

Valdus A Migrant Worker in Need

Valdus had self harmed after finding all his belongs had been taken from the caravan he was living in. He spent nearly 24 hours in Accident and Emergency whilst agencies and voluntary groups decided they could not help. Valdus appeared to be slipping through the net and a solution could not be found. He was vulnerable but could not be kept in hospital under the Mental Health Act, he could not be found a place in a hostel as they were all full and he was not classed as homeless because the Housing Department did not have any papers to determine his status.

As Valdus sat in A and E, bewildered and confused, on a Friday evening no one appeared able to help. Fortunately though for Valdus the Psychiatric Nurse felt she could not let him leave A and E and after many many phone calls reached the Cornwall Migrant Workers Group. This group refused to accept Valdus' only option was a night on the streets. They convinced Penwith District Council to use their discretion and book temporary accommodation for Valdus if the Church agreed to pay. The Salvation Army agreed to check on Valdus to ensure he was safe.

The Migrant Workers Group put him in a taxi from A and E and went back the next day with extra food and the back up of Amber Initiatives. Valdus could not remember his families phone number back in Lithuania but all of this along with temporary passport documents were obtained by Amber so that he could return home. Valdus' family sent across the money required for his return flight and after one week from being in A and E Valdus was on his way home.

Having worked here since 2005 things had gone very wrong with his gangmaster, with no documentation, money or hope Valdus was isolated and desperate. The Cornwall Migrant Workers Group made up of many partners will ensure that the approach taken by the Churches, Amber, Penwith's Street Services team and the Salvation Army are encouraged throughout Cornwall. A system will be put in place to ensure that no one is allowed to go unsupported in Cornwall. Valdus was vulnerable, his story has a happy ending, it could all too easily have turned out differently.