

# Algarve Network for Families in Need - the way forward



The Algarve Network for Families in Need has been supporting families across the Algarve for approximately ten years now, working in a variety of ways to enhance the lives of needy families.



It has been a very small charity, nonetheless has become well known and well respected across the region. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns – the first lockdown beginning on 13 March 2020 – threw many needy families into despair, the timing being particularly bad as many families only have work in the summer and had therefore not worked for some six months. This was the exact time that they had been expecting to go back to work and start earning. These families had no reserves to fall back on and therefore found themselves without food or money. This situation brought about

a rapid departure from the usual work of ANFFIN as it was forced to depart from its mainstream work (though not totally) and concentrate on getting food and essentials to families who had none. A food appeal was launched with collections being made across the Algarve and deliveries being made to families. Nobody could have foreseen how long this would continue nor the number of families that would be affected but throughout the following 16 months thousands of families were supported ranging from a one off emergency supply, to those who have needed support throughout.

As summer 2021 approached feedback from our volunteers told us that, at last things were starting to move on. Whilst by no means back to normal, tourism was opening up, jobs were becoming available, other providers were helping with food supplies and overall, the need for weekly deliveries of food was reducing.

It was time to reassess the help we were giving families – begin to phase out regular food supplies which, if they continued could foster an unnecessary dependence – and look at how we could now support the most vulnerable families through a period of recovery.

Now we are not naive and we know that things can move backwards as quickly as they move forward and of course we will have a contingency in place should the country at any stage go back into lockdown, but we are optimistic and therefore our current plan is based on moving forward but with safeguards in place.

What this last year and a half has taught us is that much of what we were doing before the pandemic was good work which was helping families but, as a small group we were not reaching as many families as we would like. We are still small and can't be all things to all people so we have used this time to identify certain groups of families who appear to be most in need and consequently are the most vulnerable. These are the people on whom we will focus this year.

## Families Returning to Work

We recognise that returning to work after all that has happened will not be easy for many people. Confidence has been lost, routines disrupted, families have broken up.

Our priority is to help anyone who would like to return to work but who faces difficulties. We know that jobs are becoming available and we want our families to benefit from this.

## Families who struggle to provide the essentials for their homes and children

Many families are really struggling to provide bare essentials both in their homes and for their children, affecting not only family life but also preparedness for school. We aim to help these families so that children do not continue to be disadvantaged in school owing to a lack of resources in the home.

## Abuse Victims

Requests for support for families escaping domestic abuse are very frequent. Again we will seek to support these families as a priority. We aim to assist families in accessing statutory services and to give practical support when needed.

## Fire victims

ANFFIN has always been one of the first to respond when families have been affected by fires either through evacuation or loss of home. We see this both as a crisis response and a longer term commitment as families seek to rebuild their lives. We will continue to provide this service.

## Emergency food supplies

Whilst it has been recognised that the need for regular food supplies has (for now at least) diminished we recognise that any family can find themselves in a crisis situation for any number of reasons some outlined above.

In these cases we will provide a one off emergency supply of food whilst an assessment of the family's ongoing needs is completed

## Storage

Storage continues to be a problem. Often, we have to turn down good items because we have nowhere to keep them. Whilst we strive to get items out to families as quickly as possible we really do need a store for sorting and keeping items short term. If anyone can help in this matter we would be very happy to hear from you.

## Transport

Transport has been a problem throughout – particularly for larger items which are actually very beneficial to our families. This will be a priority issue for the charity as we look for ways of transporting these items. If anyone can help with this we would be pleased to hear from you.

## Volunteers

Whilst our volunteers have been outstanding in the work throughout the pandemic if this plan is going to reach out to those who need our support and grow in the way we would wish it to we will need more volunteers. We will especially need help in the lead up to Christmas so please help if you can.

## To Donate

The Algarve Network for Families in Need  
Registration Name: Associacao Todos Team  
NIF: 516092626  
email: familiesinneed@hotmail.com

Cash donations can be made using PayPal -  
algarvefamiliesinneed@hotmail.com  
or bank account  
IBAN PT5000070000005141347272 3  
SWIFT/BIC BESCPTPL

## Working with partner charities

The Network has strong links with other charities and will continue to engage with any groups and/or initiatives which support families in the Algarve.

- We will work closely with the Arm in Arm Charity Van
- We will engage in the Reverse Advent Calendar initiative with Chantelle Kortekaas – Qunita Bonita
- We will support the Back to School Backpack appeal

## Webpage

We are delighted that we have been joined by Jenny Keating who, with a background in I.T. has volunteered to build a website for us – something which we have wanted for a long time. The website will be launched in January 2022 so do look out for it.

We recognise that there are many more unmet needs in our community and we would really want to respond to far more. However, we are limited both by person power and funding. Having said that we really want to be community led and if you feel that there are other issues / families that we should be prioritising please do let us know. None of us are professionals at this work, we are all just doing our best. Help us to do better!