

Cloverleaf, Leeds

Group transport supports Cloverleaf's work in the community.



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Leeds Alternative Travel provides minibus transport and MiDAS training for Cloverleafworld Ministries, helping their work with the homeless in Leeds.

'It started five years ago with a drive to take the message we preach to a more practical level,' explains Pastor Paul Okhuoya at Cloverleaf. 'We started going out into Leeds and, looking at the needs there, we saw a real issue with homelessness. So twice a week for a year, we hit the streets, bringing tea and sandwiches.

'After a time, we wanted to add some dignity to the process, bringing people off the streets to a central place where we could provide a hot meal. We were able to secure a property and start a monthly event we call Love Feast. This is where we first encountered Leeds Alternative Travel, which could provide the transport we needed to bring up to 50 homeless people to our centre.

'With many facing addiction problems, it became clear that rather than just feeding people we needed to think about the causes of their homelessness. We added a level of support to the meal, helping people to start to address their addiction problems, building healthier and better habits.

'Over time, this was reinforced with trained counsellor volunteers, volunteer medical students who were at an appropriate stage in their studies to help and, eventually, a formal 12-step support programme – Reconnect. So from taking sandwiches out to the streets, we have grown to helping people come in for hot food, a clothes bank, professional counselling, a formal support programme and medical help.

'An important part of addressing homelessness is to equip people with skills. This aspect of our work became more important when we began helping homeless migrant workers. We bring people to our centre for a job club and interview preparation – and have trained people as volunteer drivers using Leeds Alternative Travel's MiDAS programme so we can provide skills that could lead to a job.

'The range of services we provide mean that we have to transport a lot of people. Taxis are too expensive and working with Leeds alternative Travel means that we can support as many people in the community as possible.'