

1 APRIL 2004

by around her

People in region swift to help charity

Anila Baig

A CHARITY has been inundated with donations from Yorkshire people wanting to help victims of the devastating Iranian earthquake.

Staff at the Human Relief Foundation, based in Claremont, Bradford, said they started receiving calls on Sunday from people wanting to give money, blankets and tents.

Spokesman Mobeen Azhar said the situation in Iran was dire. "We have worked predominantly in Iraq this year and we were dealing with 10,000 civilian deaths. In Iran that figure could be 50,000, which just puts it into context. It is a massive operation.

"Death is abundant. The official death toll now stands at over 22,000 and it is feared that this will soar in coming weeks.

"More than 70 per cent of homes have been destroyed and two major hospitals have been reduced to rubble. Many survivors have been left terribly injured, homeless and destitute.

"The people of Bam are in urgent need of medication, emergency supplies, tents, blankets, care and shelter."

He said that typically Yorkshire people were swift to help.

"We had a lot of people contacting us asking if there was anything they could do to help. We have sent over cash already and people did donate blankets and tents but we are finding that cash is the best thing and we are working with agencies in Iran as well in a co-ordinated effort."

Project co-ordinator Yusuf Razaq said the charity was printing 30,000 leaflets. "We are hoping to get the leaflets out by Friday and hand them out outside mosques and community centres. We have had a big response already but this publicity will help raise a lot more money."

The Foundation was established in 1991 in response to the first Gulf War. It has since worked on a multitude of projects in more than 40 countries. In 2003 it received the "Special Consultative Status" award from the United Nations in recognition of its expertise.

Cheques made payable to "Human Relief Foundation" should be sent to HRF, FREE-POST BD 3125, P.O. Box 194, Bradford, BD7 1YW.

Donations can also be made to the Foundation at Barclays Bank, a/c 70 55 40 22 sort code 20-11-81.