

## **“Routes out of Poverty” a Redbridge Faith Forum Network Meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

This network meeting continued the theme “Routes out of Poverty” with three organisations that offer practical help and support to people in debt or living in poverty presenting.

**“Freeing people from the miserable grip of UK Poverty”**:- Rev Ken Ashton of St Pauls, Hainault spoke about the Christians Against Poverty Money courses that take place at the church over 3 sessions. The next course is starting 5<sup>th</sup> May and will be repeated in October. These sessions enable people who are having problems managing money to actually identify their spending and take action to control it and prioritise paying debts in the most helpful order. This is a real eye opener and it can sometimes take a lot of effort for someone to identify all their expenditure and bring it in line with income. Using cash rather than card transactions is highly recommended as it provides a strong visual image of expenditure. Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a Christian organisation that works with churches but offers support to people of any faith or none – its headquarters are in Bradford and its work is endorsed by many professionals including money saving expert Martin Lewis. CAP also have debt centres attached to some churches and employ workers throughout the UK some of which can participate in home visits to help vulnerable people.

**“Transforming homes, transforming lives”** - Brian Darwood then gave a presentation about the TCL Reuse centre in Ilford which aims to:

1. Relieve poverty for those in some form of housing crisis by providing furniture, appliances and household items to everybody regardless of circumstances or income.
2. Divert furniture from landfill for reuse or to be recycled for environmental benefit.
3. Educate about the causes of homelessness
4. Provide work experience and training for youth and the long term unemployed helping them to gain confidence and work readiness



The Reuse Centre has a large shop/warehouse in Uphall Road Ilford open Monday-Saturday each week where furniture and appliances are displayed for purchase. They have a van which collects unwanted furniture and delivers purchased items and also have workers and volunteers who PAT test electrical items and ensure they are in good working condition. The centre also provides training and employment for young men who are on Teen Challenge London’s drug rehabilitation programme. TCL Reuse works in partnership with many other agencies including the NHS, & Social Services, and receives donations of goods from major retailers such as John Lewis and from Shanks recycling sites. It works with other voluntary organisations to provide goods at discount to vulnerable people. Donations of furniture and appliances in good condition are welcome as

are offers of voluntary help especially from those with practical skills to repair and upcycle furniture.

**“Restoring dignity, reviving hope”** – Jocelyn Davis of Redbridge Foodbank spoke about the work of the foodbank providing emergency provisions for families or individuals referred by care professionals. Each food-parcel contains a 3 day supply of food as an emergency relief in times of crisis – people are allowed up to 3 visits in a 6 month period unless there are extenuating circumstances in which case the referring professional will liaise with the foodbank manager. Donations are always welcome and there are collection points in many supermarkets, places of worship and public buildings (including Redbridge Town Hall). Peak times for donations are around harvest festivals and Christmas. Donations of toiletries and toilet paper are always welcome along with non-perishable food items. The Redbridge foodbank is based at Jubilee Church, Granville Road, Ilford but food-parcels can also be collected from City Gates Food Centre and TCL Reuse Centre on Saturdays between 11am and 1pm.



Volunteers are always welcomed to help sort donations and pack and distribute food parcels and the Foodbank could not operate without them.

There was an opportunity for questions to be addressed to the speakers and the panel was joined by Chantal who works for CAP in Dagenham who explained her role in working directly with people referred to her.



It was clear to the audience how easy it is for a change of circumstances in health, employment or relationship breakdown to quickly lead to an escalation in debt and misery for all involved. It was encouraging to therefore hear of the vital and much valued work performed by the staff and volunteers of CAP, TCL Reuse Centre and Redbridge Foodbank. Redbridge Faith Forum would like to thank Ken, Brian, Jocelyn and Chantal for coming to speak about their services.

The next network meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July in the Gloucester Room of Central Library.