweets / Chocolate
- ◆ Books
- ◆ Toiletries etc. for teenagers
- ◆ Large cardboard boxes
- ◆ Carrier bags
- ◆ Christmas Wrapping Paper
- ◆ Sellotape
- ◆ And Finance (to help cover our operating costs and to buy items when we have shortages).

To make a financial donation, please scan here.



**Thank you for your support**  
**We cannot do it without you**

Whilst we prefer new toys and other gifts, we are happy to accept the following good quality second hand items: -

- ◆ Books (with no names written inside)

- ◆ Games & Puzzles – complete with boxes ‘as new’
- ◆ Soft toys / Teddies

For each individual we endeavor to provide the following (adjusted for babies, toddlers and teenagers): -

- 2 age relevant toys
- 2 or 3 books
- Stationery pack (colouring book, pencils, pens, sharper etc.)
- Art / craft set
- Teddy / soft toy
- Game / puzzle
- Sweets / chocolate



We also give wrapping paper and tape so that mum / dad / guardian can wrap the gifts. We hope that this gives them a sense of ownership and that the children will believe the presents are from their family or Father Christmas, rather than a charity.

There are still some volunteering slots available. If you are interested in being involved, please e-mail [cc@scratchcharity.co.uk](mailto:cc@scratchcharity.co.uk) and we will send you up to date information.

### [THE LATEST NEWS ON OUR VOLUNTEERS \(from Polly\)](#)

It is with sadness that I find myself writing my final report for SCRATCH as I will be retiring in December. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff, the Board of Directors, our supporters and of course our incredible volunteers for making the past 6 years such a fulfilling and enjoyable experience.



During the summer a long-standing friend of SCRATCH, Dr. Alan Whitehead MP, visited volunteers who are seeking Asylum in the UK. There was a great turn out and he was overwhelmed with questions. Most of the questions were concerned with waiting times, which he responded to in a written statement. However, for those with more complex problems, he offered to provide a one-off surgery on site. He has subsequently helped 5 volunteers pursue their cases with the Home Office. Thank you, Alan.

Over the last few months, we have been carrying out a survey amongst our volunteers. Here are a few of the findings: -

18 out of the 23 volunteers said that they had been supported by the volunteer Manager or other staff members.

- ◆ 50% of whom received help with access to training.
- ◆ 39% had received a letter of support for their asylum case.
- ◆ 28% received help with employability.
- ◆ 39% received emotional support.

- ◆ 22% received help with benefits.
- ◆ 39% received help making phone calls.
- ◆ and a further 22% were assisted with appointments.

How did the volunteers feel they benefitted from volunteering: -

- ◆ 96% helping others.
- ◆ 78% meeting new people and making friends.
- ◆ 70% improved physical and mental health.
- ◆ 52% increased confidence and motivation.
- ◆ 48% helped to relieve boredom.
- ◆ 48% improved English (as a second language)
- ◆ 40% peer to peer support.

I will close by adding that I have been proud to be a part of such a crucially worthwhile charity and I will always cherish my time here. Passing the baton on, I hope that my replacement finds the post as rich and rewarding as I have. A huge thank you and farewell.

*Polly Burton, Volunteer Manager*

We are pleased to say that Lizzie Osborne joined SCRATCH in mid-October as a replacement for Polly. It is great that we were able to appoint her in time for her to have a couple of months shadowing Polly and getting to know the volunteers and the various agencies with whom we work with to recruit new volunteers. We wish Lizzie well in her new role and wish Polly every happiness in her retirement.

Supported by



SCRATCH, 33 Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate, Southampton, SO14 0SP

Tel: 023 8077 3132

e-mail: [reception@scratchcharity.co.uk](mailto:reception@scratchcharity.co.uk)

[www.scratchcharity.co.uk](http://www.scratchcharity.co.uk)

Southampton City and Region Action to Combat Hardship is registered as a Limited Company,  
 Number 03830305 Registered in Cardiff.  
 Registered Charity Number 1078344

<https://www.facebook.com/SCRATCH.Charity/>